

Original Paper

Investigating Written Reflection and Its Relation to Language Teaching Strategy Change: A Self-study

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Abstract

Reflection has received wide encouragement and adoption in the teacher education, and the teachers engaging in reflection are believed to be able to gain new insights into their teaching. As one of the prominent ways of reflection, written reflection is widely promoted in the teacher education of English Language Teaching. However, the relationship between reflection and improved teaching is still largely unclear and under-researched. This study focuses on teacher's written reflection and its relation to teaching practice change. It adopts a self-study lens to examine the Chinese researcher-participant's written reflections produced in the two microteaching sessions for an English teaching practicum course at a Canadian university, to investigate the role of written reflections in the researcher-participant's self-perceived teaching strategy change across the two microteaching sessions. The study identifies the researcher-participant's teaching strategy change: from teacher-centered method to student-centered method. It also finds that written reflection increases the researcher-participant's awareness of addressing the teaching issues and helps identify the core reason behind these issues, which motivates the researcher-participant to enact the teaching change and also provides the direction for the teaching change. This study provides practical implications for the encouragement of student-centered method in the teacher education of English language teaching.

Keywords

reflection, English Language teaching, teaching strategy change, teacher-centered method, student-centered method

1. Introduction

Reflection on teaching is believed to promote teachers' development, and it has become a dominant paradigm in teacher education (Yalcin Arslan, 2019). The concept of reflection is interpreted under

different frameworks, with its wide and diverse use in different literature (Kember et al., 2008). In professional practice, Schon (1983) defines reflection as a practice through which practitioners can grow their awareness of implicit knowledge and learn from their own experience, which influences the view of reflection in professional education. In teacher education, reflection is viewed as the practice that teachers subject their teaching to a critical analysis (Korthagen, 1993). In ELT teacher education, Anderson (2020) synthesizes the views on reflection in the teacher education literature and defines reflection as: the “conscious, experientially informed thought” which at times involves “aspects of evaluation, criticality, and problem-solving” and leads “to insight, increased awareness, and/or new understanding” (p. 1). This study adopts Anderson's definition of reflection, given the same context of ELT teacher education.

Teachers engaging in reflection are believed to be able to gain new insights into their teaching (Farrell, 2015), and reflection is widely encouraged in ELT teacher education programs (Anderson, 2020). As one of the prominent ways of reflection, written reflection is also widely promoted (Abednia et al., 2013). However, the relationship between reflection and improved teaching is largely unclear.

This study investigates the reflection in English Language Teaching (ELT) teacher education. This study focuses on written reflection and its relation to one aspect of the teaching practice change--teaching strategy change. It adopts a self-study lens to examine the researcher-participant's written reflections produced in the two microteaching (MT) sessions (within each MT session, the researcher planned and taught a five-minute lesson that focused on one specific linguistic skill) for an ELT practicum course at a Canadian university, to investigate the role of written reflections in the self-perceived teaching strategy change across the two MT instances.

1.1 Theoretical Background

1.1.1 Reflection and Learning from Experience

Reflection, the “conscious, experimentally informed thought” (Anderson, 2020, p. 1), is believed to be necessary for learning from experience which occurs when people make new meanings from experience (Pereira et al., 2016)-- the new connections that people perceive between what they do to things and what they feel from the things in consequence (Dewey, 1916). Given this view, reflection on practical experience, which involves being analytical about one's professional experiences, has become an important tenet in professional learning (Schon, 1983). Reflection is recognized in driving conscious, self-monitored actions of practitioners, and empowers practitioners to successfully respond to the demands from the ever-changing practical world (Pereira et al., 2016). In teacher education, the reflection processes are mainly identified as: introspection (meaning making about teachers' themselves from their practical experiences), thinking in practice (meaning making that responds to immediate teaching actions), thinking about practice (meaning making that responds to distanced teaching actions: past and future teaching actions) and inquiry (meaning making by referring to relevant theoretical research) (Garcia, 1992).

