Chapter One
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1.1. Background Information

Reflective teaching has become one of the prominent models in teacher education in general and in foreign and second language teacher education in particular. Lockhart refers to Freeman, Lange, Pennington and Richards as teacher educators in the field of second or foreign language teaching who have recently “distinguished between teacher education as training and teacher education as development.” According to Lockhart, training is supposed to refer to special skills and knowledge which are essential for teachers to acquire in order to teach in a way that is satisfactory. From the training viewpoint, there are some specific techniques which can help teachers with effective teaching. Furthermore, “one can bestow these skills on current and prospective teachers through a teacher preparation program” (43). It is a “prescriptive” approach to teacher education which asks the educator to intervene directly in the process of teacher training. In addition, it considers teaching as a skill which is limited and as Richards puts it, “reduces teaching to a technology and views teachers as little more than technicians” (qtd. in Lockhart 43).

The other approach to teacher education which is not prescriptive is teacher development. The emphasis of this developmental approach is on “the complexities of the classroom and of teaching. It sees teacher education as an on-going process, through which teachers can explore, define and clarify their own teaching practice. Its goal is to develop the attitudes and expand the awareness of teachers or prospective teachers.” So, the developmental approach is non-prescriptive and it changes the role of the educator from an intervener to a “facilitator and [a] consultant” (Lockhart 43).

Reflection, self-monitoring and action research are three different processes that the proponents of developmental approach suggest to prospective and current teachers to follow in order to “generate change through increasing or shifting awareness” (Freeman, qtd. in Lockhart 43). As the focus of the present study is on the first suggested process, that is reflection, the discussion continues elaborating on the terms: reflection, reflective thinking and reflective teaching.

There are two phases of reflective thinking that teachers follow in the
process of reflection. As Dewey mentions in *How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process*, the first phase includes “a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates” and the second phase involves “an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity” (12). Teachers sometimes face a puzzling situation regarding the subject that they teach, but they have some suggestions out of their experience to cope with the problem. In these cases, their thinking is not necessarily reflective because they are not “critical” enough about the solutions which come to their minds. Teachers may hastily conclude without considering the context in which the perplexity occurs. Being impatient or passive, some teachers may choose the first given solution. “One can think reflectively only when one is willing to endure suspense and to undergo the trouble of searching.” Lots of people avoid being doubtful in “judgment and intellectual search” and they try to end it up when they are still involved in it. In addition, some may think that the situation in which they are uncertain about something and they can not judge at once is a sign of their “mental inferiority”. Elaborating on the difference between reflective thought and bad thinking, Dewey concludes, “to be genuinely thoughtful, we must be willing to sustain and protect that state of doubt which is the stimulus to thorough inquiry, so as not to accept an idea or make positive assertion of a belief until justifying reasons have been found” (16).

The three attitudes of open-mindedness, whole-heartedness and responsibility, referred to by Dewey, are necessary for reflective actions. The attitude of open-mindedness can be elaborated as being free from discrimination, bias and other habits that refrain teachers to see and examine the issues from different angles. It also refers to the tendency that people show in order to consider others’ ideas, even if they are against their own present beliefs and to pay attention to truth regardless of its origin. Teachers should be encouraged to be sure of the accuracy of their old beliefs and correct them when they feel that they are wrong, even if their viewpoints are the dearest ones to them. Dewey reminds us of the fact that it is very difficult to substitute an existing belief with a new one. “Self-conceit
often regards it as a sign of weakness to admit that a belief to which we have once committed ourselves is wrong. We get so identified with an idea that it is literally a ‘pet’ notion and we rise to its defense and stop our mental eyes and ears to anything different” (30).

In *Dewey and Reflective Teaching*, it is stated that “open-mindedness is an active desire to listen to more sides than one, to give full attention to alternative possibilities and to recognize the possibility of error even in beliefs that are dear to us.” Later in the same article, the attitude is generalized to the field of teaching by noting that “teachers who are open-minded are continually examining the rationales that underlie what is taken as natural and right and take pains to seek out conflicting evidence. Reflecting teachers are continually asking themselves why they are doing what they are doing” (2).

According to Mills, there are three types of believers. The attitude of open-mindedness proposed by Dewey is similar to critical believers, that is, the third type of believers suggested by Mills. The first type of believers is called vulgar. They “have no interest in listening to opposing arguments or in analyzing their own beliefs and operate only according to slogans and stereotypes.” The second type of believers is referred to as sophisticated believers. They listen to others’ opposing points of view, in order to prove that they are wrong. Sophisticated believers do not accept that their ideas may be wrong. The third type is critical believers who “are willing to enter sympathetically into opposing points of view because they realize that all belief systems have weaknesses and can be strengthened by the confrontation with different beliefs” (qtd. in *Dewey and Reflective Teaching* 2-3).

