

Development Of Reflective Competence in In-Service Teachers as A Pressing Pedagogical Issue

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the development of reflective competence among participants in advanced training courses as a priority area of teachers' professional development in the context of ongoing educational modernization. The relevance of the study is обусловлена large-scale educational reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan, rising demands for teaching quality, the implementation of competency-based and student-centered approaches, and the growing need for teachers' conscious professional self-development. Drawing on an analysis of domestic and international psychological and pedagogical research, the article conceptualizes reflective competence as an integrative personal quality that enables a meaningful approach to professional activity, critical analysis of teaching experience, and informed professional decision-making. The study demonstrates that reflective competence functions as a key mechanism of teachers' professional growth, supports the development of their subject position, and facilitates effective adaptation to changes in the educational environment. Particular attention is paid to contradictions in current professional development practices, including the predominance of lecture-based formats, limited use of reflective methods, and the absence of systematic assessment of reflective maturity. The article substantiates the need to integrate reflective practices into the content and organization of professional development programs and to create a reflective educational environment that promotes teachers' active and autonomous professional engagement. The findings may be applied in the design of professional development programs, scientific and methodological work, and further research on teacher professional development.

Keywords: Reflexive competence; teacher professional development; professional development; pedagogical reflection; teacher professionalism; student-centered education; competency-based approach; continuous professional development.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has been implementing large-scale education reforms aimed at improving the quality of teacher training and modernizing the foreign language teaching system. At the initiative of Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the teaching of foreign languages is viewed as a strategic resource for the country's socioeconomic development, integration into the global educational and scientific community, and the development of competitive human capital. Adopted regulations and state programs are focused not only on updating the content of language education but also on the qualitative transformation of the teacher training system, implementing modern educational standards, digital

technologies, and a competency-based approach.

In the context of these reforms, the professional development of foreign language teachers is particularly important. They are required not only to master subject content and teaching methods, but also to constantly self-reflect, understand their own teaching practices, and adapt to rapidly changing educational conditions. In this context, the development of reflective competence is viewed as a fundamental condition for a teacher's professional activity, their pedagogical mastery, and their readiness for continuous professional growth.

Despite the recognition of the importance of reflection in

teaching, the practice of professional development shows that not all teachers systematically analyze their own actions and professional decisions. The concept of a "thinking teacher" is often perceived formally, whereas a reflective approach presupposes a deep understanding not only of the methodological aspects of work but also of personal attitudes, values, and professional relationships. This contradiction between the declared goals of developing teacher agency and the actual conditions of professional training determines the relevance of this study. The purpose of this article is to theoretically substantiate the development of reflective competence in students of professional development courses as a pressing pedagogical issue in the context of the modernization of the education system.

Literature Review

In psychological and pedagogical traditions, reflective competence is typically viewed as an integrative professional quality that supports a teacher's meaningful orientation toward practice, including self-observation, self-analysis, self-assessment, and goal-oriented professional growth. From an activity perspective, Davydov (1986) emphasizes the role of conscious analysis and internal regulation in the development of professional activity, consistent with the idea that reflective processes underlie the transformation of experience into professional competence. Complementing this, Markova (1996) links professionalism with self-regulation, value orientation, and the teacher's capacity for goal-oriented improvement, emphasizing reflection as an important psychological mechanism for professional maturity. Kuzmina (1990) further conceptualizes teacher professionalism as a structured system of competencies and professionally significant qualities, in which reflective self-assessment and continuous improvement function as conditions for sustainable effectiveness. Within the framework of a practice-oriented pedagogical concept, Kolesnikova and Titova (2005) emphasize that the quality of professional activity depends on the teacher's ability to analyze and optimize practice—an argument that supports the integration of reflection and praxeological analysis into continuous professional development (CPD).

International research views reflection as a key mechanism for professional learning and adaptive competence. Schön (2003) conceptualizes professional growth through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, arguing that practitioners improve not only through the accumulation of

experience but also through its interpretation and reinterpretation in response to complex situations. This view is consistent with Dewey's (2000) understanding of reflective thinking as an active, persistent, and careful consideration of beliefs and knowledge claims, where meaningful learning emerges from thoughtful analysis rather than from routine repetition. Together, these theoretical perspectives support the argument that reflective competence is not an optional attribute, but a central condition for professional development in conditions of uncertainty, change, and heightened responsibility.

Within the broader pedagogical discourse, reflective competence is closely linked to teacher professionalism and the student-centered learning paradigm. Gazman (2001) emphasizes pedagogical support and the teacher's role in facilitating students' personal development, which presupposes reflective sensitivity to student needs, classroom dynamics, and the ethical implications of pedagogical decisions. Bondarevskaya (2000) argues that student-centered education requires teachers to have a subject-oriented stance and value orientation—aspects that are strengthened through reflective practice. Isaev (2002) emphasizes professional culture as the basis for responsible pedagogical choice, suggesting that reflective judgment mediates between institutional requirements and context-dependent decisions in the learning process. Mitina (2004) adds that reflection is crucial for professional growth and the prevention of professional strain, especially under stress and high workloads. From a pedagogical perspective, Ilyina (2008) links teacher development to the ability to rethink one's professional position and innovate, implying that reflective competence facilitates both flexibility and sustainable professional renewal.

