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Practitioner Research: What Language Teachers Have to Say?

By

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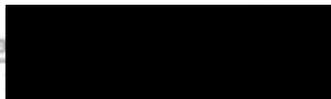
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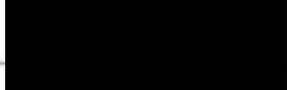
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<u>Dedication page</u>

To my loving parents, Nabila and Imad, thank you for always pushing me forward and supporting my decisions no matter how challenging they may be. I believe I inherited the will from my mother and the strength from my father.

This thesis is also dedicated to my Aunt Leila D., a true warrior who showed me that life goes on only if you have the determination, perseverance, and passion to accomplish all your goals despite all the challenges, hardships, and painful situations you go through. Thank you for your unconditional love and support!

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Practitioner Research: What Language Teachers Have to Say?

Sabine Imad Arayssi

ABSTRACT

Teachers as practitioner researchers are marginalized in educational institutions since teachers are being subjugated by overwhelming obligations and standards which hinders their autonomy and transparency in voicing out their concerns and enhancing their practices. This study examined language teachers' perception of practitioner research in order to establish an understanding whether research comprises a fundamental component in their career. A qualitative study was conducted with language teachers and coordinators from various schools in Lebanon. Questionnaires were distributed to 50 language teachers, followed by semi-structured interviews conducted with language coordinators, and in-depth interviews with language teachers who are practitioner researchers. Results indicate that research is a minority activity for language teachers due to the common issues which are lack of time, overwhelming working conditions, and lack of flexibility in the workplace. Limitations and recommendations for promoting practitioner research among language teachers are further discussed at the end of the study.

Keywords: Practitioner, Researcher, Perception, Autonomy, Transparency.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Teaching is a form of art and science. From an artistic perspective, teachers do not perceive themselves as homogenous products, but they possess skills that fit their distinct and personal teaching style. On the other hand, teaching is also considered a science since teachers should engage in research to inform their practice through collecting data, observing their learning environment, and experimenting with innovative techniques and strategies. Following these premises, teachers are accountable to maintain high standards and implement a successful learning environment. However, these notions are problematic since school authorities impose hefty expectations such as meeting students' needs, maintaining adequate discipline in the classroom, being responsible for academic progress, and so on where teachers feel the heavy burdens of being restricted to these expectations and therefore hardly leave room for teacher autonomy. Therefore, when teachers do not have the opportunity to engage in research due to the overwhelming obligations, then teachers become subjugated to a marginalized situation in which they yield to receive rather than produce (Mehrani, 2014).

Metaphorically speaking, the classroom is described as a black box where teachers are not able to sufficiently go beyond or in depth since the classroom portrays a place of repetition. In addition, it also lacks an individualistic entity as the classroom dominates the teacher and reduces him/her to an indoctrination of system where it minimizes the teacher's transparency (Woo & Jung, 2016). Hence, if we decrease the burden teachers' encounter with the undefinable responsibilities and opaqueness,

then teachers would be able to view their classroom and practices as dynamic and valuable rather than a place where a sort of idealistic ideology dominates (Woo & Jung, 2016). Based on the aforementioned metaphor, the authentic meaning of a teacher's educational practice in the classroom can be discovered only when the limits of pedagogical expeiences are recognized through developing a framework that guides and evaluates their practice where teachers become practitioners and engage in research (Mehrani, 2014).

Moreover, in the field of language teaching, there is an issue with research which restricts the role of teachers as practitioners and form a hierarchy for researchers to make pedagogical decisions (Mehrani, 2014). Therefore, the gap between practitioners and researchers remains unsolved since teachers should take the initiative to seize the perspective of the researcher and escape from the submissive role of being relentlessly bombarded by guidelines and recommendations that flow from the top-down into the classroom. Thus, one of the comprehensive trends in education that emerged is "postmethod pedagogy" by Kumaravadivelu which consisted of a range of grounded pedagogic principles of "particularity, practicality, and possibility" (p. 538). Kumaravadivelu (2001) claimed that significant pedagogy cannot be constructed around belief systems that are hostile and that lack holistic interpretation of particular situations. Therefore, there should be an emphasis on being involved in action research and reflective teaching since it enhances a teacher's practice rather than just produce knowledge (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). In addition, Kumaravadivelu (2001) asserted that teachers should engage in *pedagogical thoughtfulness* where they put theory in practice which enables them to identify, analyze, and assess problems. In this sense, teachers fruitfully become reflective