The second attitude which is necessary for reflective action is wholeheartedness. This attitude can be defined as being devoted to something thoroughly and enthusiastically. When a teacher does not focus on what he does he becomes like a student who apparently gives his external attention to the teacher, but he thinks of other subjects which are more interesting. In these cases, the student “pays attention with ear or eye, but his brain is occupied with affairs that make an immediate appeal. He feels obliged to study because he has to recite, to pass an examination, to make a grade, or because he wishes to please his teacher or his
Dewey believes that this kind of approach taken by the student avoids him being “single-minded”, thus it forms a kind of “habit or attitude that is most unfavorable to good thinking”. A teacher who is wholehearted does not need to concentrate on the subject. It is always there in his mind. When he faces a problem, questions come to his mind effortlessly and different solutions are posed automatically. That is because “when a person is absorbed, the subject carries him on” (31).

The attitude of responsibility is considered as important as the other two attitudes of open-mindedness and whole-heartedness to reflective action. Although Dewey accepts that “responsibility is usually conceived as a moral trait rather than as an intellectual resource,” he stresses on this attitude as an incentive which makes a person look for “new points of view and ideas and of enthusiasm for and capacity for absorption in subject matter” (32).

When a person is intellectually responsible, he will reflect on the possible outcome of his action. Elaborating on the consequences to which an action leads, in Dewey and Reflective Teaching, the article refers to three possible consequences of one’s teaching which make teachers consider the attitude of responsibility. These three consequences are as follows:

A) Personal consequences – the effects of one’s teaching on pupils’ self-concepts.

B) Academic consequences – the effects of one’s teaching on pupils’ intellectual development.

C) Social and political consequences – the projected effects of one’s teaching on the life chances of various pupils. (3)

The implication of these consequences is that the more a teacher is responsible, the more positive attitudes, academic achievements and successful life the pupils will have. Responsible teachers tend to ask themselves about the reasons of what they do. When people do something, they immediately ask about its usefulness. In addition to this, if they are responsible, they are also liable “to consider the ways in which it is working, why it is working and for whom . . . [it is] working.” Responsible teachers should reflect on the expected consequences as well as
unexpected ones, because when they teach a subject, they will undoubtedly face “unintended” and “intended outcomes” (3).

The attitude of responsibility is also applicable to students when their tendency toward learning is concerned. Dewey warns teachers against irresponsibility of the students. When students are taught a subject which is beyond the present level of their knowledge or is totally different from the things that they have already experienced, they stop considering the subject as something valuable for their own daily life; they start to open a different file in their mind for school subjects. “They begin to use a measure of value and of reality for school subjects different from the measure they employ for affairs of life that make a vital appeal. They tend to become intellectually irresponsible; they do not ask for the meaning of what they learn, in the sense of what difference it makes to the rest of their beliefs and their actions” (32-3).

Equally, when students do not have enough time or chance to grasp the meaning of what they have been taught, they emerge as irresponsible. Too much burden makes students puzzled in such a way that they neither take the subjects, nor can they see the reason to consider them as valuable belief. To solve the problem of students’ irresponsibility, Dewey suggests, “fewer subjects and fewer facts and more responsibility for thinking the material of those subjects and facts through to realize what they involve would give better results” (33). He concludes that if students are intellectually responsible, they will be involved in the subjects in order to complete the given tasks.

In a paper entitled, Understanding the Realities of Reflective Teaching: What Are Best Practices for the 21st Century?, Pultorak and Stone begin their introduction as follows:

Some have implied that the term reflective teaching is redundant (Borko and Michalec, 1997; Colton and Spark-Langer, 1993; Feldman, 1997; Mcmahon, 1997). In order to teach, don’t we have to think about our teaching? Isn’t such thinking the same thing as reflecting on our teaching? If the teacher never questions the goals and values that guide their work, the context in which they teach, or
never examines their assumption, then is that individual engaged in reflective teaching (Costa, 1995; Glen, 1995; Papoulia-Tzelepi, 1996; Posner, 1996)? (3)

Regarding the questions posed by the first group of scholars who consider reflective teaching as a redundant term and the second group who are in favor of reflective teaching, Pultorak and Stone distinguish between teaching which is considered reflective and teaching which is categorized as technically focused. So, it can be concluded that when a teacher thinks of his or her teaching, s/he technically focuses on the process of teaching; while s/he goes beyond that and thinks of teaching goals as well as making assumptions about teaching, s/he thinks reflectively.

Ferraro reports some studies which show the effectiveness of reflective practice both at the pre-service and in-service levels of teaching. The first study, done by Ojanen investigated the teacher educators’ role as coach. The results of the study showed that "teacher educators can most effectively coach student teachers in reflective practice by using students’ personal histories, dialog journals and small and large–group discussions about their experiences to help students reflect upon and improve their practices." The second study quoted by Ferraro was done by Kettle and Sellars. The research subjects were third-year teaching students. The researchers examined the subjects’ reflective writings and asked them to participate in interviews to discuss their reflective practices. The results of the study showed that "the use of peer reflective groups encouraged student teachers to challenge existing theories and their own preconceived views of teaching while modeling for them a collaborate style of professional development that would be useful throughout their professional careers" (2).

