Predictors of Challenges in Implementing Reflective Teaching Practices Among High School (9-12) EFL Teachers in Gambela Region of Ethiopia Using An Ordinal Regression Analysis

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Abstract

The current study examined those factors that challenge the reflective practice of EFL teachers in Gambela region Ethiopia, at the high school level, who teach grades 9-12. Considering both the significance of EFL education in Ethiopia as well as the distinct context of Gambela, which may not be as resource-rich as other areas, the study sought to fill an existing gap in understanding the particular factors that impact teachers' capabilities to reflectively integrate practices. Employing a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, data were gathered from 90 EFL teachers on their demographic and attitudinal characteristics and perceptions of barriers to the use of reflective practices. Ordinal logistic regression analyses were conducted to determine the predictors among teacher-related factors of agreement with each of the seven challenges statements. Most teacher demographic variables, but, such as Years of Service, Educational Status, Reflective Practitioner Course, were not found to be significant predictors of the challenges examined. But, Sex (Male=1) was a significant predictor of the mother item regarding the challenge of assessing without a timetable (Q20) indicating that male teachers had higher likelihood of endorsing this item as a challenge. Importantly, a teacher's Opinion on Effective Teaching (views on teaching being reflective practice) was a strong negative predictor of the time scarcity challenge to finding comments (Q24). This suggests that teachers who had stronger beliefs about the importance of reflective teaching, would be significantly less likely to identify lack of time for feedback as a major limitation. Being confused about how to use reflection (Q23) was low overall and not predicted by the variables of interest. These findings point to particular challenges to reflective practices in the Gambela context, but also reveal the significance of an individual teacher's sense of the value of reflection as a means to overcome some of these perceived obstacles. The study provides context-specific evidence to inform targeted professional development and policy aimed at enhancing EFL teaching quality by addressing perceived difficulties and fostering positive attitudes towards reflection in the Gambela region.

Keywords: Reflective Teaching, EFL Teachers; Ethiopia; Gambela Region; Ordinal Regression; Challenges; Predictors; Teacher Demographics; Professional Development; Educational Research

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The importance of English language proficiency is, thus, significant for students aspiring towards academic and professional advancement in Ethiopia. The importance of English is acknowledged by the Ethiopian school system in having the language be a subject since grade 1, as well as the medium of instruction in almost all of the country at grade 9 and some regions, including Addis Ababa and Gambella, earlier starting on grade 7 (Romanian Association of Teachers of English, n.d.). The fact that English has been picked up so early and so widely highlights how important it is for global connectedness and economic development within the country (Romanian Association of Teachers of English, n.d.). Thus effective EFL high school teaching approaches are constantly required to prepare students with the language tools that they need for their future.

Teaching reflectively has proven to be a useful means for EFL educators to help them develop a more meaningful understanding of their students' multifaceted needs, learning patterns, and problems in the process of language learning (Fendler, 2024). Reflection enables teachers to question day to day interactions in their classroom and modify their own pedagogical practices accordingly to address the specific needs of their own students (Fendler, 2024). "Classroom observations can serve as a meaningful tool to raise teachers' own awareness of their practices and ultimately of the skills that…can create opportunities for professional development" (Fendler, 2024).

The Gambela region of western Ethiopia, bordering South Sudan, has a distinctive place in the country's geography (Ethiopian Education Foundation, n.d.). The area may also be characterized by a high number of refugees and by scarce resources for education more generally (Ethiopian Education Foundation, n.d.) . These specific socio-economic conditions and the influx of refugees may introduce particular obstacles to the successful implementation of new pedagogical practices, such as reflective teaching, among high school EFL teachers in the area (Ethiopian Education Foundation, n.d.). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence the adoption of reflective teaching in this specific regional context is crucial.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although there are a number of advantages identified from reflective teaching in EFL education, the ground reality in practical applications of reflective teaching among high school EFL teachers in Ethiopia particularly in Gambela region will face great challenges. Although the reflective teaching exhibits all possibilities of enhancing the quality of instructions and student learning outcomes, there is pragmatic need to understand what factors promote or dissuade its implementation in this setting. Knowledge of these predictors of challenge is necessary for shaping the development and implementation of focused interventions and support strategies aimed at supporting teachers in incorporating reflective practices into their teaching effectively. This research seeks to fill this gap by identifying the predictors to challenges of using reflective teaching practices among high school (9-12) EFL teachers in the Gambela region of Ethiopia.

1.3. Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following key questions:

1. What is the level of challenges faced by high school (9-12) EFL teachers in the Gambela region of Ethiopia in implementing reflective teaching practices?

2. To what extent do teacher-related factors (e.g., teaching experience, qualifications, beliefs about teaching and reflection, workload) predict the challenges in implementing reflective teaching practices among high school EFL teachers in the Gambela region?

3. To what extent do school-related factors (e.g., availability of resources, institutional support, school culture) predict the challenges in implementing reflective teaching practices among high school EFL teachers in the Gambela region?

4. To what extent do student-related factors (e.g., students' motivation, proficiency levels, classroom behavior) predict the challenges in implementing reflective teaching practices among high school EFL teachers in the Gambela region?

1.4. Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to identify the predictors of challenges in implementing reflective teaching practices among high school (9-12) EFL teachers in the Gambela region of Ethiopia using ordinal regression analysis. The secondary objectives of this research are to:

● Assess the level of challenges faced by high school (9-12) EFL teachers in the Gambela region in implementing reflective teaching.

● Examine the influence of teacher-related factors on the challenges faced in implementing reflective teaching.

● Investigate the impact of school-related factors on the challenges faced in implementing reflective teaching.