1.2 Language and Writing in Learning from Experience

Given that language can be deliberately shaped to achieve certain outcomes (Pare, 2009), language is able to mediate learning from experience. People start their learning through interaction: they use language to converse with others and internalize the conversation into their thought (Bruffee, 1986), and with time, they automatically enact such internalized conversations for their own problem solving. It indicates that language is the vehicle for people's learning from experience (Pereira et al., 2016).

Based on this role of language in learning from experience, writing, which makes people's thinking and language tangible, provides a way for learners' self-monitoring. Constructing a text from one's lived experience involves the construction of a verbal representation of the experience, and such construction makes people's thinking objectified, analyzable and also sharable (Pereira et al., 2016). Besides expressing what they know, people can uncover unknown thoughts in this process of constructing the verbal representation of the experience (Eisner, 2005). Van Manen (1989) even views writing as a method for any research that intends to gain personal insights from one's lived experience.

1.3 Narrative, Reflective Writing in Teacher Education

Writing in learning from experience has attracted interests from teacher education, given the belief that writing may also enhance teachers' learning from their practical experience (e.g., Darling, 2001). Narrative writing is mostly used for teachers to make meanings from their experiences. Rosen (1985) argues that narrative is a strategy of making meanings. Narrative writing of one's stories can present what is unique in one's learning experience, by representing the complexity of one's response to their specific situation. In teacher education, writing about one's experience is done with a pedagogical intent of enhancing one's experience as a teacher. Such narrative and reflective writing can help extend the minds of the teachers who go through this process of meaning making themselves (Pereira et al., 2016). Therefore, written reflection is believed to be able to enhance teachers' critical thinking, refine their practical teaching knowledge (Lee, 2007) and help them revisit their teacher identities (Farrell, 2004).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Reflection and Improved Teaching

British Council (2015) states in its continuing professional development framework for teachers that reflection is one of the appropriate professional development practices that teachers need to be aware of and also engage in to inform their classroom practices. However, the relationship between reflection and improved teaching is still largely unclear.

Some researchers try to imply the reflection's effectiveness for improved teaching. Farrell (2015) reports positive effects of reflections on raising teachers' critical awareness of their practices, and further suggests that such increasing awareness may lead to the teachers' improved teaching practice. Moradkhani, Raygan and Moein (2017) investigate the relationship between teachers' reflection and the factor that is believed to be closely related to improved teaching, self-efficacy--"the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments"

(Bandura, 1997, p. 3). They find that meta-cognitive reflection, which focuses on teaching beliefs, critical evaluation on teaching performance and interpretation of teachers' behaviors, can predict the change of teachers' self-efficacy.

However, most studies report the reflection's effectiveness as unclear. Borg (2011) argues that reflection has demonstrated positive effects on language teachers' knowledge and attitude, but little evidence is shown of its effectiveness in improved teaching. Yesilbursa (2011) also comments that even if teachers reflect in the ways that are conducive to professional growth, it does not imply they will change their teaching. Akbari (2007) directly states that the positive role of reflection is largely speculative, and there is no evidence of a causal relationship between reflection and improved teaching. Akbari further adds that few studies directly examine the relationship between reflection and improved teaching, and one possible reason is the lacking of baseline for defining a good teaching performance (Farrell, 2015).

2.2 Reflection and Teacher Change

Teacher change, which can be interpreted from various perspectives, such as changes of teaching beliefs, instruction methods and course content (Fullan, 1991), is promoted as the main goal of teacher education and is related to improved teaching (Griffin, 1983). Two studies try to identify the relationship between reflection and teacher change. In a case study of an English language teacher's self-initiated teaching change, Li (2019) argues that reflection is the catalyst of reaching change, which underpins the mental and strategic change in teaching, connects teacher's understanding of socio-cultural issues and collects the teacher's knowledge and wisdom to teach appropriately. Another study on the teaching change in the context of educational reform also acknowledges the connection role of teachers' reflection--connecting various factors that may contribute to teaching change (Cheung & Wong, 2017). However, the role of reflection in teacher change is still under-researched.

