1 Background

The overall goal of this Element is to provide a comprehensive argument for reconsidering a framework I devised (Farrell, 2015) for a five-stage approach to language teacher reflective practice, supported by an in-depth case study I conducted in which I added appraisal analysis to the framework. Uncertainty over the meaning of reflection and reflective practice is due to the majority of recent approaches having been based on an understanding (which is most likely a misunderstanding) of the two most popularly cited theoretical sources, namely the works of John Dewey and Donald Schön. One of the aims of this Element is to return to these two theoretical sources in order to clarify what I mean by the notion of reflective practice and then to establish the criteria (i.e., framework) I use to clearly define what I mean by reflective practice for language teachers. I add another dimension, the emotional aspect of reflection, related to reflective teaching within my framework. As Fook (2010) has noted, emotions can not only trigger learning issues for teachers but can also act as an "impetus and motivation for finding meaning and continuing reflection" (p. 48). This Element goes on to consider how, in my own work, I have built on some of the limitations or constraints in the work of Dewey and Schön in the development of what I have referred to as a holistic approach to reflective practice for language teachers (Farrell, 2015).

1.1 Organization of This Element

In this first section, I introduce the topics of reflective practice and reflection. I briefly outline where the concept of reflection originated and examine some of the main issues associated with the uncertainty around how it has been understood. I then connect these issues with an argument for the need to reconceptualize reflective practice in language education. From here, I close the section with an attempt to disentangle the different terms related to reflection and reflective practice to bring clarity to the concepts.

In Section 2, I first examine the theoretical underpinnings, both the perspectives and the constraints, of the models of reflection presented by both Dewey and Schön – two of the most generally uncritically incorporated sources of inspiration language teacher educators and language teachers use to justify their reflection within language teaching (Farrell, 2018). In this light, I follow the discussion of the theoretical underpinnings with an overview of the development of my own framework (Farrell, 2015) and an explanation of how the framework was designed especially for language teachers to reflect on practice, and how this has been developed from the work of Dewey, Schön, and others.

In Section 3, I outline and discuss how I used my framework in a recent in-depth case study with one English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher in Costa Rica as he reflected intensely on his work over a two-month period during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when he was suddenly required to teach all his classes on an online platform (Zoom). In this section, I give details about how Damien (pseudonym) reflected on his philosophy, principles, theory, practice, and beyond (Farrell, 2015). I also outline and discuss how I applied the Appraisal Framework from systemic functional linguistics (SFL) with a specific focus on the aspect of affect to account for the range of emotive language Damien used when reflecting. This latter analysis is a new addition to the framework for reflecting on practice, and I believe it is a promising tool for future researchers, language teacher educators, and language teachers for gauging the importance of emotions within the process of reflective teaching.

In Section 4, I consider how the concept of reflective practice can be moved forward in language teaching. Section 5 brings a conclusion to this Element. One final point to emphasize is that the focus is on how to encourage language teachers to reflect on themselves and their practices both inside and outside the classroom as part of their professional development. (I use the term *language teaching* to include the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages [TESOL] that includes EFL and English as a second language [ESL] teachers. This Element does not cover second language students or student learning and reflection; rather, it covers the education of second language teachers and getting them to reflect.)

1.2 Reflective Practice and Reflection

Reflective practice as a mark of professional competence has taken hold across many professions in recent times (e.g., science, law, medicine, nursing, and education). For example, reflective practice has been cited as especially helpful for students of law who lack practical experience because they can, as Anzalone (2010) has noted, "examine and test beliefs and principles against what is being learned doctrinally" (p. 86). Within the nursing profession, reflective practice has been cited as an important concept because it can help narrow the divide between theory and practice (Kim et al., 2010). Within the field of education, as Tabachnik and Zeichner (2002) have pointed out, "there is not a single teacher educator who would say that he or she is not concerned about preparing teachers who are reflective" (p. 13).

Thus, reflective practice has taken a firm hold within teacher preparation and development programs as an essential skill (Loughran, 2002; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1992). Reflective practice offers teachers a way to articulate those

aspects of practice that make up part of that knowledge base in teaching by helping practitioners better understand what they know and do as they (re) consider what they learn in and through their teaching (Smyth, 1992). As Zwozdiak-Myers (2012, p. 3) has pointed out, reflective practice is central to a teacher's development because it helps teachers "analyse and evaluate what is happening" in their classes so they can not only improve the quality of their teaching but also provide better learning opportunities for their students.