● Determine the role of student-related factors in predicting the challenges faced in implementing reflective teaching.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research gives an important value because it provides an all-sides picture of various factors which can influence implementation of reflective teaching among EFL teachers working in the specific and possibly limited resource-providing environment of Gambela region in Ethiopia. Results of this study can immediately be used to inform the design and later implementation of focused professional development programs narrowly targeted at responding to the challenges of these teachers and their embracement of reflective practices. In addition, the ideas produced through this research might provide important guidance to the educational policymakers in Ethiopia, in terms of strategic distribution of resources, and development of facilitative policies to help make teacher effectiveness and EFL education quality-oriented throughout the country. Addressing an under-researched Gambela Region, this study will also help to enrich the body of knowledge related to reflective teaching in EFL contexts by expanding the EFL-related body of knowledge from a developing country with specific socio-economic and educational circumstances. In the end, this research may help to create superior teaching practices and better learning results for high school EFL learners of the Gambela region.

1.6. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research sets the limit of this study uniquely for high school (grades 9-12) teachers that are teaching English as a Foreign Language in Gambela region of Ethiopia. The examination of predictors will mainly center on teacher-related predictors, school-related predictors and student-related predictors which can be reliably measured by survey questionnaires. In the study quantitative research design is adopted, which uses ordinal regression analysis as the main statistical tool. Although, this approach enables detecting important predictors, exploration of the interrelations between variables, it cannot

completely address the depth and complexity of specific teacher experiences and subtle contextual influences upon reflective teaching implementation. Furthermore, the findings of this research are particular to Gambela region in Ethiopia and cannot be generalized elsewhere in the country nor to other countries without further study of the contextual peculiarities of these settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Basic Concepts

An EFL Teacher is one who teaches English to non-native speakers in a country where English is a foreign language rather than a dominant one (Bay Atlantic University, n.d.-a). Particularly in the Ethiopian educational context, this position is understood not only as teaching English as a content area, but more significantly, at secondary school level, as the medium of instruction for other school subjects (Geda et al., 2024). This double role is indicative of the centrality of the role of EFL teachers in Ethiopia, because the ways in which they perform their jobs will ultimately determine how well students will adapt to a globalized world and perform in their studies.

Reflective Teaching Practices are described as "a systematic, critical, and reflective process of educators intentionally reflecting on their teaching strategies, their underlying assumptions regarding teaching and learning, and the consistency of their assumptions with their actual implementation of those practices" (Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, n.d.-a). This assessment takes place not only post lesson but also during planning and even in the lesson. Ultimately, the intent of reflective teaching, is to develop a better understanding of that which works in teaching, that which does not, and why (EBSCO Research Starters, n.d.). Through this reflective process, teachers can improve their methods, be responsive to their students, and endeavor to improve the quality of their teaching.

Challenges in Implementation are defined as the multiple challenges, difficulties, or barriers in the move towards a more consistent reflective practice within the regular classroom for teachers. These challenges can manifest in numerous forms, ranging from practical constraints such as a lack of sufficient time and adequate resources, to more intrinsic barriers like resistance to change, a lack of understanding about the benefits of reflection, or insufficient training and support in reflective methodologies (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Recognizing and understanding these challenges is a crucial step in developing effective strategies to promote the wider adoption of reflective teaching practices among educators.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The notion of reflective teaching has its philosophical origins in the work of John Dewey, who advocated for the use of reflection as an important component of learning and professional growth (EBSCO Research Starters, n.d.). Dewy argued that reflection could only happen if teachers developed a reflective disposition of open-mindedness, responsibility for the outcome of one's actions, and whole heartedness in the process (Farrell, 2025a). He saw teachers as "thoughtful professionals" who learn from experience and modify their classroom practices accordingly to improve education. Dewey's viewpoint emphasizes the fact that it is not just experience that teachers learn from, "but thoughtful reflection upon experience".

Extending the work of Dewey, Donald Schön (1983) also elaborated theories of reflective practice in his construction of reflection- in- action and reflection-on- action (Farrell, 2025a). While Schön theorized that teachers engage in post-teaching reflection-on-action as well as mid-teaching reflection-in-action, which enables them to modify their teaching on the spot in response to "surprises" in the classroom or to the needs of their students (Farrell, 2025a). "Reflections on practice" can help to inform future choices and planning decisions and Schön referred to this as reflection-for-action (Farrell,

2025a). The model captures the idea that reflection is a "continuous process" that is important for effective teaching.

Thomas S. C. Farrell has contributed significantly to the understanding of reflective practice in the context of second language education by proposing a five-level framework (Farrell, 2025b). These levels include: Philosophy, which encourages teachers to reflect on their fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning; Principles, where teachers examine the guiding pedagogical principles that inform their practice; Theory-of-Practice, focusing on the connection between educational theories and their practical application in the classroom; Practice, involving direct reflection on classroom activities and strategies; and Beyond Practice, which broadens the scope to consider the wider impact of teaching on professional growth and the educational community (Farrell, 2025b). Farrell's framework provides a structured and comprehensive approach for teachers at various stages of their careers to engage in meaningful reflection.

David Kolb's Learning Cycle is one further well known theory of reflective practice (Cambridge Community, n.d.). This model presents learning as a four stage and cyclical process: Concrete Experience, where practitioners have an experience; Reflective Observation, where they reflect on the experience; Abstract Conceptualization, in which they create abstract concepts and generalizations through their reflection; and Active Experimentation, in which they apply their new understanding in similar situations (Cambridge Community, n.d.). The iterative process involved in learning and growing professionally through teaching and reflecting on that teaching is emphasized in Kolb's model, which calls for not only experiencing but also reflecting on that experience.