individuals where they are constantly involved in reflection and action rather than just implementing professional theories. Hence, based on Kumaravadivelu's philosophy, teachers can become autonomous and bring out their voices only when they have the motivation and desire to self-explore and develop their pedagogical beliefs. This occurs when teachers commit themselves by engaging in goal-oriented teacher research where it calls for practitioners to do the research in their classroom through observation and reflection, and breaking away from the concept that relying on constraining methods and theories guarantees an effective teacher.

My main emphasis in this study is on teacher research which is a crucial approach for language teaching and learning. Although educators acknowledge the potential of teacher inquiry for enhancing knowledge and promoting theory about teaching and learning, teacher research continues to be marginalized (Smiles & Short, 2006). One of the main reasons that teacher research is underrepresented is due to the hectic lives teachers lead which requires their full time and energy, thus leaving inconsiderable time to engage in research. Smiles and Short (2006) assert that once teachers engage in research and reflective inquiry, they look closely and propose new insights on how ideas evolve and belief systems change. Through teacher research, educators can use their own voice in order to offer different perspectives on the challenging assumptions of what happens within the classroom and the complexity of the practice.

The call for educators to be researchers is a major argument behind the stances since relevant studies have shown that teachers' engagement with research is very low due to the lack of time, support, and immense obligations. Therefore, the prevailing study is an attempt to shed light on particular contexts related to teachers being practitioner

researchers where they can transform their voice and benefit all educational stakeholders.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

A large body of research has focused on teachers engaging in research in order to be aware and understand students' needs and behavior where the learner should be the main focus for the teacher's actions (Aslanian, 1985). However, there is a little focus on examining the perception of language teachers in adopting a research disposition in order to gain an insight of the challenging endeavours they encounter since school administrators use research as a practice to enhance their own educational reforms (Ellis & Loughland, 2016) rather than enhancing teachers' professional growth which becomes a constraint.

Moreover, the term knowing usually refers to learners' core knowledge which refers to how their expertise grows through mastering certain skills; however, educational stakeholders disregard how teachers as practitioner researchers would play a remarkable role in developing a teacher's identity, self, and personal agency which can give a teacher the sense of professionalism and revitalization to have a voice (Leat, Reid, & Lofthouse, 2015). Therefore, the teacher as a practitioner researcher should engage in reflective inquiry as a matter of speculative understanding and evaluation whereby s/he would be able to provide his/her evaluation of performance as well as find his/her challenges and track his/her progress rather than succumb to the standards imposed by administrators where teachers should only follow and deliver predetermined knowledge objectives.

Furthermore, Leat et al. (2015) assert that there is considerable difficulty in provoking teachers to become practitioner researchers since research is highly

regarded as long as it meets the mandated standards imposed on teachers of what is required to be done and what seems right. The persistent demands can be hostile to teachers since they lose their sense of critical autonomy; therefore, research will unlikely attain its purpose as long as it is only correlated to measurable school improvement and the perpetual expectation to raise standards. Thus, educational stakeholders and school leaders should take into consideration that teachers are not technicians (Loft et al., 2015), but they should move towards viewing educators as multifaceted individuals who are able to effectively become practitioner researchers by fostering deep engagement in research.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

A plethora of researchers (Allwright, 2005; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Borg, 2009; Hanks, 2017) in the field of education acknowledge the significance of teachers being practitioner researchers as an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice. My purpose is to conduct a qualitative study to establish an understanding about language teachers' perception regarding their engagement in and with research in order to have a better understanding whether research comprises a fundamental component in their career.