This study focuses on the relationship between reflection and teaching practice change (one dimension of teacher change). It specifically addresses the change of the teaching strategy use, or in other words, the change of instructional methods used. Instructional methods can be divided into teacher-centered method, student-centered method and a mix of both methods (Arends, 2007). Teacher-centered method refers to the method that places teacher at the center of instruction and classroom activities (Ahmad & Aziz, 2009) and mainly focuses on knowledge transmission (Brown, 2003), while student-centered method is the method that centers on students' learning characteristics (Brown, 2003) and actively engages students in the learning process (Ubulom & Ogwunte, 2017). Teacher-centered method involves teachers' careful curriculum planning and purposeful instructional procedure, with students' limited participation (Ubulom & Ogwunte, 2017). Student-centered method involves student-led discussions and explorations with teacher's facilitation and limited interjection (only when necessary) (Ahmad & Aziz, 2009). Teacher-centered method sees teacher as the authority that controls information presenting; student-centered method views teacher as the facilitator who creates a learning environment and supports students in their learning process (Brown, 2003).

In this study, the investigation of the teaching strategy change focuses on the change of instructional

methods from teacher-centered to student-centered methods.

2.3 Setting the Stage: Researcher-participant and Context

The participant is the researcher myself. I am a speaker of English as an additional language who previously taught English as Foreign Language (EFL) to university students in a cultural and educational context which is dominated by teacher-centered method--which was also adopted for my teaching. After leaving the previous teaching position, I came to Canada to pursue an advanced degree in Applied linguistics for professional development. During my study, I registered in an ELT practicum course.

This course was taught in two semesters. It introduced and explored the methodology of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). One of the major teaching methodologies that had been heavily explored was Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT)--which aims to engage classroom students into the authentic use of the target language by designing and using tasks (Willis & Willis, 2007). The course included four MT sessions with two sessions assigned for each semester, and each student was required to plan and teach four 5-minute lessons on different skills respectively: MT1 on a non-linguistic skill, MT2 on a linguistic skill in a language other than English, MT3 on a receptive skill in English and MT4 on a productive skill in English. The researcher's peers in class played the role of students. Each MT session required lesson planning, the 5-minute on-site teaching (which was self-video-recorded) followed by peer-students' oral and written feedback and the instructor's written feedback, and a written reflection which was submitted within one week after the on-site teaching. The written reflection was advised to focus on the whole MT session, including *things that worked well and not well, unexpected issues, comparison between lesson planning and actual delivery, peer feedback and things to do differently in future teaching*. Lastly, the instructor provided the feedback and grade on the overall MT session.

About two months after MT2, I perceived a self-initiated change in the language teaching strategy use in MT3. This study is exploring this change and investigates the written reflection's effect to it. The research questions (RQ) are:

RQ1. Does the language teaching strategy change across the two MT lessons?

RQ2. If so, what role does a written reflection play in this change?

3. Method

3.1 Data Sources

The study analyzes the previously-collected data from MT2 and MT3: two video-recorded lessons taught by the researcher-participant, peer and instructor written feedback on the teaching performance of MT2 and MT3, instructor final written feedback on the two MT sessions and the researcher-participant's two written reflections. The study has received ethics clearance (recruitment material in an independent file).

3.2 Data Analysis

The study uses qualitative thematic coding (Saldaña, 2009) to code and analyze the discussion of the teaching strategy use in the written reflections, and adopts the multimodal interaction approach (Norris, 2004) to code and analyze the instances of teaching strategy use in the video-recording teaching.

All the written data for MT2, including peer and instructor written feedback, instructor final feedback and written reflection, was first coded to identify how peer and instructor feedback was addressed in the reflection. Then the video-recorded lesson for MT2 was coded mainly using the researcher-participant's higher-level action--the action developed from the chains of an individual's fluidly-performed actions in interaction and has a distinct opening and closing (Norris, 2004), such as asking a question and eliciting responses--as the unit of analysis to specify the language teaching strategy use. The study further conducted concurrent and recurrent analysis of the codes of all the written and video data of MT2, to identify a common theme to triangulate the findings regarding the teaching strategy used in MT2. The same coding procedure repeated for MT3.