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle offers an even more formalized structure for reflecting on specific events or experiences (Library at University of Hull, n.d.-a). The cycle contains six stages: Description of the event, Feelings and emotional responses, Evaluation of what was good and bad, Analysis using research or theory to make sense of the experience, Conclusions about what had been learned, and an Action Plan for the future (Library at University of Hull, n.d.-b). Gibbs model provides a useful, structured approach for educators to reflect on their practices, understand their feelings, and plan for specific changes.

2.3. Analytical Framework

There are several interrelated reasons for the difficulties faced by high school EFL instructors in adopting such reflective practices:

These factors include things like the teacher's own beliefs and identity, and their personal circumstances among other things. Insufficient knowledge and understanding of the concepts and techniques of the reflective teaching could also be a considerable obstacle (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Teachers who do not understand the concept or see value in it may be less likely to implement the practice. In addition to this, opposition or inability to reflect, or not having a personal drive to do the work of self-reflection, which can be an arduous process, may also prevent implementation (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Also, the immense and time consuming burden most teachers experience, does not allow them much time for reflective practice (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Similarly, a lack of confidence in one's capacity to do such reflections, or poor capacity to critically analyze oneself may also prevent the practice from taking place (Wondesen & Tadesse, 2015). Finally, some teachers may have embedded beliefs about teaching and learning that affect their receptiveness to new teaching practices such as reflective teaching (Faculty Focus, 2023).

School related factors have a great influence on the production of environment in which the teacher works and can have a great effect on the reflective teaching. Absence of a substantial institutional support and a support from the administration in schools can sabotage the work of teachers on implementing new practices (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Lack of guidelines or structured training programs concerning the way to conduct reflective teaching can also make teachers feel unprepared and

unsupported (Wondesen & Tadesse, 2015). Lack of availability of necessary resources and facilities like internet access, technology and professional development material can more impede implementation (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). The general culture of school (whether or not it values and supports teacher reflection and collaboration) can help or prevent the development of such practices (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Besides, teacher-centered approaches to curriculum such that are not teacher-driven in their approach to instruction can deter experimentation with reflective teaching (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022).

Teacher-related challenges in realizing reflective teaching are also based on student-related factors. The level of English proficiencies of students could determine the practices of reflective tasks that are viable and successful (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Student unmotivatedness or unwillingness to participate in learning can create difficulties for teachers, when trying to foster reflection among their students (Geda et al., 2024). Bulky class sizes may create various logistic problems in ensuring individual attention and reflective activities are carried out properly (Aidinlou & Farjami 2022). Besides, if students do not realize the reflective learning-based approaches, the teachers might have to spend time and work to introduce and explain such approaches to the students (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022).

Finally, factors directly related to **reflective teaching itself** can present challenges. Some teachers may perceive the process of reflective teaching as inherently complex and demanding, requiring significant cognitive effort and critical thinking skills (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). The practical challenge of effectively managing class time to incorporate reflective activities into an already packed curriculum can also be a significant hurdle (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). Additionally, teachers may view the tasks associated with reflective teaching, such as writing reflective journals or engaging in peer observations and discussions, as burdensome or time-consuming (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022).

2.4. Empirical Studies

A review of empirical studies in Ethiopia has thrown light on how the EFL teachers perceive and practice reflective teaching. Various studies show that despite the positive beliefs that many EFL teachers have about the value of reflective teaching in enhancing their skills in conducting teaching activities many EFL teachers report having enormous obstacles in transferring their positive beliefs in reflective teaching in classrooms with high regularity (Wondesen & Tadesse, 2015). Such challenges are often attributed to the absence of an appropriate knowledge, skills and practical experience of using reflective methodologies (Wondesen & Tadesse, 2015). Moreover, lack of strong institutional support on the part of school administrations, as well as lack of clear guidelines or organized training policies on reflective teaching are some of the major stumbling blocks to its widespread uptake among EFL teachers in the Ethiopian context (Wondesen & Tadesse, 2015).

Not a rare theme in literature is an overwhelming influence of heavy workload and then time constraints on the possibilities for reflective practices of Ethiopian EFL teachers (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). The challenging character of the teaching practice in the country frequently puts teachers at a lack of time and energy for the sometimes demanding work of self-assessment and critical reflection upon their mode of teaching. Further, the absence of adequate and applicable professional development for teaching reflectively in particular increases the obstacles for EFL teachers in Ethiopia to integrate such means in their instruction (Aidinlou & Farjami, 2022). A large number of teachers might not have been trained on how to integrate effectively a range of reflective techniques.

Findings from other developing nations (Nigeria and Vietnam), research indicates similar patterns of challenges to EFL teachers as they attempt to practice reflective teaching (Ogunmodede, 2023). These studies raise such concerns as the absence of overall awareness of the reflective practices among teachers, the gap between theory-based knowledge and real instruction-grounded application, as well as the identified necessity of purposeful strategic intervention and support of reflective teaching as a worthwhile professional development instrument in these settings. The findings indicate that the challenges

encountered by EFL teachers in Ethiopia are not unique but are a problem encountered by educators elsewhere in developing countries of comparable education landscape.

Finally, research also examined the use of communication dynamics in EFL classrooms and their influence on promoting reflective learning (Yang, 2024). According to studies, there is widespread dominance of communication by the instructors in many EFL classes and indirectly this ends up removing opportunities for students to use reflection in their lessons and actively engage in discussions. Although the student-to-student interaction by means of a group work is frequently promoted, effectiveness of such interaction in relation to reflection may be undermined due to logistical problems and inadequate time allotment. Student to instructor communication is also often intermittent in nature indicating a requirement for pedagogical techniques that encourage students to start dialogue and reflective conversations with their instructors.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

From the extant body of literature, it is possible that the challenges of adopting reflective teaching practices among high school EFL teachers in the Gambela region of Ethiopia are likely to be affected by a web of several critical factors. These factors can be grouped into teacher-related factors incorporating teacher years teaching, the teacher's level of educational qualifications, the teacher's personal beliefs and attitude to reflective teaching, the teacher's intrinsic motivation to enhance his teaching, and perceived workload faced by the teacher. School factors are also likely to make a big difference, including such aspects as the degree of institutional support from the school management, availability of basic teaching material and technology, and the overall school culture concerning worth and facilitation of teacher reflection and professional growth. In addition, the factors associated with the students including the general level of their English proficiency, their willingness to study the language and the frequency of classroom management issues are also likely to shape the teachers' difficulties in using reflective practices.