Therefore, a qualitative study was conducted addressing the following research questions:

1. What are language teachers' perception of engagement in and with practitioner research?
2. What reasons indicate constraints regarding their engagement in and with research?

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant to the field of education, especially for language teachers, in many ways. Educators need to develop the strategies and incentives to engage in research in order to document the complexity of classrooms and teaching through their own unique insights and experiences (Smiles & Short, 2006). Although research is growing in this field, it is crucial to take into consideration the language teachers' perception regarding practitioner research in order to have an insight into how this practice is a constraining factor that acts as a barrier or challenge. Thus, this study will contribute to the field of education by providing teachers with the opportunity of transforming their voice through participating in research and being agents of research rather than solely observe the process which attempts to bridge theory to practice.

1.4 Division of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into six main chapters. Chapter one incorporates the introduction where the statement of the problem, the purpose, and significance of the study were presented. Chapter two offers a synthesis of international literature regarding language teachers' perception of practitioner research which discusses a variety of definitions along with the constraints of engaging in practitioner research followed by success stories. Chapter three is the methodology section, which provides the reader with the research design used in the study, including the methods used for data collection and data analysis. Chapter four reports on the findings of the study. Chapter five provides the discussion based on my findings. Chapter six attempts to draw conclusions based on my understanding of the findings as well as presents the limitations and recommendations for future study.

To conclude, Chapter one provided an introduction and my role in conducting this study regarding the importance of teachers becoming practitioners and engaging in research in order to evaluate their practices. I also introduced the research problem addressed in this study, which aimed to shed light on how teachers are bombarded and overwhelmed by demands, tasks, and standards where they lose their autonomy in becoming practitioner researchers. In addition, I provided the purpose and significance behind this study in relation to my research question which focused on the importance of giving teachers with the opportunity of voicing out their concerns through engaging in and with research rather than just solely relying on theories.

The next section of Chapter 2 presents the synthesis of the literature review, grouped according to the distinct definitions of practitioner research, the challenges of practitioner research, and the success stories of teachers who are practitioner researchers.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Educators are facing considerable challenges within the education profession due to the overwhelming requests that teachers have to bear such as maintaining students' high academic standards and performing effective teaching skills. However, teachers should move toward practitioner research in order to reconceptualize and alter the traditional aspects of educational research which cause distorted boundaries between inquiry and practice. As such, practitioner research breaks the barriers that constraint teachers to critically interrogate and reflect on their classroom practices, and instead serves to fulfil educators' practice by allowing them to have a voice in policy decisions that impact their professional lives. This chapter presents a synthesis of international literature on the topic of teachers' perception of practitioner research within the context of their practical profession. There is a great deal of literature that provides substantial evidence of various teachers' perspectives regarding the challenges they face as they perceive research as a form of alienation to their experience as well as suggestions to bridge the gap and overcome these obstacles.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

To begin with a relevant theory, sociocultural theory serves as a conceptual framework for the study since in an educational setting, it scrutinizes the construction of self which demands the transformation of the teacher and the social world to meet the imposing demands of today's education, besides just knowing and being (Gade, 2016). Sociocultural theory in education, which originated from the work of the psychologist Lev Vygotsky, indicates that teachers should not only passively rely on

and observe the emergence of new theories. They have to act and change the obstructive conditions that hinder their self-determination of human agency where teachers act upon their internal and external world (Dang & Marginson, 2016). In addition, Dang and Marginson (2016) assert that engaging in research is a developmental process which requires reflective analysis where teachers must learn to know and understand what they want to transcend in their practices in order to find ways out of the internal contradictions. Based on the sociocultural theory, teachers must become practitioner researchers because being involved in such a practice helps teachers examine problematic practices and reveal transformative change which makes a difference on a personal and professional level. Therefore, Gade (2016) claims that practitioners should exercise action and reflection in order to move beyond hypothetical aspects and talk about it in categories specific to human development. Thus, in order for teachers to generate what is desirable and not merely focus on proficiencies, being involved in such attempts paves the way for social change in tangible terms. Teachers can empower themselves and give voice about themselves as being practitioner researchers where it enables them to regard transformation and change as inseparable aspects of their development (Gade, 2016), and to express distinctive and autonomous action and reflection beyond theories and competences in order to overcome the current status quo of teachers.