The codes of MT2 and MT3 data were then compared to ascertain the possible teaching strategy changes to answer RQ1. MT2 written reflection codes were further compared with all the MT3 codes to explore the possible factors in MT2 reflection which might be related to the MT3 teaching strategy use, to explore the role of written reflection to answer RQ2.

4. Findings and Discussions

For RQ1: Does language teaching strategy change across the two MT sessions?

The data analysis indicates that the teaching strategy use has changed across MT2 and MT3. The comparison of MT2 and MT3 codes yields a common theme *class control*--which is differently presented in the two MT sessions respectively.

1. MT2:

The theme of *class control* is presented as *maintaining class control*, as demonstrated by the two sub-categories identified in both the written reflection and video-recorded lesson: *Teacher (also the participant) controlling input* and *Teacher controlling output*. Overall, the teaching strategy used can be identified as teacher-centered method, based on what is identified in both written and video data: teacher's authority over information presentation with students' limited participation (Brown, 2003).

MT2's purpose is to make students comprehend and orally produce the two Chinese phrases: *qing jin* (please come in) and *qing zuo* (please sit down), and the activities were planned and conducted in the sequence of comprehending, pronouncing and orally producing the two phrases.

The teacher is demonstrated as the authority over the information presenting throughout MT2. All the activities are designed and delivered in the teacher-led way overall. The following excerpt from the MT2 written reflection demonstrates that the participant solely designs and conducts all purposeful instructional procedures throughout MT2.

...I start with eliciting their understanding by situating the phrases in a scenario, and repeatedly checked their understanding of the meanings in the sequential stages of my lesson plan and actual instruction.

The participant's repeated checking of the target phrases' meanings throughout the teaching demonstrates the teacher's control over the students' understandings of the learning targets to ensure the smooth delivery of planned activities. Such control results in the occurrence of repeated teaching sequences in the activities. For example, in the vocabulary learning activity (in Table 1), the repetition of teaching sequence: *Enacting activity--Silence--Repeating one phrase--Silence--Asking a question--Silence--S1 responding--Providing feedback*, can be identified from the resemblance between the codes from Line 14 to 21 and the codes from Line 22 to 27.

Table 1. Coding Table of Vocabulary Learning Activity in MT2 Video Data

Line No.	STeacher/Students	Codes (Higher-level Actions)	Duration (seconds)
14	STeacher	Enacting activity	15.6
15	STeacher	Silence	1.0
16	STeacher	Repeating one phrase	3.1
17	STeacher	Silence	0.7
18	STeacher	Asking a question	0.9
19	STeacher	Silence	0.4
20	Students	S1 responding	1.5
21	STeacher	Providing feedback	2.4
22	STeacher	Enacting activity	4.8
23	STeacher	Silence	0.4
24	STeacher	Repeating the other phrase	3.9
25	STeacher	Silence	1.3
26	Students	S2 responding	1.1
27	STeacher	Providing feedback	1.5
28	STeacher	Finishing the activity	4.5

*Notes: STeacher: the participant; Students: the participant's peer students; S1,S2: name codes of peer students

The same goes with the activity of pronunciation practice for target phrases, with the repeated teaching sequence occurring in the codes from line 39 to 43 and the codes from line 44 to 48 in the video data (Table 2).

