EXPLORING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES IN *GURU PENGGERAK* TRAINING: INSIGHTS FROM FOUR EFL TEACHER LEADERS

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Abstract: In preparing *Guru Penggerak* candidates to become reflective teacher leaders, reflective practice takes central stage, forming one of the core principles of PGP (*Pendidikan Guru Penggerak*) program. This study delves into the experiences of four EFL teacher leaders, now officially designated as *Guru Penggerak*, focusing on their past reflective practices during the training and the benefits they derived from them. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis unearthed a plethora of reflective practices integrated into the training. These included writing reflective essays in response to reflective questions as part of the selection process, self-reflections at the beginning of each module, collaborative reflections at various stages of the learning process, (bi)weekly learning reflections and post-module reflections. In regular learning reflection, the participants employed 4F (Fact, Feeling, Finding, Future) reflection model. Further, reflective practices were embedded in the candidates' assessment through the submission of their reflective tasks, along with feedback from their facilitator, mentor, peers, students, and principal. The Participants credit these reflective practices for strengthening and contextualizing their learning as well as raising an awareness of the importance of reflective practice.

Keywords: EFL; *Guru Penggerak*; reflective practice; Teacher Leader

INTRODUCTION

Pendidikan Guru Penggerak (PGP) is a professional development program focused on developing teachers to become learning leaders (Kusumaningsih, 2022). In this paper, the term 'Guru Penggerak' is represented by the English term 'Teacher Leader.' To become a Teacher Leader (*Guru Penggerak*), candidates must pass a selection process and enroll in the program for six months. One of the core principles of the training program is the concept of reflection (Kementrian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi, 2024), which is integrated into the training methods, including online training, conferences, workshops, and mentoring. This study explores the experiences of four EFL teacher leaders who have successfully completed the training and are officially designated as *Guru Penggerak*, focusing on their reflective practices during the training and the benefits they derived from these experiences.

Reflective concept is not only one of the core principles of the training but also one of the core values of *Guru Penggerak* (Dharma, 2022). To fulfill their professional roles and responsibilities, teacher leaders are expected to be reflective practitioners (Dharma, 2022), starting from the smallest unit of the classroom to the broader educational community. As learning leaders in the classroom, reflective practice benefits teachers in multiple ways, such as fostering innovation in teaching strategies and improving self-awareness (Farrell, 2013), enhancing teaching quality (Maksimović & Osmanović, 2018), developing self-efficacy (Azim, 2017), increasing awareness of students' needs and affective responses (Singh Gill, 2014), and providing a deeper understanding of the interaction between theoretical and practical experiences (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017) as well as between personal and professional experiences (Leeferink et al., 2019). It can also facilitate the development of teacher professional identity (Yuan & Mak, 2018). By integrating reflective practice into the training program, teacher leaders are expected to view reflection as a habit and a necessity rather than just a training assignment (Kusumaningsih et al, 2022).

Previously, studies on the integration of reflective practice in teacher trainings have been conducted in various contexts such as the integration of reflective practice for pre-service teachers (Maolida, 2022; 2024) and in-service teachers (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019; Nurkamto & Sarosa, 2020). Despite the variety of context, there is limited research specifically focusing on how teacher leader training programs integrate reflective practice to foster reflective teacher leaders. This research aims to address this gap by examining a specific teacher leader training program's approach to integrating reflective practices through four EFL teacher leaders' experiences during the training.

METHOD

This research is qualitative case study focusing on the reflective practices in the PGP program as experienced by four EFL teacher leaders who have officially completed their training and been designated as *Guru Penggerak*. The participants' profiles are displayed here:

Table 1. Participants of the Research

Participants	Profiles		
	Batch of *Guru Penggerak*	EFL Teaching Experience	Other leadership role(s) beside teaching
Participant 1	2	15	*Guru Penggerak*, Vice principal of curriculum, teacher mentor
Participant 2	3	17	*Guru Penggerak,* National English facilitator, teacher mentor, superintendent candidate
Participant 3	4	16	*Guru Penggerak,* Facilitator, national instructor, superintendent candidate

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Participant 4	6	5	*Guru Penggerak,* Coordinator of P5 at school

The four participants taught English at the secondary level in different schools and held various leadership roles. Therefore, the term 'EFL teacher leader' refers not only to their role as English teachers but also to their roles as leaders within the broader education community.

The data for this research were obtained from semi structured interviews and documents. The interviews were conducted face to face, lasting for approximately 30 minutes for each participant. The documents were collected from the participants' documents used in the past in their selection and learning process such as reflective essays in response to the questions in the selection process and other reflections in various forms such as videos, infographics, article, and reflective journal the participants produced during the period of *Guru Penggerak* training. The collected data were then analyzed thematically to answer the questions posed for this study focusing on the participants' experiences of reflective practice during PGP program and the benefits they derived from those experiences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the participants experienced various types of reflection integrated throughout the training, from selection and learning, to assessment process.

Integrated Reflection in Selection Process

The participants shared their experiences with reflective practice, stating that they were engaged in reflection from the very beginning of the PGP selection process. During this process, they were required to write reflective essays in response to the given questions as shown in the following figure.