2.2 Definitions of Practitioner Research

The concept of practitioner research has become a buzzword in the field of language teaching (Crookes, 1993) especially as a need for teachers to inform their classroom practices through their voices (Campbell, 2013). It is a generic term that encompasses a wide-range of contexts, movements, and methodologies, but

according to Gunn (2010), there is no one definite definition of practitioner research that everyone agrees upon. Practitioner research is also known as action research, teacher research, and reflective practice since it is a form of inquiry to learn from and about teaching by investigating his/her own practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) as well as a process of engaging in inner dialogue and reflection as a means for language teachers' personal and professional growth (Gunn, 2010). Moreover, Crookes (1993) asserted that there is a major difference between practitioner research and other forms of research carried out by researchers since the latter might focus on questions, issues, or concepts that would benefit administrators and stakeholders; however, once teachers become practitioner researchers, their questions arise from their own existing concerns and problems. Another definition for practitioner research pointed out by Lanksher and Knoebel (2004), is that teachers as researchers should be involved in self-motivating and self-generated inquiry in order to reinforce their professional career as well as internalize and infuse their questions and voices in order to promote a culture of inquiry (Bonner, 2006). Burns (2005) similarly supported this notion by stating that in order for teachers to be practitioner researchers, they should be aware of the puzzles or problems that are causing the gap between the ideal and the reality, the teaching and learning, and the implementation of a certain curriculum which in response teachers perceive there should be a need for change. Therefore, teachers being practitioner researchers reflects a paradigm shift as a means of critical reflection is a vital component for teachers to find themselves, manifest their limitations and realities, and embrace their struggle to improve their current state.

Moreover, teachers should be encouraged to explore and scrutinize their own

teaching practices. Allwright (2005b) referred to another comprehensive approach to

practitioner research called exploratory practice whereby teachers' research is based

on a set of principles rather than classroom practices. Allwright and Hanks (2009)

also emphasized that exploratory practice is taking action for understanding with an

intention to change in order to decipher perplex situations. To explain more, Hanks

(2017) asserted that exploratory practice is derived from puzzles teachers encounter

in their language teaching and pedagogic experiences as an attempt to understand

and critique their issues before problem-solving. In addition, exploratory practice

promotes a space for teachers as practitioners to explore open-ended and puzzled

inquiry through the notion of 'I wonder' rather than 'I do' in order to develop

classroom understandings (Hanks, 2015). Allwright (1997) also stated that

exploratory practice requires a research perspective where it serves as a tool to

investigate and understand whatever is puzzling them rather than relying on universal

and conventional theories. Therefore, exploratory practice transcends from the

mentality of facing concerns and issues through problem-solution, and instead moves

towards a journey and approach of puzzlement and curiosity where teachers conceive

which questions and concerns are framed as problems and therefore productively

transmute their pedagogy (Allwright, 2005b; Hanks 2017). Thus, exploratory

practice clearly integrates research and practice by significantly empowering teachers

as practitioners to develop their self and identity, and to become knowers and

researchers of their own teaching and learning because research is not always about

meeting academic standards, but about pursuing and satisfying their needs and

puzzlements in order to further enhance their role by forging a new model of

practitioner research (Allwright, 1997).