The third study which Ferraro quotes to show the effectiveness of using, reflective practice in teacher professional development was done at the level of in-service teaching. The study done by Licklider in an attempt to review adult learning theory showed that "self-directness – including self-learning from experience in natural setting – is an important component of adult learning." For that reason, teacher development programs should contain not only the routine activities such as "occasional large group sessions," but also the activities like "study teams and peer
coaching” (2). In that way, in service teachers will be able to regularly observe and criticize their own beliefs and activities.

To optimize the teaching and learning of a language in EFL/ESL contexts, it may be useful to embrace the concept of the teacher as a learner and a professional. Rose believes that, “every teacher has a professional responsibility to be reflective and evaluative about their practice. As a result of this reflection teachers will be able to identify how to improve their professional activity in order to improve the quality of pupils' learning.” She states that reflection enables teachers to observe what is going on around the class. It persuades teachers to apply their thoughts and “promote changes in pupils' learning behavior.” The other area in which Rose considers reflection as an important factor is cooperation or collaboration among teachers. She believes that, “reflective partnerships between teachers are particularly effective. Peer mentoring partnerships will support individual teachers in reflecting on and describing their practice. As a result of these focused discussions a teacher is able to better understand practice and be able to take steps to improve practice” (1).

Kumaravadivelu in Beyond Methods: Macrostrategies for Language Teaching, asserts that “to shape the practice of everyday teaching, teachers need to have a holistic understanding of what happens in their classroom. They need to systematically observe their teaching, interpret their classroom events, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems, find solutions, and try them out to see once again what works and what doesn’t.” He believes that teachers should become “strategic thinkers as well as strategic practitioners”. Teachers, as strategic thinkers, should “reflect on the specific needs, wants, situations, and processes of learning and teaching” (7). Teachers, as strategic practitioners, extend their knowledge and skills which are necessary for observing, analyzing, and evaluating their teaching. When teachers face problems in the process of teaching, they pose many questions to which they can not find answers. They mention that many “conventional approaches in teacher development rarely help them find answers which will give them practical help with their problems” (Richards and Lockhart 2). Even the courses that they pass or workshops that they participate in, as student teachers, do not have that long
term effect to help them with their teaching problems. Richards and Lockhart believe that teachers should “look objectively at teaching and observe critically” on what they find out. In this way the teachers will be able to examine their beliefs about teaching, and the efficiency of their activities around the class. They will have “a better understanding of teaching and learning processes” (2). They will monitor and evaluate their own teaching which leads them to develop professionally.

Graves is another educator who is in favor of reflective teaching. She believes that “reflection is one of the most powerful tools teachers can use to explore, understand and redirect their practice. Reflection is about learning to see and to understand what is seen. It is not simply being able to identify problems and frame solutions, although both are crucial.” According to her, there are two potential pitfalls which teachers should be aware of when they observe their own teaching reflectively. The first potential danger is to follow reflective process but not to take any action based on the obtained data “—to hold up a mirror, acknowledge what is there and how one feels about it, but go no further” (Stanley, qtd. in Graves). The second possible danger is to merely consider reflection as a process through which an observed problem is solved. While it can be a part of reflective process, the main goal is to find the underlying reasons which have caused the observed problem. “When teachers are able to explore the root issues and beliefs, a shift occurs in their understanding and a wider range of effective, intelligent actions becomes possible” (20).

In fact, a person who wants to be involved in the process of reflective thinking has to candidly dedicate his time and energy “to write about individual thoughts, feelings, and experiences honestly; . . . to consider ideas critically; [to have] active participation; involvement of self; and commitment” (Thorpe 328).

Sharp cites Lester who believes that reflective teachers “are better equipped to be life long learners; they are also in a more favorable position to initiate changes in their existing practice through personal awareness of their classroom and its culture” (244). She also cites Dicker and Monda-Amaya who mention the advantages of reflective process. Firstly, reflective process enables teachers to change the instructional atmosphere. Secondly, teachers can consider reflective
process as a tool for evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching. Thirdly, it is a process through which the teacher can put into effect his classroom experiences in order to teach in a different way. Finally, reflective process is an effective method for tackling the instructional problems and presenting workable solutions.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to Richards and Lockhart, when teachers are involved in the process of teaching some events occur that they can use to have a better understanding of their teaching. Sometimes they take these events for granted and they fail to reflect on them; in fact, the events that occur around the classroom can provide the teachers with “the basis for critical reflection”. Richards and Lockhart suggest some procedures that can be used by teachers to investigate classroom teaching. The proposed procedures are as follows: teaching journals, lesson reports, surveys and questionnaires, audio and video recordings, observation and action research. Some of these procedures are also mentioned by Tice and Murphy and they properly label them as “tools,” the term that has been chosen to refer to the same procedures in this thesis.

