Investigating Self-Assessment of Teaching Profession of Iraqi EFL Teachers

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Abstract:

Self-assessment is a process of formative assessment during which teachers reflect on and evaluate the quality of their work, decide the degree to which they reflect explicitly stated goals or criteria, identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and revise accordingly. The present study is an attempt to find out the SA of Iraqi English language teachers. The sample consists of 100 teachers in Baghdad. An inventory of many domains distributed to the teachers, they are, routines, expectations, language, time, opportunities, physical environment, and interactions. The results show that the EFL teachers practice four domains of SA they are: routines, physical environment, time, and language.

Keywords: Self-Assessment, EFL teachers, self-efficacy

1- Introduction:

Self-assessment henceforth (SA) can raise levels of achievement and can affect the motivation of teacher and self-efficacy in positive ways (Harlan, 2007: 21). Gregory, Cameron and Davies (2011:3) define SA as a sequence of skills in a teacher's ability to 'reflect on the quality of their work, judge the degree to which it reflects explicitly stated goals or criteria, and revise accordingly'.

SA is tied particularly to assessment for learning, or assessment for formative purposes. SA (and peer assessment) is identified as one of the four main assessment practices for formative purposes or assessment for learning along with questioning, feedback and sharing criteria with the learner (Clarke, 2005: 33).

Green and Johnson (2010: 11) state that SA 'teaches objectivity – being able to get beyond your own point of view and look at yourself in relation to a standard. It also teaches empowerment – if you eventually understand the standard yourself, you are not as dependent on an authority to make judgments about your own work'.

Tan (2007:121) describes three ways that SA practices are related to life-long learning: individuals developing critical skills (in particular, skills to conduct and evaluate his or her own learning); individuals developing self-directed learning (meaning the ability to plan and direct his or her own learning); and, developing individual responsibility for learning.

Earl and Katz (2006: 16) also outline the teacher's role, in relation to SA, in promoting the development of such independent learners. Being able to:

- Model and teach the skills of SA;
- Guide students in setting goals, and monitoring their progress toward them;
- Provide exemplars and models of good practice and quality work that reflect curriculum outcomes;
- Work with students to develop clear criteria of good practice;
- Guide students in developing internal feedback or self-monitoring;
- Provide mechanisms to validate and question their own thinking, and to become comfortable with the ambiguity and uncertainty that is inevitable in learning anything new;
- Provide regular and challenging opportunities to practice, so that students can become confident, competent self-assessors;
- Monitor students' metacognitive processes as well as their learning, and provide descriptive feedback; and,
- Create an environment where it is safe for students to take chances and where support is readily available.

So, the present study is an attempt to investigating teachers SA towards the teaching and raise the awareness of practicing such thinking, also it provides opportunities for influence.

We apply the theory to change in ELT teaching and report an explanatory case study in which use of the SA tool, in combination with other elements, contributed to change in a secondary schools teacher.

2- Theoretical Framework
2-1 Theory of Individual Teacher Change

SA contribute to teachers' beliefs about their ability to bring about student learning; i.e., teacher efficacy, a form of professional self-efficacy. Teacher efficacy is particularized to teaching specific content, to particular students, in specific instructional contexts. Teacher efficacy is an expectancy about future performance that is based on past experience. Teachers who perceive they have been successful, regardless of the accuracy of their judgment, expect to be successful in the future. Of the four sources of teacher efficacy information identified by Bandura (1997: 41), the most powerful is mastery experience being successful in the classroom. Teachers become confident about their future performance when they believe that through their own actions they have helped students learn.

Teacher efficacy influences goal setting and effort expenditure. Teachers who anticipate that they will be successful set higher goals for themselves and their students. Teacher efficacy consistently predicts willingness to try out new teaching ideas, particularly techniques that are

Teacher SA difficult to implement and involve risks such as sharing control with students. High expectations of success motivate classroom experimentation because teachers anticipate they will be able to achieve the benefits of innovation and overcome obstacles that might arise (Ross, 1992:56).

Teachers with high expectations about their ability to teach produce higher student achievement (Ross & Cousins, 1993: 205). Teacher efficacy also influences effort. Teachers with high efficacy have fewer absences, are more willing to handle difficult to teach students themselves rather than refer them to special classes, and are less likely to leave the profession. Confident teachers persist. They are not depressed by failure but respond to setbacks with renewed effort (Bandura, 1997: 54).