Furthermore, exploratory practice is a scheme for practitioner research which focuses on teachers' concerns. Allwright (2005a) pointed that teaching is considered as idiosyncratic and unpredictable where teachers should recede from the notion of only planning. Instead, as practitioner researchers, teachers form a state of agency where they seek the opportunity to understand that the language classroom is based on episodes of eclectic and interactive events and experiences which helps them balance between the challenging pedagogic and social pressures of their profession. Based on the notion of creating opportunities, Allwright (2005a) asserted that engaging in exploratory practice facilitates decision-making in order to deal and respond to external pressures and understand oneself rather than relying on methodological and theoretical interventions in order to avoid the jeopardy of burnout due to being bombarded and dissipated onto other priorities (Allwright, 2003). In this way, exploratory practice contributes to providing richness in experience and dedication to explore further because it gives teachers the opportunity to understand the complexities of the challenges they are facing through realizing, discovering, and inquiring into their experiences (Hanks, 2015) thus, giving it more validity. DiPardo, Whitney, Fleischer, Johnson, Mayher, McCracken, Miller, Stock, Zancanella, and Zuidema (2006) similarly supported this notion, where being practitioner researchers, creates opportunities for teachers to expand and stimulate their array of discussions and reflections as well as to conduct their own inquiries. This could also be perceived from a philosophical point of view since being a practitioner researcher is a venture of reviving and harmonizing teachers' competence to experience and embrace authentic situations related to the quality of their profession through being inquisitive rather than conceptualizing theories (Wu, 2006). Through research, knowledge and action should be brought together as a way of unifying the knowing and doing rather

than just being manipulated by prescribed and institutionalized standards and assessments. To explain further, Li (2006) proposed an approach for practitioner research known as 'balanced research' whereby teachers design and adapt their course of research based on authentic social settings despite the uncertainties and changes. In this way, teaching does not become dictated by fragmented skills or teaching points where teachers become restricted to naïve and inadequate tasks that are below their required level of cognition (Wu, 2006; Allwright, 2005a). This could also be linked to the notion of 'thinking globally and acting locally' coined by Allwright (2003) which emphasizes that research should move away from particular contexts and instead try to analyze significant principles that have explicit implications on what teachers want to achieve and why. As such, teachers as practitioner researchers should go beyond the classroom and act as a force towards profound change rather than feel disposed to hasty and inconsiderate change.

Borg (2006) described practitioner research as a "systematic, intentional, and self-critical inquiry about one's work" (p. 22). By emphasizing on the word 'systematic', teachers should avoid the traditional notion of teaching which hinders their understanding of research and its purpose. Instead, research and reflective practice should be embedded as a constant process in teaching where teachers become researchers themselves which has the capacity to be a poignant and transformative force (Borg, 2010). It also encourages teachers to be reflective of their own practices as well as develop their decision-making proficiencies in which it helps them undertake control over their respective state (Campbell, 2013) through systematically testing and debating the implicitly imposed theories and understandings of their practice (Brindley, 1991). In this way, teachers view research as a means to

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metamorphose their pedagogy since it emerges from their own practice rather than being conceived by people outside the specific context (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). In addition, Bartlett and Burton (2006) argued that research should not only be based on personal accounts and efforts to enhance their practice and improve students' achievement. Instead, being practitioner researchers involves the improvement of practice and construction of new knowledge in order to understand and interpret the situation teachers are investigating. Borg (2010) also pointed that research encompasses engaging *in* research which is doing it and engaging *with* research which is reading and implementing it. Therefore, once teachers integrate research and reflexivity within their process of teaching which addresses and translate their questions and concerns, then it becomes an integral part to understand the underlying nature of education (Bartlett & Burton, 2006) where teachers will be able to synthesize the complexities and nuances that will inform their practices (Heid, Larson, Fey, Strutchens, Middleton, Gutstein, King, & Tunis, 2006). This notion is further backed by DiPardo et al. (2006), who noted that teachers as practitioner researchers do not yield generalizable understandings and practices; instead, they weave critiques and inquisitive connections based on conceptual and pedagogical insights and perspectives. Thus, practitioner research involves and fosters understandings that inform practice through systematic processes of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data that are driven by puzzles, issues, and questions (Borg & Sanchez, 2015) as well as being a valuable form of action research which promotes life-long learning by helping teachers become proactive in handling challenges and acquiring inquisitive skills and habits in order to scrutinize their practices (Cain & Milovic, 2013).