While theory consistently recognizes reflection as a central element of professionalism, the literature also points to persistent contradictions in teacher professional development systems. A common problem is the prevalence of lecture-based and informational models that prioritize content delivery over active reflection and reflective reconstruction of experience. In such settings, reflective activity can be reduced to formal forms of feedback rather than systematic engagement with professional dilemmas, cases, and data from classroom practice. These limitations hinder the transfer of new knowledge into practice and reduce the potential of continuous professional development to support teachers' autonomous professional growth. In the context of reforms

in Uzbekistan, this gap is becoming particularly relevant, as political expectations increasingly demand that teachers be autonomous, adaptive, and make evidence-based decisions (President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2023; Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2024). Thus, the literature supports the need to incorporate structured reflective practices—such as reflective journaling, case studies, group discussions, and guided self-assessment—into

Methods

The methodological basis of the study was based on systemic, competency-based, and student-centered approaches. The study utilized theoretical analysis and synthesis of scientific sources, a comparative analysis of domestic and international concepts of teacher professional development, and a summary of contemporary psychological and pedagogical research on the issue of teacher reflection and professional development.

Results

An analysis of the scientific literature shows that reflective competence in pedagogy is viewed as an integrative quality of the teacher's personality, ensuring a conscious and responsible approach to professional activity, the ability to self-observe, self-analyze, self-assess, and purposefully develop professionally. Contemporary research emphasizes that reflection is not an episodic act of understanding experience, but a sustainable professional mechanism that provides a link between pedagogical goals, the means of their implementation, and the results achieved. Domestic and international researchers agree that reflective processes underlie teachers' professional self-awareness and fulfill a number of key functions: analytical (understanding pedagogical situations and one's own actions), regulatory (correcting professional behavior), prognostic (planning future actions), and value-semantic (aligning professional decisions with personal and professional values). Implementing these functions contributes to the development of an individual teaching style and enhances teachers' ability to critically evaluate their own effectiveness in a dynamically changing educational environment.

Donald Schön made a significant contribution to the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of reflection, viewing reflection as a necessary condition for a specialist's professional development. He substantiated the

proposition that pedagogical excellence is developed not only through the accumulation of practical experience but also through its systematic reflection. The concepts he introduced, "reflection in action" and "reflection after action," reflect a teacher's ability to analyze and adjust their own decisions both directly during and after teaching, transforming their experience into conscious professional strategies.

The results of an analysis of modern psychological and pedagogical research indicate that the development of reflective competence positively influences teachers' professional motivation, enhances their readiness for innovative activity, and facilitates the development of a subjective position in the educational process. Reflective competence allows teachers not only to adapt to changes in educational policy and standards but also to meaningfully integrate new requirements into their own practice, which is especially important in the system of professional development and retraining.

Discussion

Despite the theoretical recognition of the importance of reflective competence, a number of persistent contradictions remain in the practice of teacher professional development. First of all, the stated goals of developing teachers' professional agency are often not supported by appropriate methodological tools. Continuing education courses remain predominantly focused on lecture-based formats, in which teachers act as passive consumers of ready-made knowledge rather than active participants in professional reflection.

A significant limitation is also the lack of systematic reflective work aimed at analyzing individual teaching experience. As a result, the implementation of professional innovations is often formal in nature and is not accompanied by a deep reflection by teachers on their own professional difficulties, mistakes, and achievements. This hinders the transfer of acquired knowledge to real-world educational practice and reduces the effectiveness of continuing education courses. An analysis of practice shows that the most productive conditions for developing reflective competence include engaging teachers in challenging professional situations, modeling pedagogical tasks, collectively discussing experiences, analyzing pedagogical cases, and maintaining reflective journals and essays. These forms of work allow learning to shift from the mere acquisition of information to a space of meaning-

making and professional dialogue.

At the same time, implementing reflective practices requires targeted methodological training for teachers in professional development courses, as well as a revision of traditional forms of organizing the educational process. Without creating a reflective educational environment and appropriate methodological support, the development of reflective competence remains fragmented and does not ensure sustainable changes in teachers' professional activities.

Conclusion

Thus, developing reflective competence in students attending continuing education courses represents a pressing and multifaceted pedagogical challenge, driven by the transformation of the educational environment, the changing professional role of teachers, and increasing demands on the quality of teaching. Reflective competence is a key mechanism for teachers' professional growth, enabling them to engage in conscious self-development, critically analyze their own practice, and make informed professional decisions.

Developing this competence fosters a sustainable intrinsic motivation for learning, increases teachers' readiness for innovation, and ensures the implementation of the principles of student-centered education within the continuous professional development system. In the context of the modernization of the continuing education system, reflective competence is key to bridging the gap between theoretical learning and teaching practice. Effective development of reflective competence is possible only with a systematic approach that involves the integration of reflective practices into the content and organization of advanced training courses, the development of diagnostic tools, and the creation of a reflective educational environment focused on the active and subjective position of the teacher as a participant in his or her own professional development.

Ethics Statement

This study is based on the analysis of published academic literature and official policy documents. It does not involve human participants, personal data, or experimental interventions. Therefore, ethical approval was not required. The author declares no conflict of interest.

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