Goal setting and effort expenditure are linked: For example, individuals are more likely to persist if they adopt goals that have unambiguous outcomes, that are achievable in the near future, and that are moderately difficult to achieve (Schunk, 1981: 98).

The combination of goals and effort affect teacher practice defined as the assembly of teacher actions (e.g., choice of curriculum objectives, teaching methods, assessment) and knowledge (e.g., of subjects, learners, pedagogy, and policy). Teachers willing to try new instructional ideas and persist through obstacles are more likely to implement new approaches, experience success with them, and internalize the innovations into their practice. There may also be benefits for professional learning. Research with children suggests that positive self-evaluations foster an upward cycle of learning in which the child sets higher goals and commits more personal resources to learning tasks. Negative self-evaluations lead students to adopt social rather than academic self-images, embrace goal orientations that conflict with learning, select personal goals that are unrealistic, adopt learning strategies which are ineffective, exert low effort, and make excuses for performance (Stipek, Recchia, & McClintic, 1992: 57).

SA is an individual enterprise, can be informed by colleagues. Peer input can influence the first SA process (self-observation) by directing teacher attention to particular dimensions of practice. Peer feedback might influence teacher judgments about the degree of their goal attainment (the second process). The influence is likely to be stronger if colleagues interpret student outcomes and teacher practices in terms of overt standards. Peers might influence teacher satisfaction with the outcomes of their instruction (the third process), if colleagues give praise explicitly linked to the quality of the teacher's performance. Peer feedback is weighed against the observations, judgments and reactions the teacher generates during (i.e., reflection-in-action) and after (i.e., reflection-on-action) the lesson (Cameron & Pierce, 1994: 371).

Peer input may complement or compete with these self-responses depending upon the teacher's perceptions of the credibility of their colleagues. These opportunities for peer influences on teacher SA that contribute to self-efficacy involve recognizing teaching success (mastery experiences). Peers also have opportunities to influence teacher efficacy through the other three sources of efficacy information proposed by Bandura (1997): social persuasion (telling colleagues they are capable of performing a task), vicarious experience (highlighting the successful performance of someone similar to the teacher), and managing physiological and emotional states (strengthening positive feelings arising from teaching and interpreting them as indicative of teaching ability or reducing negative feelings arising from teaching, such as stress).

Peers can also influence teacher practice by suggesting specific strategies and by working together to implement them. Collaboration among teachers promotes teacher efficacy, especially when it leads to instructional coordination within a school (Raudenbush, Rowan, & Cheong, 1992: 157).

When teachers reinforce each other, beliefs about competence are magnified. Collective teacher efficacy is "the perceptions of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (Goddard, and Hoy 2000: 480). Schools with high collective teacher efficacy have higher student achievement than schools with lower levels of collective teacher efficacy, independent of student socio-economic status. Peers exert a powerful influence on the collective teacher efficacy of a school.

In summary, the individual process of teacher change can be influenced by teachers' peers. The avenues for influence are embedded in the SA process and in other mechanisms identified in social cognition theory such as persuasion and vicarious experience. But these avenues need to be developed through professional community development activities such as peer coaching.

2-2 Influence of External Change Agents on Teacher Change
External change agents, for example, university researchers, can influence teacher SA through the same mechanisms potentially available to peers. Although lack of immediacy, presence, and shared values diminishes the influence of external agents, university based change agents can contribute to teacher SA by clarifying goals (i.e., dimensions of teaching that define excellence) and criteria (levels of performance that constitute a hierarchy of professional growth). They can also provide credible feedback on whether particular standards of teaching have been achieved (e.g., through classroom observation).

3- Study Objectives

The present study aims at:

1- investigating SA of Iraqi teachers towards teaching profession. .

4- Research Design

The subjects of the present study include 100 English teachers at Baghdad Al-Rusafa 3rd The present study selects a randomly samples to meet the purpose of the present research. The sample represents 60% of the population of teachers in Al-Rusafa 3rd, which is 172 teachers.