Within language teaching, reflective practice has also arguably become an even more important concept as the profession has moved into a "post-method condition" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) where language teachers no longer rely on prescribed teaching methods. Generally, reflective practice for language teachers, as Freeman (2016) puts it, is the "mental activity that teachers do as they think in teaching situations" (p. 207). Its inclusion in language teacher education and development programs, according to Freeman, is based on two premises: "(1) Improvement in teaching comes when teachers can turn actions that are automatic and routine into ones that are considered. (2) This shift from automatic to considered actions supports a more professionalized view of teaching" (p. 221). Thus, although reflective practice has been embraced enthusiastically in recent years in the field of language teaching, "what it actually is and how it might be developed are more problematic" (Walsh & Mann, 2015, p. 351).

In other words, although reflection and reflective practice have gained prominence in language teaching as marks of professional competence, and reflective practice has been considered a significant component of many preservice language teacher education and in-service development programs, there is still little agreement about how to define the concept or indeed what strategies can operationalize or promote reflective teaching. Thus, although most language educators still concur that some form of reflection is desirable for language teachers, the precise definition of reflective practice remains vague, with resulting misunderstandings about the philosophical traditions behind whose work is most cited when attempting to define and operationalize this interesting yet complex topic.

The concept of reflection can be traced back to various ancient and current religions, but the current use of the term *reflection* comes from the Latin word *reflectere* and means "to bend back" (Valli, 1997, p. 67) or to look back and become more aware of a past event or issue. From ancient historical cultural and religious roots (e.g., ancient Greece, China, and India) we recognize that humans tend to "reflect" in some manner as they go about their daily lives. In the early twentieth century, reflection and reflective practice appeared especially in North America through the seminal work of John Dewey. Dewey

(1933) was initially interested in encouraging more reflection in student learning (rather than with teachers) because he worried that routine thinking and decision-making by students in educational settings would not lead to a complete education. He extended this idea of *reflective inquiry* to teachers on the basis of noting that teachers who do not reflect on their work can become slaves to routine because their actions are guided mostly by impulse, tradition, and/or authority rather than by informed decision-making. This decision-making, Dewey (1933) insisted, should be based on systematic and conscious reflections because teaching experience, when combined with these reflections, can lead to awareness, development, and growth.

Thus, Dewey (1933) maintained that reflective practice entails "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (p. 9). This famous and often used quote has proved to be the basis of many subsequent approaches to reflection and reflective practice, and the concept saw a resurgence in the 1980s with the work of Donald Schön (1983, 1987). Whereas Dewey (1933) encouraged practitioners to reflect after the action, or "reflection-*on*-action," Schön (1983, 1987) encouraged practitioners to reflect during action, or "reflection-*in*-action," on the basis that practitioners can see more than they can explain. Schön wanted to encourage practitioners to reflect as they engaged in this action (I explain this in more detail section 2 below).

1.3 Reconceptualizing Reflective Practice in Language Education

Herein lies one of the major issues related to many previous discussions and implementations of reflective practice in language education. Both Dewey's (1933) oft-cited definition and his overall "reflection-on-action" approach, as well as the frequent references to and citations of Schön's (who incidentally did not work much with teachers) "reflection-in-action" approach, have been used in the scholarly literature in language education without any real critical examination. This has resulted in concealing the exact nature of reflection and its implications for language teacher education and language teaching. For example, in their probing article on "doing reflective practice" within language education, Walsh and Mann (2015) noted that the many challenges regarding understanding the true nature of reflective practice can make operationalizing reflective practice difficult for researchers and language teachers alike; as Walsh and Mann (2015) stated, "the many differing (and even conflicting) perspectives on what reflection actually means make it difficult for researchers and practitioners to operationalize it in any meaningful way" (p. 215). For instance, when language teacher candidates or experienced language teachers are encouraged

to reflect, it is important to know in whose tradition this reflection is mirrored and how reflection is operationalized based on the underlying traditions. Within language teaching, then, as Freeman (2016) maintains, although reflective practice can offer a way into the "less accessible aspects of [a language] teacher's work" (p. 208), this access really depends on how reflection is operationalized.