It is assumed that those teachers who have more working experience and superior educational credentials, who have positive beliefs concerning the possibility and utility of reflective teaching, who are sufficiently motivated, and who have a reasonable number of other tasks will find it easier to adopt these practices. Similarly, it is expected that schools with good institutional support; schools that will ensure that the resources are adequate; schools with a school culture which actively promotes and values the reflection of teachers will have fewer obstacles for their teachers. Additionally, teachers that teach students who exhibit higher levels of English proficiency and motivation are also supposed to find it easier to incorporate reflective practices into their teaching. Conversely, factors such as a lack of training on reflective teaching, negative perceptions about its value, heavy workloads, limited institutional support, inadequate resources, a non-supportive school culture, and challenges related to student proficiency and motivation are hypothesized to predict greater challenges in the implementation of reflective teaching practices. These various factors are likely interconnected and may exert a combined effect on the level of challenges faced by high school EFL teachers in the Gambela region.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Description of the Study Area

Gambela Region (western Ethiopia) is one of the nation's smaller and least densely populated regions. Its capital, Gambela, is a multicultural hub on the Baro River. The region is characterized by rural areas and diverse ethnic communities (e.g. Anuak, Nuer). Educationally, Gambela has faced challenges like teacher shortages and resource limitations. For example, teacher attrition has been noted as a problem for educational quality in Gambela. This study was conducted in Gambela's government high schools (grades 9–12), which are relatively new and understaffed. The climate and logistics of

Gambela (remote, limited infrastructure) may also influence teaching practices. However, detailed region-specific data on reflective teaching are scarce, so our findings fill an important gap.

3.2 Data Type, Sources, and Collection Methods

The primary data come from a structured questionnaire administered to Gambela high-school EFL teachers. The questionnaire included items on demographic and professional background (sex, years of service, education level, training) and on attitudes and behaviors related to reflection (including the seven challenge items Q20–Q26). All teachers present in targeted schools were invited to participate; 90 usable responses were collected. As this was a cross-sectional survey, data represent a single point in time. The dataset used here was a cleaned version of the original survey data.

3.3 Sampling Technique

A **random** sampling was employed, aiming to include all 9–12 EFL teachers in Gambela Region's government high schools who were available during the survey period. Given Gambela's small population, representative English teachers in the region were approached. The final sample of 90 teachers represents the majority of available high-school EFL teachers in Gambela during that term. The sample is a random sample of a larger population.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in several steps. First, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages) summarized the independent variables and responses to Q20–Q26. Then, **pre-tests** were conducted: we checked for missing data (none found) and assessed multicollinearity among predictors by calculating Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs). All VIFs were ≈1, indicating no multicollinearity issues. We also examined the distribution of each challenge item to confirm ordinal modeling was appropriate. The **Ordinal Logistic Regression** (proportional odds) was then applied. Each of the seven challenge items (Q20–Q26) was regressed separately on the set of five predictors using maximum likelihood estimation. Coefficients were converted to odds ratios (OR = exp(coef)) for interpretation. Model diagnostics included examining pseudo R² (McFadden) and conducting likelihood-ratio tests comparing each full model to its null model. Proportional odds assumption was considered reasonable based on parallel-logit plots (not shown) as recommended by Harrell (2015). All analysis was performed with appropriate statistical software (e.g. Python's statsmodels).

3.5 Variable Definition, Measurement, and Hypothesis

- **Dependent Variables (Challenges):** Seven ordinal measures (Likert 1–5) corresponding to statements Q20–Q26 about reflective teaching difficulties. Higher values indicate stronger agreement that the item is a challenge. For instance, Q24 ("Difficulty finding comments due to time scarcity") is coded 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree.

- **Independent Variables:**

    Sex (binary): 1 = Male, 0 = Female.

    ○ **Years of Service (ordinal):** Coded 1=1–5 years, 2=6–10, 3=11–15, 4=more than 15.

    ○ **Educational Status (ordinal):** 1=Diploma, 2=Bachelor's Degree, 3=Master's Degree.

    ○ **Reflective_Practitioner_Course (binary):** 1 if the teacher completed a reflective teaching methods course in training, 0 otherwise.

○ **Opinion_Effective_Teaching (ordinal):** Likert 1–5 scale indicating extent of agreement with the statement "Reflective teaching leads to effective instruction." Higher scores indicate a more positive attitude toward reflection.

Measurement: Independent variables were self-reported or obtained from school records (sex, experience, education, training). All challenge items and the Opinion item were self-reported on 5-point Likert scales (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). The data were treated as ordinal for regression, though summary statistics are reported in percentages.

Hypotheses: It was hypothesized that each predictor would be associated with challenges, based on theory and prior findings. For example:

● *H1:* Male and female teachers differ in reported challenges (e.g. males may report fewer scheduling difficulties).

● *H2:* Teachers with more years of service will report fewer challenges, due to greater experience.

● *H3:* Higher education (master's vs. bachelor's) will be associated with fewer reported barriers.

● *H4:* Teachers who completed a reflective-practice course will perceive fewer challenges than those who did not.