Table 2. Codes of Pronunciation Practice Activity in MT2 Video Data

Line No.	STeacher/Students	Codes (Higher-level Actions)	Duration (seconds)
39	STeacher	Asking students to read along	2.7
40	STeacher	Reading out as model	1.5
41	STeacher	Silence	0.6
42	Students	Students reading along chorally	1.6
43	STeacher	Providing feedback	0.5
44	STeacher	Asking to read again	0.5
45	STeacher	Reading out as model	1.4
46	STeacher	Silence	1.2
47	Students	Students reading along chorally	1.6
48	STeacher	Providing feedback and asking to read another phrase	2.2

Under such controlled activity framework, students have limited roles to play in participation. In both Table 1 and Table 2, it can be seen that student engagement is solely conducted between the participant and students, without any interaction among peer students. Student participation only serves to fit in one of the teacher-led careful designed instructional procedures. In other words, student participation is minimal and can only be allowed with the teacher's authorization.

2. MT3:

The theme of *class control* is presented as *relinquishing class control* in MT3, as demonstrated by the two sub-categories identified in both written and video data: *Adopting student-centered approach* and *Maintaining student-centered approach*. Overall, the teaching strategy used can be identified as student-centered instruction, based on what is identified in both written and video data: teacher behaves as the facilitator who creates the environment that supports students' active learning (Brown, 2003).

MT3 is to ask higher-beginner students of English as a Second Language (ESL) to do a reading comprehension on an article on food waste. It starts with the word-definition matching with the key vocabulary in the article, follows with a reading comprehension and then listening comprehension on the article.

Teacher (the participant) facilitates student engagement to create an active learning environment. All the activities are designed and delivered in a student-led way overall, as demonstrated by the following excerpts from the MT3 written reflection.

...the lesson is deliberately designed and delivered in a student-centered and task-based manner...

Back in lesson plan, I decided to complete a mini task with the pre-task of vocabulary building, the target task of jigsaw reading and listening comprehension.

Teacher's relinquishing control in activity design can be demonstrated by the recurrent word *task* appeared in the excerpt above. *Task* is a type of activity used in TBLT that the participant has learned

from the ELT practicum course, and TBLT is believed to be in line with the education philosophy of student-centered method (Ellis, 2003). Relinquishing control on activity not only avoids the repeated teaching sequences (which appeared in MT2), but also allows space for the creation of an active learning environment. From the recurrent code *Stepping aside to allow students to engage* in the video data (Table 3), the participant shows the sign of allowing students to engage in a discussion with their peers to co-construct their learning environment.

Table 3. Codes of *Stepping Aside to Allow Students to Engage* in MT3 Video Data

Sequence No.	STeacher/Students	Codes (Higher-level Actions)	Duration (seconds)
9	STeacher	Stepping aside to allow students to engage	11.8
40	STeacher	Stepping aside to allow students to engage	2.6
48	STeacher	Stepping aside to allow students to engage	35.1

Compared to the students who play limited roles in MT2, the students in MT3 show active participation. It is not only demonstrated in their engagement in group work, but also in their active question asking (Table 4). In the reading comprehension activity, the codes of line 41 to 45 present the process that S4 (name code of a participant's peer student) takes the initiative to ask questions.

Table 4. Codes of Reading Comprehension Activity in MT3 Video Data

Sequence No.	STeacher/Students	Codes (Higher-level Actions)	Duration (seconds)
36	STeacher	Giving specific readings to each group	10.2
37	STeacher	Giving instructions on activity	24.3
38	STeacher	Encouraging group work	2.3
39	STeacher	Checking the time left for activity	5.4
40	STeacher	Stepping aside to allow students to engage	2.6
41	Students	S4 asking a question	2.4
42	STeacher	Clarifying the activity	6.2
43	STeacher	Checking the time left for activity	5.9
44	Students	S4 asking a question	2.3
45	STeacher	Clarifying the activity	4.5
46	STeacher	Silence	2.7
47	STeacher	Encouraging to seek external support	5.6
48	STeacher	Stepping aside to allow students to engage	35.1
49	STeacher	Ending the activity	3.7

*Note: S4: name code of a peer student

Student's active participation can be contributed to the active learning environment that the participant facilitates. A re-examination of the codes in Table 4 question can also reveal the participant's facilitation. Besides stepping aside to allow students to engage, the participant also states the support available for students (Code 38 and 47) and only intervenes when students ask for support (Code 42 and 45), instead of assuming students' needs and repeatedly checking students' understanding in MT2. It further provides the evidence that teacher relinquishes class control and facilitates the environment that allows students to take the lead of their learning.