The problem is that while some experts in reflective teaching suggest different tools for obtaining the data that teachers need in order to evaluate their own way of teaching (Richards and Lockhart 6; Murphy, Reflective Teaching 502-9; Tice 1-4), they do not fully discuss the effectiveness of the tools regarding the data that teachers need to obtain. For instance Richards and Lockhart mention that “each procedure has advantages and limitations, and some are more useful for exploring certain aspects of teaching than others. The reader [teacher] will have to decide which procedures are useful and for what purposes” (6). As another example, Bartlett can be referred who is rather skeptical in his explanation of “mapping”:

Mapping involves observation and the collection of evidence about our own teaching. Probably [emphasis added] the best means of observation is to record our practice. This may [emphasis added] be done by audio or visual means (tape-recording a lesson, using photography, etc.), but the best means would seem [emphasis added]
Again we can see uncertainty over choosing the appropriate tool and the burden of choosing the tool that leads to the best results is on a teacher who is not that qualified and experienced to choose a tool which provides him or her with the most relevant data based on which s/he can reflect and have effective decision making. This is the problem which needs to be resolved during the process of this research.

1.3. Research Questions

Regarding the aforementioned problem, the following research questions would arise:

1. Is there any difference among the kind of data that all the tools obtain?
2. Is a single tool applicable to obtain any kind of data for a teacher to reflect on?
3. Regarding the accuracy of the obtained data, which tool has priority?
4. Regarding the first three questions, is there any difference between the obtained data from ESL and EFL contexts?

1.4. Statement of the Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are proposed on the basis of the above research questions in the following interrelated statements:

1. There is no difference among the kind of data that all the tools obtain. No matter which tool is used, the data remain the same.
2. There is no relationship between the kind of data that teachers need to reflect on and the selected tool.
3. Regarding the accuracy of the obtained data, no tool has priority.
4. There is no difference between the obtained data from ESL and EFL contexts in this regard.
1.5. Definition of Key Terms

1.5.1. Decision Making

Richards and Lockhart quote Shavelson who, like many other educationalists, consider decision making as “an essential teaching competency.” Shavelson observed, “Any teaching act is the result of a decision, either conscious or unconscious . . . . What distinguishes the exceptional teacher is not the ability to ask, say, a higher-order question, but the ability to decide when to ask, such a question” (78). Teachers should make a great number of decisions. Decisions that they make before teaching a lesson are called “planning decisions.” In this stage, teachers should decide on the objectives (i.e. the content of the lesson), the tasks which students will take, the allocated time to each task or activity, teaching aids, classroom setup, individual and team work. They have to make “on-the-spot decisions” while they are teaching a lesson. These decisions are called “interactive decisions.” Richards and Lockhart divide an interactive decision into four components:

1. Monitoring one’s teaching and evaluating what is happening at a particular point in the lesson.
2. Recognizing that a number of different courses of action are possible.
3. Selecting a particular course of action.
4. Evaluating the consequences of the choice. (84)

After teaching a lesson, teachers ought to get feedback and decide on the effectiveness of their teaching. Decisions of this kind are called “evaluative decisions.” The authors explain that “in evaluating their own teaching, however, teachers typically base their judgments on their own personal belief system about what constitutes good teaching” (88).

1.5.2. EFL

It is an abbreviation which stands for “English as a foreign language”. It refers to the teaching of English to people who live in a country in which English is neither the first nor the second language (e.g., Iran).
1.5.3. ELT

It is an abbreviation which stands for “English language teaching”. It refers to the teaching of English to people for whom it is not the first language.

1.5.4. ESL

It is an abbreviation which stands for “English as a second language”. It refers to the teaching of English to people who live in a country in which English is the second language (e.g., India).

1.5.5. Reflective Teaching

Richards and Lockhart define reflective teaching as an approach to second language classroom instruction in which current and prospective 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 their efforts in language courses (1). Regarding different topics that can be explored by reflective teachers, the focus of the present study is on teachers’ decision making.

Reflective Teaching Tools

The tools which will be considered for obtaining data used in reflective teaching are as follows:

- **Teacher Diary**: The teacher writes about what happened in the class after each lesson. He can note his “reactions and feelings and those . . . [he] observed on the part of the students”. It can be done by answering some general questions that form a teaching diary (Tice, Reflective Teaching 2).

- **Peer Observation**: The teacher asks a colleague to attend his class and collect information about the lesson. It can be done through note taking or “a simple observation task” (Tice, Reflective Teaching 2).

- **Recording Lessons**: Video or audio recording of lessons are considered a suitable tool in obtaining data used for reflective teaching. Tice believes that “you may do things in class you are not aware of or there
may be things happening in the class as the teacher you do not normally see” (Reflective Teaching 2). Recording of lessons can be useful in showing the teachers different aspects of their behavior.