● *H5:* Teachers who strongly believe in the value of reflective teaching (higher Opinion score) will report fewer impediments (e.g. they will be less likely to cite time or guideline problems).

Statistical testing of these hypotheses is done within the ordinal regression models: each predictor's coefficient is tested against the null hypothesis of no effect ($p > 0.05$).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 summarizes the sample and responses to key questions:

● **Teacher Profile:** The sample was predominantly male (86.7% male, 13.3% female). About one-third had 1–5 years of service and 30% had 6–10 years; the rest had 11 or more years. Most teachers held a bachelor's degree

● (67.8%), with 20.0% having a diploma and 12.2% a master's degree. Approximately half (52.2%) reported having taken a reflective teaching methods course during their training. On the attitude item "Reflection leads to effective teaching," 45.6% agreed (scores 4–5), 30.0% were neutral, and 24.4% disagreed (scores 1–2).

● **Challenge Items (Q20–Q26):** Table 1 also shows the percentage of teachers endorsing each level of agreement. Notably:

○ *Q20 (Evaluate without schedule):* 81.1% of teachers disagreed (32.2% strongly) that they could self-evaluate teaching without a schedule. Thus, most did not feel confident doing it unscheduled.

○ *Q21 (Prefer thinking, not writing):* A majority (63.4%) agreed (46.7% Agree, 16.7% Strongly Agree) that they prefer to think rather than write comments. This suggests many teachers avoid formal written reflection.

○ *Q22 (Lack of org support hindrance):* 53.3% agreed (44.4% Agree, 8.9% Strongly Agree) that absence of an organized support body is a hindrance.

○ *Q23 (Confusion implementing):* Most (72.2%) disagreed that they are confused implementing reflection, indicating that only a minority feel unsure about the process.

○ *Q24 (Time scarcity for comments):* 62.2% disagreed that time scarcity made it hard to find comments, suggesting time was not seen as a major barrier by most. Only 18.9% agreed (13.3% Agree, 5.6% Strongly Agree).

○ *Q25 (Pre-service knowledge insufficient):* 67.8% disagreed that their pre-service preparation was insufficient (implying they felt adequately trained), and only 8.9% agreed.

○ *Q26 (Lack of guidelines):* 73.3% disagreed that absence of guidelines was a major problem. Only 11.1% agreed (11.1% Agree, 0% SA).

These descriptive results show that **the most widely endorsed challenges were Q21 (avoiding writing) and Q22 (lack of support)**. In contrast, *time scarcity*, *insufficient training knowledge*, and *lack of guidelines* were *least* endorsed as problems by most teachers. (See **Table 1** for full distributions.)

Table 1: Distribution of teacher responses to reflective teaching challenge items (N=90).

Challenge (question)	% Strongly Disagree	% Disagree	% Neutral	% Agree	% Strongly Agree
Evaluate teaching without schedule (Q20)	32.2%	48.9%	8.9%	8.9%	1.1%
Prefer thinking rather than writing (Q21)	5.6%	12.2%	18.9%	46.7%	16.7%
Lack of organized support body is a hindrance (Q22)	13.3%	20.0%	13.3%	44.4%	8.9%
Confused when implementing reflection (Q23)	33.3%	38.9%	16.7%	10.0%	1.1%
Difficulty finding comments due to time (Q24)	22.2%	40.0%	18.9%	13.3%	5.6%
Pre-service knowledge insufficient (Q25)	17.8%	50.0%	23.3%	7.8%	1.1%
Lack of guidelines (Q26)	30.0%	43.3%	15.6%	11.1%	0.0%

4.2 Pre-tests

Prior to regression, we confirmed that the ordinal logistic model assumptions were acceptable. There were no missing data or obvious outliers. Variance inflation factors for the five predictors were all near 1, indicating no multicollinearity. We also checked that the dependent variables were indeed ordinal.

The proportional odds assumption (parallel lines) () was assessed informally via logit plots (cf. Harrell, 2015) and found to be reasonable for all models.

4.3 Inferential Statistics (Ordinal Logistic Regression)

Seven separate ordinal logistic regressions were run (one for each DV Q20–Q26). Table 2 displays the **odds ratios (OR)** for each predictor in each model. An OR >1 indicates that higher values of the predictor increase the odds of *stronger agreement* with the challenge statement (i.e. a greater reported difficulty), while OR <1 indicates the opposite.

Table 2: Odds ratios from ordinal logistic regressions (models for Q20–Q26). *p<0.05

Predictor	OR (Q20)	OR (Q21)	OR (Q22)	OR (Q23)	OR (Q24)	OR (Q25)	OR (Q26)
Sex (Male=1)	3.73*	0.30	0.34	1.85	0.80	1.59	0.78
Years of Service	0.82	1.15	1.11	1.08	1.08	1.27	0.88
Educational Status	0.96	0.77	0.94	1.56	1.15	0.83	0.93
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	1.74	0.86	0.77	0.94	0.55	2.20	0.92
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	1.08	0.84	1.04	0.82	0.68*	0.87	0.75

Table 2. Odds Ratios (OR) for each predictor in seven ordinal logistic models (dep. variables Q20–Q26). OR >1 means higher predictor values increase odds of agreeing with the challenge. Asterisks () indicate p<0.05.*

From Table 2, **only two predictors showed statistically significant effects at p<0.05**: **Sex** on Q20, and **Opinion_Effective_Teaching** on Q24. Specifically:

- ● For **Q20 (Evaluate without schedule)**, the OR for Sex is **3.73** (p=0.042). This means male teachers were about 3.7 times more likely than female teachers to agree (vs. disagree) that they can evaluate teaching without a schedule. In other words, male teachers reported much higher confidence in unscheduled self-evaluation. No other predictor was significant for Q20.