The type of inventory used in the present study is restricted or closed form which calls for ticking. The present inventory items have been constructed depending on Brooks & Ritchhart (2012). The final form of the inventory consists of the following domains: expectation, language, modeling, time, opportunities, routines, and physical environment, with 5 items each.

5- Results and Discussion

In order to identify the domains used by EFL teachers, table 1 shows the detailed results of each domain of the inventory in respect to their weighted mean, weighted percentile, the standard deviation and rank order of each domain as well.

Table 1
Weighted Mean, Weighted Percentile, Standard Deviation and Ranking of the Domains of the Inventory

Strategy	WM	WP	SD	Rank Order
Routines	3.64	67.02	1.76	1
Physical Environment	3.24	61.12	1.74	2
Time	3.01	59.56	1.46	3
Language	2.86	51.72	1.49	4
Modelling	2.41	48.59	1.56	5
Opportunities	2.34	46.41	1.23	6
Expectation	2.23	41.74	1.12	7

It is clear that the following domains that employed by the sample since their waited means and weighted percentiles are as follows:

Routines gets 3.64 weighted mean and 67.02 weighted percentile. Physical Environment gets 3.24 weighted mean and 61.12 weighted percentile. Time gets 3.01 weighted mean and 59.56 weighted percentile. Language gets 2.86 weighted mean and 51.72 weighted percentile.

While the following domains are not employed by teachers, they are: Modeling gets 2.41 weighted mean and 48.59 weighted percentile. Opportunities gets 2.34 weighted mean and 46.41 weighted percentile. Finally, expectation gets 2.23 weighted mean and 41.74 weighted percentile.

To sum up, the EFL teachers practice 4 domains of SA they are: routines, physical environment, time, and language.

Table 2 shows that five items of the inventory are related to the routines. Item 1 gets the highest weighted mean which is 4.32 with a weighted percentile of 86.51. The second item gets a weighted mean of 3.89 and a weighted percentile of 77.90. The third item gets a weighted mean of 3.88, and a weighted percentile of 77.67. The fourth item gets a weighted mean of 3.58, and a weighted percentile of 71.62. The fifth and last item gets a weighted mean of 3.58, and a weighted percentile of 71.62.

Table 2
Weighted Means and Weighted Percentiles of the Items Related to Routines

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	s.d.
1	**I use thinking routines and structures to help students organise their thinking.**	**4.32**	**86.51**	**1.02**
٢	**Have thinking routines become patterns of behaviour in my classroom; that is, do students know particular routines so well that they no longer seek clarification about the mechanics of the routine, instead going straight to the thinking.**	**3.89**	**77.90**	**1.07**
3	**I use thinking routines flexibly, spontaneously, and effectively to deepen students' understanding**	**3.88**	**77.67**	**0.95**
4	**I am good at matching a routine with appropriate content so that students are able to achieve a deeper level of understanding**	**3.58**	**71.62**	**1.12**
5	**Students' use routines and structures to further their understanding and as a platform for discussion, rather than as work to be done**	**3.58**	**71.62**	**1.11**

Table 3 shows that five items of the inventory are related to the Physical Environment domain. Item 1 gets the highest weighted mean which is 3.91 with a weighted percentile of 78.37. The second item gets a weighted mean of 3.73 and a weighted percentile of 74.65. The third item gets a weighted mean of 3.19, and a weighted percentile of 63.12. The fourth item gets a weighted mean of 3.05, and a weighted percentile of

61.16. The fifth and last item gets a weighted mean of 2.95, and a weighted percentile of 58.29.

Table 3
Weighted Means and Weighted Percentiles of the Items Related to Physical Environment

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	s.d.
1	A visitor would be able to discern what I care about and value when it comes to learning.	3.91	78.37	1.00
2	Displays in the room inspire learning in the subject area and connect students to the larger world of ideas by displaying positive messages about learning and thinking.	3.73	74.65	1.26
٣	I arrange the space of my classroom to facilitate thoughtful interactions, collaborations, and discussion.	٣.١٩	٦٣.١٢	١.١٧
٤	I use a variety of ways to document and capture thinking, including technology.	٣.٠٥	٦١.١٦	١.١٥
٥	My wall displays have an ongoing, inchoate, and/or dialogic nature to them versus only static display of finished work.	٢.٩٥	٥٨.٢٩	١.١٩

Table 4 shows that five items of the inventory are related to the Time domain. First item gets the highest weighted mean which is 4.41 with a weighted percentile of 88.37. The second item gets a weighted mean of 4.08 and a weighted percentile of 81.62. The third item gets a weighted mean of 3.79, and a weighted percentile of 75.81. The fourth item gets a weighted mean of 3.53, and a weighted percentile of 70.69. The fifth and last item gets a weighted mean of 3.01, and a weighted percentile of 60.23.