- **Students’ Feedback:** That is a tool used for finding out the learners’ opinions and perceptions about the teaching process, and teachers’ efforts that “can add a different and valuable perspective” (Tice, Reflective Teaching 3). The data can be obtained through questionnaires.

### 1.6. The Purpose and Significance of the Study

There are three main models described by Wallace, “the Craft Model, the Applied Science Model and the Reflective Model”. He is in favor of the reflective model because he believes that “reflection guides future” (qtd. in Miller de Arechaga’s Teacher Development: Awareness, Reflection and Sharing).

Elaborating on Wallace’s models, Ur in Teacher Training and Teacher Development: A Useful Dichotomy? states that “according to applied science model, teachers learn to be teachers by being taught research-based theories, and then applying them in practice”. The definition implies that the most salient professional knowledge is the one that has been generalized from the theory. The craft model, as Ur defines it, means to learn how to teach in a way that the trainee learns skills such as carpentry. “The novice watches and imitates a master teacher, and obeys the latter’s directions for improvement. Here the implication is that teaching is mainly a practical skill.” According to Ur, a reflective model implies that teachers learn teaching skills “by reflecting on their own experience and applying what they have learned in order to develop their professional abilities further” (1). In order to support the idea that the third model (i.e. Reflective Model) is more effective than the others, Miller de Arechaga refers to Ur’s elaboration on Wallace’s models and mentions that: first, the teacher as a trainee observes or teaches others’ classes or uses his teaching background; second, he reflects by himself or joins a group discussion to practically exercise the theories of teaching; third, he applies these theories in his teaching. In this way, he continually improves and develops his own theories for teaching.
Tice mentions that there are many teachers who think of their teaching and discuss it with their peers. Teachers may say to their colleagues, “My lesson went well” or “My students didn’t seem to understand” or “My students were so badly behaved today.” It seems good, but without devoting enough time and reflecting on the causes of the events which have occurred in the process of teaching, teachers may hastily draw some conclusions from their insufficient discussions. In these cases, outgoing and “louder students” are just taken into consideration. In order not to fall into this trap, reflective teaching “implies a more systematic process of collecting, recording and analyzing our thoughts and observations, as well as those of our students, and then going onto making changes” (Reflective Teaching 1).

Richards and Lockhart in Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classroom state that the questions that they try to investigate in their book are not related to a specific “method” or “view of teaching.” They do not want to introduce the effective teaching method to the teachers. What they attempt is “to develop a critically reflective approach to teaching, which can be used with any teaching method or approach” (3). In addition, the developed approach would cover all situations, in which teachers work, from elementary to advanced levels; all different kinds of skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing; and all kinds of teachers, from novice to experienced ones.

There are some assumptions which Richards and Lockhart consider as the bases of the proposed techniques for investigating language teaching. The researcher considers the reflective approach which is based on these assumptions significant and worthy of investigation. The following assumptions constitute “the nature of teacher development.”

1. **An informed teacher has an extensive knowledge base about teaching.** Teaching is an activity which is multifaceted. Teachers who are familiar with various aspects of teaching and are aware of the varied “components and dimensions of teaching” can be better decision makers and fairer judges (3).

2. **Much can be learned about teaching through self-inquiry.** Traditionally, the
major part of feedback on the teacher’s activities is provided by the supervisor who visits his class from time to time. Although Richards and Lockhart admit, “While comments of a supervisor or other outside visitor can be a useful source of information about one’s teaching,” they stress on the role of the teacher himself as a provider of feedback. “Teachers themselves are in the best position to examine their own teaching.” They note that instead of “drawing on experts’ opinions, theories, or external source of knowledge as an impetus for change or development,” they prefer an approach towards teacher development which “involves teachers in collecting information about their teaching either individually or through collaborating with a colleague, making decisions about their teaching, deciding if initiatives need to be taken, and selecting strategies to carry them out” (3).

3. Much of what happens in teaching is unknown to the teacher. Supporting this assumption, it is stated that “teachers are often unaware of the kind of teaching they do or how they handle many of the moment-to-moment decisions that arise.” They report some teachers who watched the videotapes of their teaching. The teachers’ comments showed that they were able to analyze their own teaching and pinpoint their strengths and weaknesses. Explaining the reason behind this capability of teachers to evaluate their own teaching just after watching their own teaching, the authors mention, “Since many things happen almost simultaneously during a lesson, it is sometimes difficult for teachers to be aware of what happens in classrooms and why” (3-4).

4. Experience is insufficient as a basis for development. The fourth assumption about the nature of teacher development considers “experience as a key component of teacher development . . . [but] insufficient as a basis for professional growth.” Experienced teachers know how to manage the problems that they face expectedly and unexpectedly. They are not necessarily involved in the process of reflection when they “develop routines and strategies for handling these recurring dimensions of teaching . . . . Experience is the starting point for teacher development, but in
order for experience to play a productive role, it is necessary to examine such experience systematically” (Richards and Lockhart 4).

5. Critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching. Elaborating on the last assumption about teacher development, the authors first quote Bartlett and Wallace. “Critical reflection involves examining teaching experiences as a basis for evaluation and decision making and as a source for change.” Critical reflection then is defined as asking questions about the reasons why teachers represent things in a certain way and how they do this. What are the other accessible ways for doing it? What are the limitations of each way? Teachers who are familiar with the nature of teaching can “evaluate their stage of professional growth and what aspects of their teaching they need to change.” The other advantage of critical reflection is when it is considered as an “ongoing process and a routine part of teaching, it enables teachers to feel more confident in trying different options and assessing their effects on teaching” (4).

In sum, the aforementioned assumptions reveal “the fact that if teachers are actively involved in reflecting on what is happening in their own classrooms, they are in a position to discover whether there is a gap between what they teach and what their learners learn” (Richards and Lockhart 4).

The authors of Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classroom have devoted a whole chapter to the subject of teacher decision making. They believe that teaching is basically “a thinking process”. Teachers continually face various options and they have to choose the one which best suits the course goal. The option chosen by the teacher is considered as a decision. “Teaching involves a great number of individual decisions.” Teachers have to make decisions at three stages. They should decide on planning before teaching a lesson. Decisions at this stage are called “planning decisions”. While they are teaching, they have to make decisions concerning parts of a lesson that they may not have planned. These are called “interactive decisions”. In addition to these two aforementioned types of decision making, teachers have to make decisions about the effectiveness of the lesson that they have taught. These are referred to as “evaluative decisions” (78). In order to
make decisions at each of these stages, teachers need to be equipped with effective tools for obtaining appropriate data to reflect on.

Elaborating on planning decisions, Richards and Lockhart mention that some teachers make a kind of “macro-plans” which covers the entire goals for a course or a class. These teachers use this overall plan to prepare their lesson plans for “day-to-day” teaching. Other teachers develop “micro-plans” which covers the teaching of a lesson in a single session and they rarely refer to the course objectives (79). Teachers usually develop their plan based on what they believe about teaching and learning process. “Some teachers believe that lessons should be spontaneous and that a detailed lesson plan restricts the teacher’s choices and discourages responding to the students’ needs and interests. Others feel that without a detailed lesson plan, they might wander off task and not cover the prescribed lesson content” (82). In other words, some teachers prefer to follow a lesson plan which they have prepared in advance, whereas others may not prepare any plans in written form and follow the one which they keep in their minds.

Richards and Lockhart cite Neely who believes that a process of reflection should precede planning decisions. Regarding planning process, they suggest reflective teachers to consider questions like the following while planning:

■ How well do I understand the content of the lesson?
■ What activities will be included in the lesson?
■ How will the lesson connect to what students already know?
■ How much time will I need for each activity?
■ How will I organize the lesson into stages or sections?
■ How will I begin and conclude the lesson?
■ Is the lesson going to be easy/difficult for this class?
■ How will I check on student understanding?
■ How will I handle interruptions to limit interference in this lesson?

(82)

Elaborating on interactive decisions, Richards and Lockhart assert that planning decisions should be considered as “the starting point” of teaching a lesson; they can not predict what may happen during a lesson. “Teachers therefore have to
continuously make decisions that are appropriate to the specific dynamics of the lesson they are teaching.” The decisions that teachers have to make when they are involved in teaching are called interactive decisions (83).

Teachers should acquire the teaching skill of making interactive decisions appropriately. Those who enjoy appropriate interactive decisions can evaluate students’ reactions to teaching and “to modify their instruction in order to provide optimal support for learning”. A teacher who follows just his/her lesson plan in teaching and neglects the interactions which occur in the process of teaching and learning may not consider the needs of the students. Reflective teachers should have the ability to observe their own teaching and “evaluate it in terms of its appropriateness within a specific and immediate context” (84). This skill which is vital to interactive decision making includes monitoring one’s own teaching and posing questions like the following:

- Do the students understand this? Are my instructions clear and understood?
- Do I need to increase student involvement in this activity?
- Is this too difficult for the students?
- Should I try teaching this a different way?
- Is this taking too much time?
- How can I get the students’ attention?
- Do students need more information?
- Do I need to improve accuracy on this task?
- Is this relevant to the aims of the lesson?
- Do the students have the vocabulary they need in order to do this task?
- Is this teaching students something that they really need to know?
- Am I teaching too much rather than letting the learners work it out for themselves? (Richards and Lockhart 84)

When the teacher has taught the lesson, s/he should make evaluative decisions. In reflecting on their own teaching for evaluation purposes, teachers usually make judgments based on their beliefs about what good teaching means. To
support this idea, Richards and Lockhart cite Woods who found that when teachers were asked to make evaluative decisions, their “decisions were consistent with their underlying assumptions and beliefs about language learning and teaching.” Therefore, the teacher who favored a “curriculum-based approach,” examined her teaching through reviewing the way that she followed the curriculum. The other teacher who favored a “student-based approach,” examined his teaching by reviewing the students’ objectives and characters (88).