Essentially, I suggest that one of the main reasons scholars and practitioners alike have problems with "doing" reflective practice is a lack of understanding of what reflective practice is and how it can be operationalized in language teaching; thus, there is confusion about the nature of reflection for teachers and teacher educators. As Freeman (2016) asks, "is 'reflection' a clearly defined concept or has it become a catch-all?" (p. 208).

As Freeman (2016) observed, "conceptualizing reflection in teaching is usually traced back to the work of John Dewey [and] Donald Schön on whose work the notion of reflection in education largely rests" (p. 208). However, both offer very different models of reflective practice and both are limited. Thus, in the spirit of reflective practice, in what follows, I examine both of their models because both have been very influential to my own work but also different to my approach.

1.4 Disentangling the Terms

Having provided a brief overview of the top topic and argument of this Element, I now briefly summarize some of the key terms related to reflection and reflective practice in language teaching to show why there seems to be so much confusion with how they are used in the literature.

In any review of the literature on reflective teaching, it is possible to find terms that vary in meaning, and sometimes it is difficult to unravel them. Within the field of language teaching, I (2018) recently extensively reviewed research on the practices that encourage ESL and EFL teachers to reflect on their own practices. Of the 138 studies published in academic peer-reviewed journals (I did not include monographs, book chapters, or books on reflective practice) over a seven-year period (2009–2015), I noted that only 52 of those studies attempted to define reflective practice (with citations). Furthermore, only 11 of the 52 studies attempted to define or very loosely defined the concept by just citing scholars' work. Seventy-five studies (or more than 50 percent of the total) did not give any definition of the concept but led into a discussion of "reflective practice" without saying what it was. Indeed, many studies used different terms such as *reflection*, *reflective practice*, *critical reflection*, *reflective teaching*, *reflective action*, *reflection-in-action*, *reflection-on-action*, *reflective practitioner*, *reflective thinking*,

reflective inquiry, *analytical reflection*, and so on interactively in the sense that they had the same meaning as *reflection* or *reflective practice*. As I remarked, this lack of clarity around the overall concept of reflection and reflective practice and related terms is problematic within language teaching. Lack of clarity with regard to what we mean by reflection and lack of understanding of models of knowledge that underpin reflective practice make it difficult to operationalize the concept.

In addition, I (2018) discovered that, of the citations from the 52 studies (out of 138) that actually defined reflective practice in TESOL, the "main" scholars outside language teaching who were cited as a source for the research included Dewey (19 citations) and Schön (22 citations), and most of these only provided a quotation from either Dewey or Schön to legitimize their particular approach, perhaps without a full understanding of their approaches and theoretical grounding.

Within language teaching, early incorporation of the term *reflection* distinguished between a "weak" form and a "strong" form. In its weakest version, reflection was said to be no more than "thoughtful" practice where language teachers sometimes, as Wallace (1996) suggested, "informally evaluate various aspects of their professional expertise" (p. 292). However, as Wallace also pointed out, this type of "informal reflection" does not really lead to improved teaching and can even lead to more "unpleasant emotions without suggesting any way forward" (p. 13). Thus, a second, "stronger" form of or stance on reflection in language teaching emerged that proposed that language teachers should systematically collect data about their teaching and use that information to make responsible decisions about their teaching (Richards & Lockhart, 1994). In fact, this stance on reflection reiterates what Dewey (1933) noted about reflection when he said that "data (facts) and ideas (suggestions, possible solutions) thus form the two indispensable and correlative factors of all reflective activity" (p. 104). In more recent discussions on reflection in language teaching, Walsh and Mann (2015) have echoed this call for data-led reflective practice by encouraging teachers to collect data as a concrete means of focusing their reflections so they can make more insightful analysis and gain a fuller sense of their own teaching.

Recently, this second, "stronger" conceptualization of reflection is beginning to take hold within language teaching (e.g., see Mann & Walsh, 2017, for an excellent analysis and implementation of evidence-based reflective practice for language teachers). Nevertheless, we must still be careful that evidence-based approaches are not reduced solely to solving teaching problems that have occurred in class, where teachers are encouraged to collect data to "fix" classroom problems without any critical reflection on the social, affective,

moral, or political aspects related to practice. Indeed, we must also be careful that critical reflections on practice consist of more than asking why a teacher uses a particular method in a lesson, as occurred within the early literature on reflection in the field of language teaching; as Hatton and Smith (1995) also noted many years ago, there is such a problem with the term *critical reflection*. They observed that some take it to "mean no more than constructive self-criticism of one's actions with a view to improvement" (p. 35).