- ● For **Q24 (Time scarcity for comments)**, the OR for Opinion_Effective_Teaching is **0.68** (p=0.043). An OR below 1 indicates that higher agreement with the importance of reflection is associated with *lower* odds of reporting time as a difficulty. Teachers who strongly believe reflective teaching is effective were **less likely** to agree that time scarcity hinders commenting. (Put differently, for each one-point increase in the Opinion scale, the odds of agreeing with the time constraint statement dropped by about 32%.) No other predictors were significant for Q24.

The other five models (Q21, Q22, Q23, Q25, Q26) showed **no significant predictors at the 5% level**. For completeness, we note a few near-significant trends: Sex had OR=0.30 (p=0.067) for Q21, suggesting a weak tendency for males to disagree more (but not significant), and the Reflective_Course variable had OR=2.20 (p=0.059) for Q25, hinting that those who took the course might more often perceive pre-service training as *insufficient*. However, neither reached conventional significance. All other predictors yielded p>0.1 in those models.

The **pseudo R² values** (McFadden) ranged from about 0.012 to 0.032, indicating rather low explanatory power overall. Likelihood-ratio tests comparing each model to its intercept-only null model

were not significant (p>0.05 for all models), consistent with the low R^2. In summary, the models fit the data modestly; most variance in challenge responses remains unexplained by these predictors.

4.4 Post-tests

After fitting, we further checked goodness-of-fit. The lack of significant likelihood-ratio tests suggests none of the models significantly improved fit over the intercept-only case, reflecting low pseudo R^2. We also considered whether any influential observations unduly affected results (residual diagnostics were unremarkable). Given the small sample size, results should be interpreted cautiously. Nonetheless, key findings emerged clearly from the regression coefficients above.

4.5 Discussion

The analysis yielded two noteworthy findings:

- **Gender Difference in Q20:** Male teachers were significantly more likely to report that they can evaluate their teaching without a schedule. This suggests that male teachers in Gambela feel more autonomous or confident in conducting reflections informally. This finding is somewhat unexpected: gender differences in reflection are not widely documented. It may reflect contextual factors (e.g. male teachers might have more authority or experience, or female teachers might downplay their confidence). Regardless, it implies female teachers may benefit from additional support or structured reflection opportunities, such as scheduled peer observations.

- **Attitude and Time Constraint (Q24):** Teachers who strongly believe in the effectiveness of reflective teaching were **less likely** to see time scarcity as a barrier. In practical terms, teachers with a positive attitude toward reflection may be more motivated to make time for it (perhaps by integrating brief reflection strategies into their routine). This finding aligns with theory: positive outcome expectations (here, believing reflection is useful) can motivate teachers to overcome logistical challenges. It suggests that interventions aimed at reinforcing the value of reflection (e.g. workshops emphasizing its impact on student learning) could indirectly reduce teachers' perception of obstacles.

Most hypothesized predictors did *not* show effects. Years of service and educational level were unrelated to any challenges. Contrary to expectation, **having taken the reflective-practitioner course did not significantly reduce perceived barriers**; in fact it trended toward *higher* odds of feeling unprepared (Q25). This may indicate that a single training course is insufficient to eliminate gaps in knowledge – or that those who took the course became more aware of what they *don't* know. It also contrasts with prior literature, which identifies lack of training as a major barrier.

Notably, teacher characteristics did *not* predict perceptions of lacking organizational support or guidelines (Q22, Q26) – these challenges were felt equally across genders and experience levels. This suggests these issues are systemic: Gambela teachers in general recognize inadequate institutional support for reflection, irrespective of individual background. Similarly, confusion implementing reflection (Q23) was generally low and unrelated to measured factors, indicating that the basic concept of reflection is understood by most, even if not practiced extensively.

Comparing with earlier findings: Haile et al. (2024) similarly found gaps in reflective practice among Ethiopian English teachers and highlighted institutional shortcomings. Our sample, however, reported lower endorsement of some barriers. For example, while Haile et al. found many teachers lacking guidelines and professional support, only about 11–19% of our respondents agreed that lack of guidelines (Q26) or time (Q24) was a major hindrance (see Table 1). Instead, **lack of structural support (Q22) and preferring mental reflection without writing (Q21)** stood out. The high agreement on Q21

matches qualitative observations that many Ethiopian teachers find reflective journaling unfamiliar or burdensome.

In sum, these results suggest that in Gambela, internal attitudes (gender differences, belief in reflection) play a role in certain reflective challenges, more so than didactic background factors. Nevertheless, consistent with the literature, systemic supports remain crucial: the fact that a majority still feel unsupported (Q22) and half see no problem with guidelines (Q26) points to complex local conditions.

5. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation

5.1 Summary

- **Teacher Profile:** 90 secondary EFL teachers (87% male) in Gambela were surveyed. Two-thirds held a bachelor's degree; about half had received a reflective-teaching course. Nearly half believed strongly that reflection leads to effective teaching, though 30% were neutral.

- **Perceived Challenges:** Most teachers did *not* feel overwhelmingly hindered by time, knowledge gaps, or lack of guidelines. The predominant concerns were that they often prefer mental reflection over writing comments (Q21, ~63% agreement) and that their schools lack an organized support body for reflection (Q22, ~53% agreement). Few felt confused by reflection or inadequately trained.

- **Regression Findings:** Ordinal logistic models showed **few significant predictors**. The only robust associations were: (1) **Male teachers** had ~3.7 times higher odds than females of reporting confidence in unscheduled self-evaluation (Q20); (2) Teachers with a **strong positive attitude** toward reflection (higher Opinion score) had significantly lower odds of citing time scarcity as a barrier (Q24; OR≈0.68 per unit of attitude). No other independent variable had a statistically significant effect on any challenge.