Dulu, ketika saya masih mahasiswa saya cukup aktif dalam organisasi mahasiswa yang sesuai dengan idealisme saya. Saya merasa nyaman karena berkumpul dengan orang-orang yang memiliki pemikiran dan tujuan yang sama. Namun ketika dihadapkan dengan berbagai kondisi yang jauh dari ideal, dengan orang-orang yang heterogen dengan pemikiran dan tujuan yang berbeda-beda membuat saya lebih nyaman dalam "kesendirian". Setelah mendengar masukan-masukan dari beberapa senior saya, dan juga setelah lebih memahami situasi di sekolah saya mencoba untuk lebih percaya diri dalam berbuat sesuatu yang positif dan menunjukkan keaktifan saya di sekolah. Selain berusaha mengembangkan hubungan interpersonal saya di sekolah juga meningkatkan keaktifan saya dalam berorganisasi di sekolah saya juga berusaha untuk lebih berprestasi di luar sekolah melalui kompetisi yang diadakan untuk guru, salah satunya adalah OGN (Olimpiade Guru Nasional).

Figure 1. Sample of Reflective essay (participant 1)

The document shows that participant 1 was asked to reflect on her weakness and how she coped with it. Through the essay, the participant deepened her self-awareness (Farrell, 2013) by reflecting on her interpersonal skill barrier, specifically her tendency to withdraw herself in environments she considered unideal due to heterogonous types of people. Learning from more experienced colleagues' feedback and understanding her school's characteristics, she pushed herself to become more confident by participating in

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school activities and joining teacher competition such as National Teacher Olympiad, where she won at the regency level. This reflective essay revealed the interaction between the participant's personal and professional experiences (Leeferink et al., 2019). Besides responding to written question with reflective essays, the participants also admitted that the interview process required them to reflect on several aspects they had written about in their essays.

Integrated Reflection in Learning process
The findings also reveal that the participants engaged in various types of reflective practice, which were integrated into different stages of the learning process in the PGP program, as summarized in the following figure:
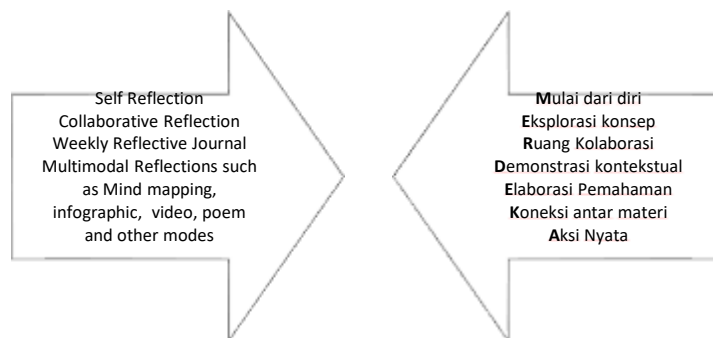
Figure 2. Types of Reflective Practice integrated in the Training

Even though the participants had slight differences in perceiving their reflective practice experiences, all of them noted continuous involvement in reflections during the training. These reflections were integrated into the stages of learning, following the MERDEKA (**M**ulai dari diri, **E**ksplorasi konsep, **R**uang kolaborasi, **D**emonstrasi **k**ontekstual, **E**laborasi pemahaman, **K**oneksi antar materi, **A**ksi nyata) concept. At the beginning of each module, the participants were asked to do self-reflection (Lew &Schmidt, 2011) linking their personal experience, feelings, and beliefs to the content that they were about to learn. They then engaged in various types of reflection, such as collaborative reflection (Morris& Stew, 2007), facilitated through discussions with other candidates, mentors, facilitator, and instructor, which helped them comprehend the topics and contextualize the content to their school's or class's needs. In addition to these integrated reflections, regular reflective journals (Baresh, 2022) were written to help them grasp the essence of the content, link it to other topics, and personalize the context. Despite being taught various models of reflection, the participants chose 4 F (fact, Feeling, Finding, Future) model for their reflections.

> The reflective learning is more to 4F, reflecting on experiences during the learning, our feeling, the lessons we obtained and how it will be implemented in the future.
> [Interview, participant 2]

In writing post module reflections, the participants were given various alternatives for expressing their reflections, such as article, mind map, infographic, video, and other modes. The

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following is a sample of a partial reflection in the form of an article written by participant 4 in the Gurusiana website for the '*Koneksi Antar Materi'* stage:

> Berdasarkan pengetahuan yang saya dapatkan dari proses belajar selama ini, saya memahami bahwa focus utama kita dalam mendidik adalah anak atau peserta didik. Dan setelah mengalami proses belajar yang diaktualisasikan dalam pembelajaran di kelas, saya menyadari bahwa masih banyak yang harus saya perbaiki dalam merancang pembelajaran, terutama agar lebih melibatkan peserta didik.
>
> Sebagai hasil dari mempelajari modul 1.1 tentang Filosofi Pendidikan KHD, maka pembelajaran di dalam kelas haruslah memperhatikan beberapa hal termasuk diantaranya pendidikan yang berpusat pada murid, memperbanyak interaksi antara guru-murid, merekonstruksi alur pembelajaran yang melibatkan proses diskusi, kolaborasi, presentasi dan kegiatan lain yang lebih banyak membuat siswa aktif selama pembelajaran.