Another important aspect for teachers to be practitioner researchers is understanding and identifying the discrepancies between theory and practice since practitioner research is a form of reflective practice which fosters professional growth and critical reflection (Campbell, 2013) as well as systematically examine assumptions and beliefs through reflective practice in order to make critical decisions of their actions (Farrell, 2006). In this way, Campbell (2013) noted that another form of practitioner research is self-study since it allows teachers to systematically speculate upon their practices in an effort to be given a voice in their profession, and Freeman and Richards (1993) also stressed that practitioner research is a social agenda which empowers teachers to contribute in sharing and developing their views and solutions based on the problems experienced at the workplace. Thus, it involves moving from transmission to transformation where teachers' challenge is not to address the deficits in their practices; instead, the goal is to be informed of their own potentialities and competencies in order to enhance their practices which is grounded in their settings (Kiely & Davis, 2010). To explain further, Vetter (2012) used a case study design to examine a fifth grade teacher's journey with practitioner research where she asserted that she became "an architect of her transformation" (p. 44) since it provided her with the space to validate, challenge, and propose solutions. Therefore, being practitioner researchers becomes a systemized and in-built practice to engage in reflective practice in an effort to identify tensions and disseminate discoveries. These claims are further backed up by Leat, Lofthouse, and Reid (2014), who noted that once teachers become practitioner researchers, it becomes an eclectic and integrated practice rather than isolated which focuses on systematic inquiry where it enables teachers to investigate their issues and contextualize their experiences. Therefore, practitioner research surpasses the nature of teachers' status quo which is linked to

the voice of schools' organization and is solely based on theory and contradictions. Instead, it is a catalyst which draws on teachers' voice and dynamic interaction since it is a continuous process of critically questioning, reflecting, and revisiting answers. Based on this, Borg (2010) posited that teachers should not be regarded as technicians, but as reflective and autonomous practitioners who are always eager to look for catalytic initiatives in order to deepen their own understandings of their practices and consider various perspectives through constructing intellectual decisions (Castle, 2006).

The importance of practitioner research is also paramount in the educational field since it holds a substantial prominence for teachers to inquire further on their practices. Rust (2009) accurately describes practitioner research as

> A bridge connecting research, practice, and education policy- as an important
> and practical way to engage teachers as consumers of research, as researchers
> of their own practice who use research to shape practice, as designers of their
> own professional development, and as informants to scholars and policy
> makers regarding critical issues in the field (p. 1882)

Based on the aforementioned statement, practitioner research should be embedded in the educational field since it is a crucial vehicle for teachers to question, improve, and communicate their practices. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) supported this notion where teachers should be practitioner researchers since it is a transformative practice to develop an inquiry stance that is essential in outlining questions, examining critical issues, and making decisions in order to refine their practice. Capobianco, Lincoln, Browne, and Trimarchi (2006) similarly supported this notion by linking practitioner research to the feminist approach whereby teachers reach a

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heightened awareness of articulating their viewpoints and perspectives as well as accompanying the changes in about their practices. Christianakis (2008) further explained the feminist approach by stating that practitioner research provides opportunities for teachers to redefine their work, opposed to the dogmatic and conventional guides imposed by educational stakeholders since it is based on how teachers transform and reinvent their roles. Therefore, practitioner research is associated with acknowledging problems rather than solving them (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), and recognizing that inquiry is generated from uncertainties and questions.

There is not one explicit definition of practitioner research, yet they focus on the importance of teachers becoming practitioner researchers in order to develop their inquiry stance and reflective practice which builds their knowledge and enhances their practice determined by puzzles, concerns, and questions.