Table 4
Weighted Means and Weighted Percentiles of the Items Related to Time

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	s.d.
1	I avoid disseminating an abundance of ideas without the time to process them	4.41	88.37	0.80
2	I make time for students' questions and contribution	4.08	81.62	1.09
3	I give students time to think and devolve ideas before asking for contribution	3.79	75.81	1.13
4	I monitor the amount of time I talk so as not to dominate the classroom conversation	3.53	70.69	1.07
5	I provide the "space" for students extends to extend, elaborate, or develop the ideas of others	3.01	60.23	1.59

Table 5 shows that five items of the inventory are related to the Language domain. Item 1 gets the highest weighted mean which is 4.12

with a weighted percentile of 82.55. The second item gets a weighted mean of 3.38 and a weighted percentile of 67.67. The third item gets a weighted mean of 3.36, and a weighted percentile of 67.20. The fourth item gets a weighted mean of 3.30, and a weighted percentile of 66.04. The fifth and last item gets a weighted mean of 3.24, and a weighted percentile of 64.88.

Table 5
Weighted Means and Weighted Percentiles of the Items Related to Language

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	weighted Percentile	s.d.
1	I use "conditional" phrases such as 'could be', 'might be', 'one possibility is', 'some people think' or 'usually it is that way but not always'.	4.12	82.55	1.14
2	I make a conscious effort to use the language of thinking in my teaching discussing with students the sort of thinking moves required by verbs such as 'elaborate', evaluate', 'justify', 'contrast', 'explain' etc.	3.38	67.67	1.19
3	I use inclusive, community---building language by talking about what "we" are learning or "our" questions.	3.36	67.20	1.28
4	I try to notice and name the thinking occurring in my classroom. For example, might I Be heard to say things like, "Sean Is supporting his ideas with evidence here", or "Sam Is evaluating the effectiveness of that strategy right now", or "Iris Has presented an interesting analogy today".	3.30	66.04	1.32
5	I seldom use generic praise comments (good job, great, brilliant, well done) and instead give specific, targeted, action---oriented feedback that focuses on guiding future efforts and actions.	3.24	64.88	1.13

Table 6 shows that five items of the questionnaire are related to the Modeling domain. Item 1 gets the highest weighted mean which is 4.11 with a weighted percentile of 82.32. The second item gets a weighted mean of 4.02 and a weighted percentile of 80.46. The third item gets a weighted mean of 3.58, and a weighted percentile of 71.62. The fourth item gets a weighted mean of 3.20, and a weighted percentile of 64.18. The fifth and last item gets a weighted mean of 3.05, and a weighted percentile of 61.16.

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Table 6
Weighted Means and Weighted Percentiles of the Items Related to Modeling

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	s.d.
1	I display open-mindedness and a willingness to consider alternative perspectives.	4.11	82.32	0.9
2	It is clear that I am learning too, taking risks, and reflecting on my learning.	4.02	80.46	1.29
3	I demonstrate my own curiosity, passion, and interest to students.	3.58	71.62	1.04
4	Thinking is regularly on display (my own as well as students) in the classroom.	3.20	64.18	1.25
5	Students model their thought process by spontaneously justifying and providing evidence for their thinking.	3.05	61.16	1.15

Table 7 shows that nine items of the questionnaire are related to the Opportunities domain. They are item 1 gets the highest weighted mean of 4.09 and a weighted percentile of 81.86, and item 2 gets a weighted mean of 4 and a weighted percentile of 80. Item 3 gets a weighted mean of 3.91 and a weighted percentile of 78.37, item 4 gets a weighted mean of 3.84 and a weighted percentile of 76.97, item 5 gets a weighted mean of 3.65 and a weighted percentile of 73.02.