Some of the questions that are related to evaluative decisions are as follows:

- Was this lesson successful? Why or why not?
- Did the students learn what they were intended to learn?
- Did the lesson address the students’ needs?
- Was the lesson at the appropriate level of difficulty?
- Were all students involved in the lesson?
- Did the lesson arouse students’ interest in the subject matter?
- Did I do sufficient preparation for the lesson?
- Do I need to re-teach any aspects of the lesson?
- Should I have employed alternative teaching strategies?
- Will I teach the material in the same way next time? (Richards and Lockhart 87)

Hiller in the second edition of her book entitled, Reflective Teaching in Further and Adult Education, devotes one part to evaluating and developing professional practice. According to her, evaluation is not as equal as reflection. Self-evaluation provides teachers with suitable information for reflection. In order to evaluate their own practice, reflective teachers should answer eighteen questions which Hiller suggests for this purpose. Some of these evaluative questions are as follows:

- Did I provide a stimulating learning environment?
- Did I treat my students with respect?
- Did the learners enjoy my program?
- What content do I want to change next time?
- Can I improve the way that I use my teaching and learning
Tice in *Writing a Teaching Diary* focuses on what Richards and Lockhart refer to as “evaluative decisions”. As teachers normally write their diaries after they have finished teaching a lesson, the main concern of keeping a diary in this case is reflecting on what they have done. Writing a diary in a form of report, after teaching each lesson, is a burdensome and time-consuming task. In addition, reviewing the prepared reports in order to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of one’s teaching needs tremendous effort. In an attempt to facilitate the process of writing diaries, Tice has provided the reflective teachers with a categorized diary which focuses on some major aspects of teaching. After teaching each lesson, teachers can refer to the questions which are related to the subcategories of teaching issues and answer them briefly. The prepared diary consists of five subcategories with twenty one questions. By comparing the answers which teachers have given to each question every time that they teach a lesson, they can conclude whether the quantity and/or quality of their teaching have/has improved or worsened. The teaching diary suggested by Tice has been presented in Table 1.1.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of the tools used in reflective teaching in EFL and ESL contexts. The aforementioned questions and statements suggested by Richards and Lockhart, Hiller and Tice along with suggestions made by other scholars form a basis for designing a questionnaire which will be used as the main instrument of the present study. The result of the research may pave the way for ELT teachers to use the reflective teaching tools effectively in order to obtain accurate data for decision making. One of the outcomes of the study is that it will provide the reflective teachers with some hierarchies of reflective tools. These hierarchies will show the effectiveness of the tools in obtaining the data that are needed for reflection. Referring to these hierarchies, teachers will be able to choose the appropriate reflective tool based on their specific needs.
Table 1.1
Writing a Teacher Diary

Here are some general questions to get you started:

Lesson objectives
- Did the students understand what we did in the lesson?
- Was what we did too easy or too difficult?
- What problems did the students have (if any)?
- Was there a clear outcome to the students?
- What did they learn or practice in the lesson? Was it useful for them?

Activities and materials
- What different activities and materials did they use?
- Did the activities and materials keep the students interested?
- Could I have done any parts of the lesson differently?

Students
- Were all the students on task (i.e. doing what they were supposed to be doing)?
- If not, when was that and why did it happen?
- Which part of the lesson did the students seem to enjoy most? And least?
- How much English did the students use?

Classroom management
- Did activities last the right length of time?
- Was the pace of the lesson right?
- Did I use whole class work, pair work or individual work?
- What did I use it for? Did it work?
- Did the students understand what to do in the lesson?
- Were my instructions clear?
- Did I provide opportunities for all students to participate?
- Was I aware of how all of the students were progressing?

Overall
- If I taught the lesson again, what would I do differently?

1.7. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

In this study, the researcher deals with four tools that are widely used in reflective teaching; these four tools are recommended by most experts in the field of reflective teaching but under different titles. For example, in Tice’s Teaching Diary, Murphy’s Retrospective Field Notes and Richards and Lockhart’s Teaching Journals, reflective teachers are supposed to follow similar procedures. The four selected tools are: Teacher Diary, Peer Observation, Audio Recording and Students’ Feedback. So, the first limitation imposed by the researcher is excluding other less recommended tools like: Case Interview, Dialog with the Supervisor, Action Research etc.

In order to make the obtained data more workable, all data obtained from different tools should be converted to answers to close-ended items which shape a uniform questionnaire. In other words, all subjective opinions noted by students, class teachers, observers and colleagues should become objective by filling out the given questionnaires. This can be considered as the second limitation, because in this way, some relevant data may have to be excluded. There may be certain responses or any other kinds of feedback, provided by the subjects in essay-type form, which are not related to any of the given questionnaire items.