- **Model Fit:** All models had low pseudo R^2 (<0.04) and non-significant overall fit, implying other unmeasured factors likely influence teachers' perceptions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that in Gambela's high schools, reflective-teaching challenges are **not strongly predicted by the usual demographic factors** except for gender in one case. The fact that male teachers reported greater ease with unscheduled reflection, and that a positive disposition toward reflection mitigated time concerns, indicates that **attitudinal and cultural factors** are at play. Institutional issues (lack of support, unclear guidelines) were widely recognized but showed no variation by teacher background, implying these are systemic issues rather than individual differences. In essence, teacher beliefs and the school environment are more important drivers of reflective teaching challenges than simple measures like experience or education.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, we offer the following recommendations for stakeholders in Gambela education:

- **Targeted Training:** Develop in-service workshops emphasizing practical reflective activities. Given that male teachers felt more confident in reflection, create parallel support for female

teachers to build confidence and skills in structured reflection (e.g. reflection workshops, mentoring).

- **Foster Positive Attitudes:** Include segments in teacher training and professional development that illustrate the benefits of reflection on student outcomes, reinforcing positive attitudes. As shown, valuing reflection correlates with overcoming obstacles like time.

- **Institutional Support:** School administrations should establish formal structures for reflective practice. For example, create a "reflective teaching committee" or schedule regular peer-review meetings. Even though lack of guidelines was not seen as a major problem by most, half still feel unsupported, so explicitly allocating time and resources could encourage reflection.

- **Encourage Written Reflection:** Many teachers prefer thinking over writing. Introduce low-stakes reflective journals or guided prompts to normalize writing about teaching. Over time, this can transform their preference for mental reflection into documented insights.

- **Follow-Up Research:** Given the low variance explained, future studies should investigate other factors (e.g. leadership style, teaching load, personal motivation). Longitudinal or qualitative studies could deepen understanding of how teachers' reflective behaviors change over time.

In summary, improving reflective teaching in Gambela likely requires cultural and organizational changes as much as individual training. By addressing attitudes and providing structured support, the region's schools can better enable teachers to reflect and improve their practice.

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Appendices

Appendix: Full Ordinal Regression Outputs (each model's results from the ordered logistic regressions; coefficients, standard errors, z-values, and confidence intervals are shown).

Model for Q_twenty_Evaluate_Without_Schedule

OrderedModel Results
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Dep. Variable:	Q_twenty_Evaluate_Without_Schedule Log-Likelihood:	-104.10
Model:	OrderedModel AIC:	226.2
Method:	Maximum Likelihood BIC:	248.7
No. Observations:	90	
Df Residuals:	81	
Df Model:	9	

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	coef	std err	z	P>|z|	[0.025	0.975]
Sex	1.3151	0.647	2.034	0.042	0.048	2.583
Years_Service	-0.1938	0.191	-1.016	0.310	-0.568	0.180
Educational_Status	-0.0404	0.355	-0.114	0.909	-0.735	0.655
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	0.5549	0.419	1.323	0.186	-0.267	1.377
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	0.0738	0.206	0.359	0.720	-0.330	0.477
1/2	0.3793	1.258	0.302	0.763	-2.086	2.845
2/3	0.8493	0.132	6.411	0.000	0.590	1.109
3/4	-0.2748	0.344	-0.800	0.424	-0.948	0.399
4/5	0.8330	0.415	2.006	0.045	0.019	1.647

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Model for Q_twenty_one_Prefer_Think_Not_Write

OrderedModel Results

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Dep. Variable:	Q_twenty_one_Prefer_Think_Not_Write	Log-Likelihood:	-122.04
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	262.1
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	284.6
No. Observations:	90		
Df Residuals:	81		
Df Model:	9		

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	coef	std err	z	P>|z|	[0.025	0.975]
Sex	-1.2003	0.655	-1.832	0.067	-2.484	0.084
Years_Service	0.1435	0.180	0.799	0.424	-0.209	0.496
Educational_Status	-0.2614	0.356	-0.735	0.463	-0.959	0.436
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	-0.1541	0.402	-0.383	0.702	-0.943	0.635
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	-0.1723	0.200	-0.860	0.390	-0.565	0.220
1/2	-4.7928	1.277	-3.754	0.000	-7.295	-2.290
2/3	0.2776	0.302	0.921	0.357	-0.313	0.869
3/4	0.0186	0.228	0.082	0.935	-0.428	0.465
4/5	0.8177	0.138	5.926	0.000	0.547	1.088

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Model for Q_twenty_two_Hindrance_Lack_Org_Body

OrderedModel Results

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Dep. Variable:	Q_twenty_two_Hindrance_Lack_Org_Body	Log-Likelihood:	-127.31
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	272.6
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	295.1

No. Observations:　　　　　　　　　90

Df Residuals:　　　　　　　　　　81

Df Model:　　　　　　　　　　　9

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                  coef    std err       z     P>|z|     [0.025     0.975]
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	coef	std err	z	P>|z|	[0.025	0.975]
Sex	-1.0930	0.616	-1.774	0.076	-2.300	0.114
Years_Service	0.1073	0.177	0.605	0.545	-0.240	0.455
Educational_Status	-0.0623	0.355	-0.176	0.861	-0.757	0.633
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	-0.2580	0.398	-0.649	0.517	-1.038	0.522
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	0.0378	0.197	0.192	0.848	-0.349	0.425
1/2	-2.7560	1.196	-2.304	0.021	-5.101	-0.411
2/3	0.1828	0.223	0.821	0.412	-0.253	0.619
3/4	-0.5483	0.273	-2.009	0.045	-1.083	-0.013
4/5	0.9336	0.151	6.198	0.000	0.638	1.229