3. Comparison of vocabulary learning between MT2 and MT3

To further explain the change across MT2 and MT3, a comparison of vocabulary learning activity is conducted to better demonstrate how the common theme *class control* is differently presented in the two MT sessions.

In MT2, comprehending the vocabulary meaning is situated in a scenario solely controlled by teacher. The participant first states that a scenario involving the use of target phrases will be set and students are asked to guess the phrase meanings. The scenario is solely constructed through the participant's oral description, as shown from the code *Enacting activity* (Table 1)--which represents the scenario construction.

In the process of students' comprehending the vocabulary, scaffolding--"a kind of process that enables a novice to carry out a task that would be beyond his (her) unassisted efforts" (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, pp. 89-100)--is solely controlled by the participant. It can be seen from the participant's efforts of using speech and gesture to indicate the phrase meaning. For example, when teaching the phrase *qing jin* (please come in), the participant makes a gesture that signals the invitation of coming in and makes a repeated oral production of *qing jin*, to help students comprehend the vocabulary used in the scenario. On the other hand, comprehending the vocabulary meaning in MT3 is situated in a scenario co-constructed by students' conversation that teacher facilitates. Unlike in MT2, the participant in MT3 only provides partial information on the target vocabulary, and students need to converse with their peers to comprehend the vocabulary, as shown in the following excerpt from the MT3 written reflection.

...I'd like you to have a little word game. So please all stand up, stand up....I give you two slips, one slip with word, and one slip with definition. But word and definition, they don't match. You need to talk to each other and find the definition for your word.

The participant starts by asking students to change their posture from *sitting* to *standing* to invite participation. Students are then asked to explore the vocabulary meaning through a conversation with their peers, while the participant steps aside and allows the natural activity flow (Table 5). It indicates that teacher relinquishes the control over the scenario construction, and engages students to co-construct a conversation scenario in which students communicate to explore the vocabulary.

Table 5. Codes of Vocabulary Learning Activity in MT3 Video Data

Sequence No.	STeacher/Students	Codes (Higher-level Actions)	Duration (seconds)
8	STeacher	Restating the instructions	10.1
9	STeacher	Stepping aside to allow students to engage	11.8
10	STeacher	Confirming activity completion	2.7

To sum up, the participant has changed from the teacher-centered method in MT2 to the student-centered method in MT3, as demonstrated by the shift from maintaining control and allowing limited student participation to relinquishing control and inviting students' participation. The comparison of vocabulary learning shows a shift from dominance in the scenario construction to facilitation of the scenario co-construction, which further exemplifies the shift of class control.

For RQ2: If so, what role does written reflection play in this change?

Firstly, correlation between written reflection and teaching strategy change can be ascertained from a common theme *class control* for both MT2 written reflection and MT3 video, as demonstrated by the categories *maintaining class control* and *attempts to relinquish class control* in MT2 written reflection data and the category *relinquishing class control* in MT3 video data.

Further comparison between the categories of MT2 written reflection and MT3 data reveals the roles that written reflection plays in the teaching strategy change.

1. Written reflection makes the teacher realize the importance of relinquishing control, which motivates the enactment of the teaching change.

The written reflection on the teacher-centered instruction in MT2 makes the participant realize the pressing need of addressing the issue of maintaining control. The issue emerges from the two output activities in MT2: *controlled oral production* and *pronunciation practice*. These activities were designed as highly controlled, given the participant's disbelief in the students' language abilities. As the MT2 written reflection states:

The choice of production activities for beginners seemed limited.

The former activity elicited production, but the conversation was highly controlled, and learners' productions were limited to the two phrases.