Table 7
Weighted Means and Weighted Percentiles of the Items Related to Opportunities

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	s.d.
1	I provide opportunities to reflect on how one's thinking about a topic has changed and developed over time.	4.09	81.86	1.07
2	I take pains to select content and stimuli for class consideration in order to provoke thinking.	4	80	1.13
3	I provide students with opportunities for students to direct their own learning and become independent learners.	3.91	78.37	1.16
4	I focus students' attention on big subject matter issues, important ideas in the world, and in meaningful connections within my discipline and beyond.	3.84	76.97	1.17
5	I ensure that rich thinking opportunities are woven into the fabric of my teaching and students aren't just engaged in work or activity.	3.65	73.02	1.16

Table 8 shows that five items of the questionnaire are related to the Expectation domain. They are: item 1 gets the highest weighted mean of

4.19 and a weighted percentile of 83.95; item 2 gets a weighted mean of 3.77 and a weighted percentile of 75.58; item 3 gets a weighted mean of 3.56 and a weighted percentile of 71.39, and item 4 gets a weighted mean of 3.15 and a weighted percentile of 63.02. In speaking, item 5 gets a weighted mean of 2.97 and a weighted percentile of 59.30.

Table 8
Weighted Means and Weighted Percentiles of the Items Related to Expectations

No.	Items	Weighted Mean	Weighted Percentile	s.d.
1	I establish a set of expectations for learning and thinking with my students in a similar way that I establish behavioural expectations.	4.19	83.95	0.98
2	I make a conscious effort to communicate to students that my classroom is a place in which thinking is valued.	3.77	75.58	1.30
3	I stress that thinking and learning are the outcomes of our class activity as opposed to 'completion of work'.	3.56	71.39	1.31
4	"Developing understanding" is the goal of classroom activity and lessons versus knowledge acquisition only.	3.15	63.02	1.51
5	I stress that thinking and learning are the outcomes of our class activity as opposed to 'completion of work'.	2.97	59.30	1.22

The results of the present study reveal that we need to focus upon SA, teachers need to do more than merely teach their students. They must do some exploration and intervention into the SA. The point is that EFL teachers need to be guided toward the use of a variety of SA while experimenting with profession of teaching.

The purpose of the SA is to allow teachers to reflect on their practice, identifying their own professional strengths and areas of development. SA will lead directly into the development of the Professional Learning Goals.

The data reveals that SA is a process in which a domains are closely tied to each other. Since they all seem to interrelate, it may not make sense to try and break the process down into a series of isolated domains. Each one feeds into the others because this is an interconnecting process.

6- Conclusion:

Teachers engage in a variety of roles in assessment (mentor, guide, accountant, reporter and programme director) (Wilson, 1996 cited in L. Earl, 2003). It can be easy enough for busy teachers to underestimate the

complexity of assessment and attempt to simplify processes and understandings in order to manage. As teacher we need to regularly reconsider and revise our assessment understanding and practices.

SA is not simply self-marking. Students need to know why we self-assess and have opportunities to practice. They need to recognize and understand that students learn in different ways and in their own time. Students need time to reflect on subject content, products of learning and their own learning strategies. The teacher plays a key role in modeling, negotiating, and refining concepts of quality.

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من مهنة التدريس لمدرسي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقي SA التحقيق

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الملخص:

التقييم الذاتي هو عملية مستمرة من خلالها يقوم المدرس بالتفكير، وتقييم نوعية عمله، والحكم فيما إذا كان تدريسه مطابقا للمعايير والاهداف، وكذلك معرفة نقاط القوة والضعف في تدريسه، ومن ثم تطويرها. والدراسة الحالية ترمي معرفة التقييم الذاتيّ لدى مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية، وتتألف عينة البحث من ١٠٠ مدرس في بغداد، وكانت أداة البحث هي الاستبانة التي تتألف من عدة محاور، هي: التوقعات، واللغة، والوقت، وفرص التعلم، وبيئة الصف، واخيرًا التفاعل، وقد اظهرت النتائج أنَّ مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية يستخدمون اربعة محاور من أصل ستة محاور، وهي: (الروتين، وبيئة الصف، والوقت، واللغة).

واللغة كلمات مفتاحية: التقييم الذاتي، مدرسي اللغة الانكليزية، الكفاءة الذاتية.