The third limitation is that the research sample is selected from a population of college/university students who have chosen English language as a basic subject, or specialized English courses whose subjects focus on practicing one of the skills or components of English language. So, the results can not be generalized beyond these groups. In addition, the study favors a way of selecting the sample which is “nonprobability sample”. As Best and Kahn put it, “Nonprobability samples are those that use whatever subjects are available rather than following a specific subject selection process . . . . In certain types of descriptive studies, the use of available samples may restrict generalizations to similar populations” (17). Therefore, the results can not be extended to other students who study the same subjects in other colleges/universities, because these higher education centers, Roudehen University (Iran) and DAV and GCG-11 Colleges (India), have not been chosen randomly from all colleges/universities which offer English courses.
The fourth limitation which should be considered is that the variables of students’ gender, age, mother tongue, social class, motivation and language proficiency are not controlled in this research; so, the obtained data can not be analyzed and interpreted based on the mentioned variables. For example, it will not be clear whether the weak and strong students can equally provide their teacher with appropriate feedback; or, whether male/female students answer the questions differently when their teacher is the same or opposite gender.

1.8. Procedure of the Study

In order to investigate the questions and the related hypotheses of the study, the researcher goes through the following steps:

First, the researcher designs two questionnaires. The first questionnaire is used for obtaining data related to teaching process, and the second one is used to check the accuracy of the students’ obtained data.

Second, in order to pre-test the designed questionnaires, they are administered to a sample of students, and the weak or ambiguous items are modified or totally removed from the body of the questionnaire.

Third, twenty teachers are selected randomly from both EFL and ESL contexts. The students who participate in this study comprise around 500 boys and girls assigned to 20 classes.

Fourth, in a single session, for each class, all four tools are applied. It means that while the class teacher starts teaching, the researcher as a non-participant observer is present in the class; taking notes which he uses later to complete the questionnaire. The teaching process is tape recorded in the same session. Afterward, a colleague reviews the recording and completes the questionnaire based on the obtained data. When the class teacher is finished with the lesson, students are asked to give feedback about the teaching process by completing their questionnaires. In addition to this, they complete the second questionnaire which investigates the accuracy of the data provided by the students completing the first one. The class teacher is the last subject who is asked to reflect on his/her teaching by completing the first questionnaire.
Fifth, the researcher uses different statistical techniques to analyze the obtained data. The statistical techniques mainly consist of determining the significant differences and coefficient of correlation between the data obtained from the four versions of the designed questionnaire, administered to class teachers, students, observers and colleagues. At last, the obtained data are analyzed once more to investigate the similarities and differences between EFL and ESL contexts.

1.9. Overview of the Study

The present chapter introduces the background information related to reflective teaching and the need for further research in that field. It also poses some questions and the related hypotheses that are the researcher’s main concerns. The key terms and concepts of the thesis statement are defined consistently and the purpose and significance of the study are explained briefly. In order to uphold the internal and external validity of the study, the limitations and delimitations imposed on the study are mentioned in this chapter. The stages which the researcher should pursue have been explained under the subtitle of “procedure”.

The second chapter reviews the literature of the study, that is, its full background knowledge. It includes the beliefs of the pioneers in the field of reflective teaching from Dewey (1909, 1933) to date. The other main part in chapter two elaborates on reflective teaching tools and their merits and demerits proposed by different scholars. The researcher reports other studies that have been conducted in the related field.

As this study is non-experimental, descriptive and correlational, one of the main parts of the third chapter is devoted to the special design of the study. In addition, the process of sample selection, instrumentation and data collection and data analysis procedures are elaborated.

The fourth chapter reports the data obtained from administering the research instruments. Regarding the research questions and the related hypotheses, the obtained data are analyzed statistically to see whether the null hypotheses are rejected or not. In order to find the significant differences between the data obtained from each single tool and the average of data provided by all four tools (i.e. Teacher
Diary, Peer Observation, Audio Recording and Students’ Feedback), a computer software (SPSS) is used. It not only calculates the differences and correlations among all obtained data, but also shows the similarities and differences among data obtained from EFL and ESL contexts and draws the related graphs to enable the researcher to investigate the issue from different aspects.

The last chapter reviews the research questions and the researcher attempts to reconsider the hypotheses based on the results given in the previous chapter. The obtained data provide a dependable basis for the researcher to fully discuss the effectiveness of the tools used for reflective teaching. As it was mentioned before, the main goal is to present some hierarchies of reflective tools based on their capabilities to fulfill the teachers’ needs. Comparing and contrasting the data obtained from EFL and ESL contexts is another primary concern of the present study. A significant byproduct of this research is a creation of a tool (i.e. a questionnaire) made available to all reflective teachers who are keen to evaluate and improve their teaching. The questionnaire will be diligently designed during the course of this research. Based on the data obtained from the administration of the designed instrument, the researcher will generalize the results from the sample to the whole research population. In “Recommendations for Further Research,” some suggestions will be made for further studies to those who are interested in doing research in the field of reflective teaching.