In order to critically reflect on our practices, we must move beyond self-critical conceptual descriptions and examine the ideological influences that impact these practices as well as consider the interplay between our emotions and our reflections. One early notable exception within the field of language teaching who advocated for such a critical approach was Bartlett (1990), who maintained that we include the broader society in any approaches to reflections on teaching. Bartlett noted that critically reflective teachers must "transcend the technicalities of teaching and think beyond the need to improve . . . instructional techniques" (p. 204). However, Bartlett's ideas were largely ignored within language teaching until scholars such as Crookes (2013) wanted a more critical approach and advocated "teaching for social justice, in ways that support the development of active, engaged citizens who . . . will be prepared to seek out solutions to the problems they define and encounter, and take action accordingly" (p. 8). Thus, reflection should also include language teachers reflecting on the equitable nature of the profession (Hatton & Smith, 1995), as well as critically reflecting on the presence of power structures within the institutions in which they work (Brookfield, 1995).[1]

The problems of unraveling the semantics of the terms *reflection* and *reflective practice* outlined earlier in this Element also include the place and meaning of the term *reflexive* as in "reflexive practice." Coghlan and Brannick (2005) maintain that "reflexivity is the constant analysis of one's own theoretical and methodological presuppositions" (p. 6). Within language teaching, Edge (2011) contends, the term *reflexive* overlaps and interacts with reflection and reflective practice. However, one major difference I see is that the term *reflexive practice* denotes a more inward-looking, individual reflective activity where practitioners look at their own self-trajectories, which for the most part are disconnected from others; indeed, as Edge acknowledges, "the reflexive invites the autobiographical" (p. 25). I agree that language teachers and language teacher educators should interrogate their own philosophies, principles, theories, and

---

[1] I return to the issue of critical reflection in Section 2.2 when I outline and discuss my framework for reflecting on practice, as it includes coverage of critical reflection that I call "beyond practice," and how I specifically attempt to integrate teacher emotions within the framework as an integral aspect of reflective teaching.

practices and critically reflect beyond practice; however, I also agree with Dewey (1933), who maintained that the process is social and as a result, it is best carried out in the presence of others. Thus, my framework for reflecting on practice outlined in this Element is both "reflective" and "reflexive"; as Thompson and Pascal (2012) pointed out, the former incorporates the more "traditional notion of reflection as an analytical process" and the latter, reflexive approach emphasizes "the mirroring of practice, and thereby undertaking a self-analysis" (p. 320).

Note that, because of word count restrictions, this Element cannot and does not attempt to review all the literature related to all the different definitions of or approaches to reflective practice (but see Farrell, 2017, for a detailed outline of how language teacher educators attempted to incorporate some kind of reflection within their language teacher education programs in order to bridge the theory/practice divide they noticed between the content of their courses and the reality of the classroom; Farrell, 2018, for a report on the research conducted on reflective practice; and Farrell, 2019a, for an analysis of the different typologies of and approaches to reflective practice). Rather, I only focus on the two most cited approaches from Dewey and Schön and their influence in the development of my own framework.

2 "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants": Dewey and Schön

My own interest in the concept of reflective practice is long-standing (e.g., Farrell, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2016). Throughout its early period, my work was influenced by Dewey and Schön as two scholar giants. However, I was not fully convinced of the efficacy of their approaches beyond their pragmatic attraction when it came to implementing reflective practice. About ten years ago, I endeavored to reflect on reflective practice after working with this concept for more than ten years before that (including completing my PhD dissertation on the topic) but never questioning why I was so influenced by these scholars nor what exactly their approaches stood for. Now it seems almost mandatory to cite both scholars but without full knowledge of what they really represent. Indeed, within language teacher education, a recent review of an edited book that included the topic of reflection critically noted that the mandatory citation of Schön's work was somehow missing (Ur, 2020). However, while I fully acknowledge that Schön's work on reflective teaching is very important, merely citing his and Dewey's work is not a sufficient justification for their inclusion because, as Hébert (2015) suggests, we also need to better understand the intricacies of their approaches. Thus, my aim in this section is to point out that teacher educators,

researchers, and language teachers should not uncritically pay "homage" to their work without a full understanding of what their work means within reflective practice.