The excerpts above also show that the participant is aware of the issue of limited student production as a result of the controlled activity. The following excerpt further reveals that the participant initially thought about designing a student-centered activity to address the issue. However, the participant's fear of taking the challenge is triggered and the student-centered approach is forfeited.

...I was striving to design a student-centered activity...but I was afraid that could be challenging and dropped the plan.

The reflection on *controlled oral production* indicates the participant's acknowledgement of the issue of maintaining control, and the initial attempt to address the issue. It also shows that student-centered

approach initially occurred to the participant as a possible solution, but was then abandoned.

For the pronunciation practice, the same issue of maintaining control appears again. The peer and instructor feedback unanimously points to the weakness of MT2 teaching: few chances for student production. The participant acknowledges the weakness, but still reiterates the struggle of addressing the issue, as is shown in the MT2 written reflection.

It turned out to be insufficient, based on my peers' and instructor's feedback that request more pronunciation practice, with which I agree.... could not come up with any activity.

Despite the response similar to the one to the previous output activity, acknowledging the issue but struggling with a solution, what follows after the reflection on pronunciation practice is:

From this microteaching experience, I have sensed what has hindered me to try student-centered activities...

It indicates that the participant looks at the issue of managing control again, instead of giving up on it. The resolution of adopting student-centered activities is shown in the words “*embracing student-oriented activities*” and “*try more student-centered activities*” at the end of the reflection. Reflection on the two output activities may have repeatedly raised the issue of maintaining control, which makes the participant feel the pressing need of addressing it. Therefore, the participant continues to address the issue and eventually decides to try student-centered activities.

The participant's increasing awareness of the issue facilitates the transition to the use of student-centered instruction in MT3. The following speech content of MT3 video describes the enactment of a student-centered activity:

...you two form one group, Group A. And you two form another group, Group B....I am gonna give Group A a Reading A, and Group B, a Reading B. What I want you to do is to answer the questions based on the reading...And you can do it together.

The excerpt above presents *grouping*, *giving different learning tasks* and *encouraging teamwork*, which signal that the control over learning is delegated to each group from the participant. The participant's encouragement of teamwork sets the tone for the learning in each group: collaboration that allows group members to share the control over learning. Therefore, it can be implied that the control has been relinquished by the teacher, which makes this reading comprehension activity student-centered.

To sum up, written reflection contributes to the teacher's increasing awareness of relinquishing control, which motivates the enactment of teaching change.

2. The written reflection identifies the core issue to tackle for relinquishing control, which provides a direction of teaching change.

As previously stated in the written reflection, the participant feels the increasing need of relinquishing control and continues to address the issue.

From this microteaching experience, I have sensed what has hindered me to try student-centered activities: the fear of losing control. As an instructor used to teacher-dominant instruction, I have grown the desire of micromanaging the class. Allowing students to take charge makes me feel

insecure.

The excerpt above demonstrates that the participant looks at the issue from a different perspective: Instead of struggling to find pedagogical solutions, the participant starts to reflect on the thought that there will be issues when student-centered activities are adopted. It appears that the core issue behind the struggle is the participant's fear of losing control. The participant is accustomed to teacher-centered method which allows for the control of class. Maintaining control brings the participant a sense of security, and relinquishing control, on the other hand, brings the sense of insecurity. The issue of the fear of losing control is also echoed by the course instructor in the written feedback.

...that might be the most common transition that teachers go through when trying out a student-centered approach.

With the identified issue, the direction of solution shifts to addressing the core issue. The participant mentions *resolve the mental fear* together with *embrace student-oriented activities* and *try more student-centered activities* in the last part of reflection in MT2, which indicates the direction of relinquishing control has been confirmed: resolving the mental fear. This direction is well demonstrated in MT3 teaching, as the following excerpt shows in MT3 written reflection:

...the lesson is deliberately designed and delivered in a student-centered and task-based manner, in order to address my fear of losing control (which was mentioned in MT 2 reflection).

All the activities in MT3 are designed as student-centered to help address the mental fear. In other words, the main goal of MT3 teaching was to address the fear, and the way to achieve the goal is adopting student-centered method.