Figure 3. Sample of Reflective article in Gurusiana (participant 4)

Besides engaging in reflection during the learning process, the participants also explicitly learnt about reflective teaching from the module as stated by participant 3, "Indeed, one of the subjects in *Guru Penggerak* training is how we make reflection a habit in our own class and in this training."

Reflection as Part of Assessment

Through the interview, it is also revealed that the reflections were also integrated as part of assessment in *Guru Penggerak* training.
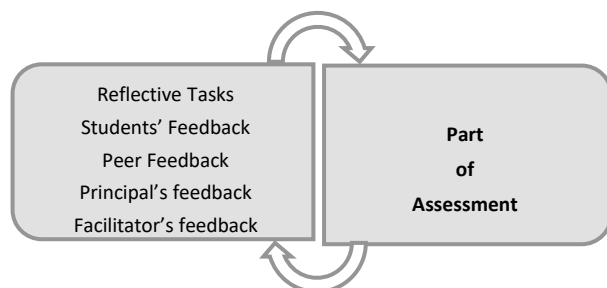
Figure 4. Reflection as Part of Assessment

As part of assessment, the participants submitted their reflections in learning management system to be assessed, as mentioned by participant 1, "Our tasks that should be uploaded to learning management system involve a lot of reflection, starting from '*mulai dari diri'* and other stages following MERDEKA concept." In addition, various feedbacks coming from their facilitator, mentor, peer, principal, and students had become the inseparable assessment that led to their learning improvement. In that case, the use of reflection as a reviewing process during the formative assessment along with constructive feedbacks play a crucial role in improving the participants' overall learning experiences (Dutta et al, 2023).

Furthermore, one of the participants identified that reflection had become component of formative assessment during the learning process. Participant 2 disclosed that during the training, candidates were also explicitly taught about assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning. She learnt that various

reflective practices, such as survey, observation, peer reviews, self-reviews and students reviews of learning can be utilized as formative assessments both for and as learning.

Benefits of Reflective Practices in PGP program

The four participants agreed that their reflective practice experiences during the training have given them various benefits.

> Reflective learning is very helpful for me, so I got general content, then I reflected on my learning experience, my feeling, what I learnt specifically and its implementation in our context as English teacher [Interview, participant 2]

The first benefit of reflective practice, such as (bi)weekly journals and post module reflections, was that it helped participants comprehend the content better. Reflecting on what they had learned required a full understanding of the material, allowing them to respond meaningfully. This aligns with Chang (2019), who stated that reflection helps participants gain a deeper understanding of the content and improve specific aspects of their learning process. Additionally, using Roger Greenaway's 4 F model of reflection (Anam et al., 2023), participants could contextualize their learning for implementation in their own contexts.

Participant 1 reported another benefit of writing skill improvement (Sani et al, 2017) due to regular reflections, which facilitated the development of ideas in a deeper and more detailed way. She added that through reflections, she realized the process, the progress, and contributions she made to the school and the wider education community, while also learning from hear weakness to improve. This process developed a sense of self-worth, aligning with the benefits of reflection in developing self-efficacy (Azim, 2017) and professional identity (Yuan & Mak, 2018).

Furthermore, continuous reflection during the training raised the participants' awareness of the importance of reflective practice, as indicated by participant 3's statement:

> To me, reflection is self-evaluation, for example in class context, how were my students' responses to my lesson, what did they feel? Did they learn new things? Is there any change in their skill, is it improved? I think reflection is very important for all subjects, including English. Indeed, it is also one of my tasks as *Guru Penggerak*, right? In smallest unit at my class and in bigger context to inspire other teachers [Interview, participant 3]

The excerpt from participant 3 demonstrates that the reflections he experienced during the training have led him to integrate reflective practices into his English class, involving both students and teachers in the process, in line with the training's emphasis on making reflection a habit (Kusumaningsih et al., 2022). This excerpt also highlights the participant's awareness that being a reflective teacher is paramount not only for the benefits of his classroom but also for fulfilling his broader role as a teacher leader who inspires other teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on exploring the experiences of four EFL teacher leaders with

reflective practice during their participation in PGP training. The findings reveal that reflective practices, as one of the core principles of the training, have been integrated into many stages of the PGP program-from the selection process and learning phases to the assessment system. Those reflective practices have helped the candidates comprehend the learning content, contextualize it to meet their school 'specific needs, formulate action plans, and as foster an awareness of the significance of reflective practice. Further studies are needed to examine how EFL teacher leaders implement reflective practice in their actual teaching environments and how they reflect on their teaching aspects while coping with the dynamics of English teaching. Such studies are crucial since the teacher leaders are expected start their leadership role from their smallest unit of class.

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