The contemporary EFL classroom assumes the language teacher performs a multitude of roles.[9] At different moments of instruction, they adopt different roles, at some moments strengthening while at others loosening control over learners and allowing them greater or lesser autonomy, as needed. The most crucial roles given the nature of foreign language teaching are those of: manager, organizer, evaluator, facilitator, controller, prompter, assessor, stimulator, source of language input, tutor, resource/teaching aid, performer, language model, observer, expert, and researcher. Such roles are adopted and changed, in accordance with the pedagogical purposes, learners' needs, lesson topics but also cultural contexts in which the teaching/learning process is taking place. Out of this plethora of roles, the ones of reflective practitioner and expert/researcher are of particular interest to the current study.

The role of reflective practitioner[10] presupposes awareness of and ability to choose the most suitable instructional style, critical observation of classroom incidents, and proposing remedial action.[11] This is similar to the role of teacher

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[9] See Jeremy H a r m e r, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), 57–67; Hanna K o m o r o w s k a and Jarosław K r a j k a, *The Culture of Language Education* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020), 188–90; Elżbieta Z a w a d z k a, *Nauczyciele języków obcych w dobie przemian* (Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza Impuls, 2004), chapters 4–9.

[10] See Marion W i l l i a m s and Robert L. B u r d e n, *Psychology for Language Teachers: A Social Constructivist Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 53–55.

[11] See Maria W y s o c k a, "Teaching English as an International Language: Problems and Research Questions," in *Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Second Language Learning and Teaching*, ed. Krystyna Droździał-Szelest and Mirosław Pawlak (Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), 41–55.

as researcher, which, according to Franciszek Grucza,[12] might involve both executing empirical research in the classroom according to all rigors of particular methods and exhibiting the skills of independent thinking, critical evaluation of theoretical frameworks, seeking own solutions to practical problems and preparing learners for independent intellectual activity.

When teachers undertake reflection on their own practice, they think of themselves as explorers, researchers, ethnographers and reflective practitioners.[13] They experiment with students themselves, viewing them in the context of their families and neighborhoods, and the ever wider circles embracing larger and larger communities.[14] The classroom is a natural research site, as teachers regularly implement pedagogical innovation through multiple data collection techniques: observations, field notes, collected samples, and informal interviews with students in order to inform their decisions about curriculum implementation. As Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan L. Lytle state, teachers become empowered through engaging and being engaged in research.[15] Such inquiry can be viewed as knowledge-based, outcome-centered, and resulting in learning opportunities for students. Teacher research also allows educators to contribute to construction of local and public knowledge through ongoing learning,[16] emerging from their own curiosity and reflective inquiry on their individual practices.[17] Teacher research has been defined as "systematic self-study by teachers (individually or collaboratively) which seeks to achieve real-world impact of some kind and is made public."[18] It may include different approaches, such as action research,[19]

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[12] See Franciszek G r u c z a, "O potrzebie tworzenia naukowych podstaw kształcenia nauczycieli języków obcych i tłumaczy (zamiast wstępu)," in *Przyczynki do teorii i metodyki kształcenia nauczycieli języków obcych i tłumaczy w perspektywie wspólnej Europy*, ed. Franciszek Grucza (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1993), 5–10.

[13] See Donald A. S c h ö n, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

[14] See W. A y e r s, *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010).

[15] See Marilyn C o c h r a n - S m i t h and Susan L. L y t l e, *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993), 43.

[16] See Marilyn C o c h r a n - S m i t h, "Constructing Outcomes in Teacher Education: Policy, Practice, and Pitfalls," *Educational Policy Analysis Archives* 9, no. 11 (2001): 1–56, https://epaa.asu.edu/index.php/epaa/article/view/340.

[17] See Thomas S. C. F a r r e l l, *Research on Reflective Practice in TESOL* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); Steve M a n n and Steve W a l s h, *Reflective Practice in English Language Teaching: Research-based Principles and Practices* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

[18] Simon B o r g and Hugo Santiago S a n c h e z. "Key Issues in Doing and Supporting Language Teacher Research," in *International Perspectives on Teacher Research*, ed. Simon Borg and Hugo Santiago Sanchez (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), 1.

[19] See Dario Luis B a n e g a s and Luis S. V i l l a c a ñ a s de C a s t r o, "Action Research," in *Routledge Handbook of English Language Teacher Education*, ed. Steve Walsh and Steve Mann (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 570–82; Simon B o r g, *Teacher Research in Language*

exploratory practice, exploratory action research, self-study, lesson study, design-based research, and scholarship of teaching and learning.

However, for teachers to become researchers is a challenging process—they need to become critical consumers of target language and culture, learning to understand and blend quantitative and qualitative approaches. Moreover, they need to develop the ability to understand and interpret the existing situation, set up and conduct their own investigations, as well as apply their research knowledge to the daily practices and routines of the classroom. Sometimes they face up to a professional culture that might not value teacher research and might appreciate immediate, unreflective and routine action much more. According to Sue Nair, when they feel helpless and unable to change the system, they may become reluctant to be involved in research.