The direction of addressing the mental fear even enacts a noticeable participant's act: maintaining student-centered approach when unexpected issues occur. One activity was designed to ask students to read out their group reading to the members from another group who have not read the reading, and the students listening to the reading then were expected to complete listening comprehension questions. However, during MT3 teaching, the participant noticed the time left did not allow for an in-class delivery of this activity. The in-class activity was then turned into an assignment. The following excerpt from the speech content of the MT3 video describes the adjusted activity:

...I want you to record this after class... Record this. Reading it, and record it, and send it to one member of the other group. For example, S5 (name code for a peer student), record Reading A and send it to S3 (name code for another peer student). S3, listen to that and answer the other two questions...

Despite that the activity has been changed from in-class delivery to after-class assignment, the gist of *communication for information* remains, which still makes the activity student-centered. It indicates that the participant does not forfeit being student-centered. Such adherence to being student-centered in an improvised activity adjustment may have compromised the activity quality. It can be said that the participant is taking a risk.

The adherence to being student-centered could be largely related to the participant's view on adopting

student-centered method in MT3. As previously mentioned, adopting student-centered method is a way to achieve the goal of addressing the mental fear, and by teaching in a student-centered way, the participant can experience the loss of control. In this spirit, it is the act of adopting the student-centered instruction that matters: either a good or a poor student-centered teaching performance allows the experiencing of losing control. Such view may encourage the participant's active trials of student-centered method and the adherence to being student-centered. It indicates that addressing the core issue provides a direction for the adoption of student-centered method.

To sum up, the written reflection in MT2 identifies the core issue of relinquishing control, which provides new insights of adopting student-centered method and thus provides a direction of the teaching change.

5. Implication and Limitation

The change from teacher-centered to student-centered method across the MT sessions might not indicate a real teaching strategy change of the participant for real world teaching. Microteaching in teacher education programs can create an environment that makes teachers feel safe to experiment with new practices (Piwowar et al., 2013), which could invite the occurrence of teaching change. The environment of real world teaching may not provide such sense of security to teachers. However, Girardet (2018) argues that teachers might feel safe to experiment new teaching methods in their own classrooms. Further research needs to be conducted to test this.

Despite the identified roles of written reflection in the teaching change from teacher-centered to student-centered method, written reflection is not the sole cause of this change. In a review of studies on teachers' change in classroom management, Girardet (2018) identifies multiple factors that may facilitate a teaching change, including studying new practices, reflection on prior teaching beliefs and reflecting on teaching practice. In this study, the knowledge of designing student-centered activities might have been acquired by the participant so that the resolution of being student-centered can be realized. It can be implied from the fact that the use of some student-centered activities has been introduced and practiced in the instruction of TBLT which is heavily relied on in the ELT practicum course.

The main limitation of this study is its small and limited scale. Since it is a case study on one person in one teaching strategy change, the result cannot be generalized. Also the limited data does not allow an in-depth exploration of the participant's thoughts beyond the teaching strategy use in the MT sessions, such as the reflection on prior teaching beliefs and attitudes to the two teaching methods--which may help further interpret the written reflections.

6. Conclusion

This study explores the researcher-participant's self-perceived change of teaching strategy use across the two MT sessions in an ELT practicum course. The comparison of all the written and video data

across the two MT instances has confirmed the participant's teaching strategy change from teacher-centered to student-method method. Written reflection has also been found to be correlated with the teaching strategy change. It increases the participant's awareness of the issue of teacher-centered method and motivates the enactment of teaching change, and it also helps identify the core issue behind the struggle of adopting student-centered method and provides the direction of teaching change.

Addressing the core issue--fear of losing control, may provide an important implication for the adoption of student-centered method in ELT teacher education. It would be important for teacher educators to look beyond the teachers' reluctance of being student-centered and to identify the core issue behind it. Also, there could be different core issues behind the different teachers' struggle of being student-centered, which is worth further investigation for future studies.

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