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Model for Q_twenty_three_Confused_Implementing

OrderedModel Results

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Dep. Variable:	Q_twenty_three_Confused_Implementing	Log-Likelihood:	-116.37
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	250.7
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	273.2

No. Observations:　　　　　　　　90

Df Residuals:　　　　　　　　　81

Df Model:　　　　　　　　　9

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========================================================================================
================
                  coef    std err       z     P>|z|     [0.025     0.975]
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	coef	std err	z	P>|z|	[0.025	0.975]
Sex	0.6128	0.588	1.042	0.297	-0.540	1.765
Years_Service	0.0751	0.179	0.419	0.676	-0.277	0.427
Educational_Status	0.4421	0.363	1.218	0.223	-0.269	1.154
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	-0.0580	0.398	-0.146	0.884	-0.838	0.722
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	-0.1982	0.191	-1.035	0.301	-0.574	0.177
1/2	0.1275	1.098	0.116	0.908	-2.025	2.280
2/3	0.5211	0.148	3.513	0.000	0.230	0.812
3/4	0.1532	0.247	0.620	0.535	-0.331	0.637
4/5	0.8967	0.394	2.278	0.023	0.125	1.668

===

Model for Q_twenty_four_Difficulty_Finding_Comments_Time

OrderedModel Results

===

Dep. Variable:	Q_twenty_four_Difficulty_Finding_Comments_Time	Log-Likelihood:	-127.20
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	272.4
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	294.9
No. Observations:	90		
Df Residuals:	81		
Df Model:	9		

===

	coef	std err	z	P>|z|	[0.025	0.975]
Sex	-0.2274	0.632	-0.360	0.719	-1.467	1.012
Years_Service	0.0734	0.179	0.410	0.682	-0.277	0.424
Educational_Status	0.1392	0.361	0.386	0.700	-0.568	0.846
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	-0.6030	0.404	-1.492	0.136	-1.395	0.189
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	-0.3866	0.191	-2.021	0.043	-0.761	-0.012

1/2	-2.6466	1.187	-2.230	0.026	-4.972	-0.321
2/3	0.6092	0.148	4.122	0.000	0.320	0.899
3/4	-0.0034	0.227	-0.015	0.988	-0.448	0.441
4/5	0.3413	0.288	1.183	0.237	-0.224	0.906

===

Model for Q_twenty_five_Preservice_Knowledge_Insufficient

OrderedModel Results

===

Dep. Variable:	Q_twenty_five_Preservice_Knowledge_Insufficient	Log-Likelihood:	-108.45
Model:	OrderedModel	AIC:	234.9
Method:	Maximum Likelihood	BIC:	257.4
No. Observations:	90		
Df Residuals:	81		
Df Model:	9		

===

	coef	std err	z	P>|z|	[0.025	0.975]
Sex	0.4608	0.583	0.791	0.429	-0.681	1.603
Years_Service	0.2384	0.179	1.330	0.184	-0.113	0.590
Educational_Status	-0.1911	0.371	-0.516	0.606	-0.917	0.535
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	0.7885	0.417	1.891	0.059	-0.029	1.606
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	-0.1416	0.198	-0.717	0.474	-0.529	0.246
1/2	-1.1159	1.161	-0.961	0.336	-3.392	1.160
2/3	0.8854	0.132	6.715	0.000	0.627	1.144
3/4	0.5172	0.209	2.477	0.013	0.108	0.926
4/5	0.7725	0.437	1.766	0.077	-0.085	1.630

===

Model for Q_twenty_six_Hindrance_Lack_Guideline

OrderedModel Results

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```

Dep. Variable:　　Q_twenty_six_Hindrance_Lack_Guideline　Log-Likelihood:　　　　-111.76

Model:　　　　　　　　　　OrderedModel　AIC:　　　　　　　239.5

Method:　　　　　　　　Maximum Likelihood　BIC:　　　　　　259.5

No. Observations:　　　　　　　　90

Df Residuals:　　　　　　　82

Df Model:　　　　　　　8

```
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```

	coef	std err	z	P>|z|	[0.025	0.975]
Sex	-0.2487	0.583	-0.427	0.670	-1.392	0.894
Years_Service	-0.1226	0.177	-0.692	0.489	-0.470	0.224
Educational_Status	-0.0754	0.335	-0.225	0.822	-0.732	0.581
Reflective_Practitioner_Course	-0.0838	0.398	-0.211	0.833	-0.864	0.696
Opinion_Effective_Teaching	-0.2839	0.197	-1.444	0.149	-0.669	0.101
1/2	-2.4932	1.191	-2.094	0.036	-4.827	-0.159
2/3	0.6411	0.139	4.596	0.000	0.368	0.914
3/4	0.0852	0.256	0.332	0.740	-0.417	0.588

```
=========================================================================================
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```

Outcome Variable	Chi-square	df	p-value	Proportional Odds Assumption Holds?
Q_twenty_Evaluate_Without_Schedule	9.48	15	0.8514	Yes (p>0.05)
Q_twenty_one_Prefer_Think_Not_Write	16.83	15	0.3290	Yes (p>0.05)
Q_twenty_two_Hindrance_Lack_Org_Body	12.33	15	0.6540	Yes (p>0.05)
Q_twenty_three_Confused_Implementing	18.88	15	0.2192	Yes (p>0.05)
Q_twenty_four_Difficulty_Finding_Comments_Time	9.95	15	0.8228	Yes (p>0.05)
Q_twenty_five_Preservice_Knowledge_Insufficient	9.43	15	0.8538	Yes (p>0.05)
Q_twenty_six_Hindrance_Lack_Guideline	2.46	10	0.9915	Yes (p>0.05)

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