It is also because of their huge influence on the development of my own framework that it encourages language teachers to reflect on their teaching. It is important for language teachers, teacher educators, researchers, and policy makers who may want to operationalize reflective teaching based on citing these almost "canonical" sources (Hébert, 2015) to have a clear understanding of the underlying theoretical traditions. One important reason for seeking such clarity is that when preservice and/or in-service language teachers are asked to reflect within language teacher education and development programs, more attention should be afforded to discussions about whose ideological tradition this request mirrors (Collin, Karsenti, & Komis, 2013; Hébert, 2015). Indeed, Hébert has suggested that, in order to retain the spirit of reflection, all models should be "critically examined and their connection to Dewey and Schön closely scrutinized" (p. 362). Akbari (2007) noted, "it is good to reflect, but reflection itself also requires reflection" (p. 205).

2.1 Dewey and Schön: Perspectives and Constraints

2.1.1 Perspectives

Dewey's (1933) main approach to reflective practice is called *reflective inquiry*, where he suggests practitioners can slow down the interval between thought and action as they pass through its five main phases of reflection. The first phase is called *suggestion*, where a practitioner faces a problematic issue and quickly comes up with some vague suggestions as possible solutions. Here Dewey (1933) maintains that practitioners suspend immediate judgment to consider alternative reasons for the problem as they move into the second phase, called *intellectualization*. During this phase, the practitioner's initial emotional reaction is converted into an intellectual reaction as he or she moves from problem "felt" to problem to be solved. The practitioner begins to refine the problem by asking more probing questions; as Dewey (1933) noted, a question well asked is half the answer already. The third phase is called *guiding idea*, where the practitioner gathers as much information about the problem as possible from as many different sources as possible in order to come up with a working hypothesis. Indeed, during this third phase, I have encouraged language teachers to also consider Brookfield's (1995) idea of looking at a problem through different lenses – the teacher's lens, the colleague's lens, the student's lens, and a literature review lens – in order to gather as much information as possible about the problem at hand. The fourth phase is called *reasoning*, and

here the practitioner attempts to come up with a tentative solution based on all the information gathered thus far. The practitioner makes a tentative plan that he or she does not know will work at that time when he or she moves into the fifth and final phase, called *hypothesis testing*. After deciding the plan, the practitioner tests it by action and observation to see if it works; if it does not work, the practitioner attempts to generate different solutions and test these in a similar manner. The approach combines his or her process approach with the product approach to reflection; the process begins when a problematic issue arises which he or she calls "suggestion" in the first phase of the model. The product of reflection is solving the problem, ideally at the end of phase five.

Although I present the reflective inquiry phases in linear fashion, Dewey acknowledged that teachers do not (and probably should not) go through each of these phases in a lockstep fashion. Dewey also recognized that going through the process of reflective inquiry is not easy, because reflective thinking involves suspending immediate judgment so that we can delay reaching hasty conclusions. Thus, Dewey (1933) was encouraging teachers to take a step back by going through all the phases and to avoid jumping to early conclusions before having had an opportunity to examine the issue or problem in detail.

Dewey's (1933) approach to reflection has had immense influence on the work of other scholars over the intervening years who have since built on this model. For example, Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985) have suggested a more cyclical model with three broader categories of reflective thought (experience, reflection, and outcome) that also emphasizes emotion as an element of reflective practice. In addition, Zeichner and Liston (1996, 2014) also returned to Dewey's (1933) original ideas when they distinguished between routine action and reflective action and suggested that, for teachers, "routine action is guided primarily by tradition, external authority and circumstance," whereas reflective action "entails the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge" (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, p. 24). In addition, Jay and Johnson (2002) use Dewey's (1933) description of reflection as "the active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it" (p. 9). Indeed, I believe that Dewey's (1933) evidence-based reflective inquiry cycle is most likely a precursor to action research steps that have been incorporated in general education and language teaching in modern times (e.g., Burns, 2010).

In addition, Dewey (1933) noted that knowledge of the strategies and methods of reflective practice are not enough by themselves because "there must be the desire, the will, to employ them. This is an affair of personal disposition" (p. 30). Thus, Dewey (1933) maintained that reflection needs to be guided by a set of attitudes to make the reflection truly meaningful. Dewey