2.3 Challenges of Practitioner Research

A plethora of authors discussed the barriers and challenges on teachers being practitioner researchers. Teachers can either be discerning consumers or producers of research (Perry, 2011), and the latter is what makes a teacher stand as a researcher since teachers being consumers of research only informs the technical and instructional competencies of their practice (Borg & Liu, 2013). However, Ellis and Loughland (2016) noted that teachers encounter constraining factors that act as a challenge when engaging in practitioner research since teachers believe that once they know one right theory, they simply apply it to practice and all problems of practice would be solved (Crookes, 1993). In addition, teachers find it challenging to interpret and translate research related to their teaching and learning that addresses

their main concerns and questions (Heid et al., 2006) since their practices do not go beyond localized contexts as theory is always appraised and voicing out their concerns is dampened (Block, 2000). Therefore, teachers find it challenging to engage in research because their professional values are ignored since their own practices are based by ideological and theoretical conditions that distorts their self-understanding (Crookes, 1993); thus, it acts as a hindrance to attain their goals (Borg, 2006). Based on this notion, Nassaji (2012) conducted interviews with language teachers in order to investigate their perceptions regarding the challenges they encounter with research, and one of the teachers noted that schools do not encourage or support enhancing one's knowledge and skills in the field since schools are more concerned to bringing in students and adhering to their needs. Thus, gaining knowledge only from teaching experience is insufficient for teachers' status quo, and educational stakeholders should go beyond the traditional notion and assumption that teachers gain deeper knowledge only through content and curriculum (Graczewski, Knudson, & Holtzman, 2009). They instead should consider decisive ways in providing teachers with time and resources that will help them become practitioner researchers not only to improve their teaching, but to take action and transform their own practices and values in order to surpass the burdens on their shoulders.

Teachers also described their profession as an 'egg box' (Kiely & Davis, 2010) since they seldom explore and rationalize their practices which degrades their investment in learning as well as has detrimental effects on their role and identity. To explain more, teachers' situation in institutions are not aligned with their perceived needs and are considered low-status since they usually work under dominant conditions that leads to tension in their environment as well as failure to meet their effective targets.

In addition, teachers are not perceived as researchers but as the researched since they are always the target for endless demands, observations, questionnaires, and evaluations; hence, research is not considered a core institutional teaching activity and is not given an eminent priority (Firkins & Wong, 2005). Therefore, teachers believe that being practitioner researchers is a constraint that does not fulfil their role due to imposed instructional tensions where it hinders their awareness and opportunity for conducting research in order to have a wider perspective of their social and educational context (Kiely & Davis, 2010; Atay, 2008).

The teaching profession is not only about teachers trying harder or differentiating instruction for each learner; instead, there should be a magnitude of change in the role of research in order to develop and sustain teachers' conditions to improve their practices rather than just enhance and deepen their pedagogical knowledge and understanding. This could be linked to the concept of social cohesion in relation to the field of education since it establishes and provides teachers with the perception and skills to facilitate their role as practitioner researchers. However, Alton-Lee (2011) refutes this concept by stating that school leaders follow a "prescriptive approach" (p. 316) which prevent and bypass the proactive involvement in and with research, and therefore constraints teachers to process and integrate new findings that builds upon their current knowledge. In addition, teachers do not have ownership over their practices because they are not able to take the participative approach where they transform and assimilate their ideas into their own views of the context of their pedagogical practices; instead, they are depending on theories to transform their practice (Kiely & Davis, 2010). Thus, when teachers work under exploitative conditions that lack support and opportunities to learn, then challenges to being

practitioner researchers scale up where teachers have insufficient time to adequately address their issues by engaging in inquiry and reflection for the purpose of continuous improvement. These claims are further backed up by Freeman and Richards (1993), who noted that teachers find it challenging to engage in and with research since it lacks individualism and dynamism and therefore destroys teachers' critical and liberal notion that their conceptions and values are indefensible.

Moreover, teachers are overwhelmed with the insistent and imperative policies that demand a lot of their time and energy. To explain further, Leat et al. (2015) asserted that research engagement is only driven by expectations to raise standards and achieve measurable school improvement rather than emanating from their voices and perceptions which shapes their identity. As such, teachers perceive themselves as technicians, where they just deliver lessons and administer assessments, which trivializes and decontextualizes their role as practitioner researchers (Campbell, 2013). Therefore, teachers' engagement in and with research becomes a minority activity due to the conflicting burden and intensified workload along with the constant surveillance; thus, devaluing the quality of their performance (Snoek & Moens, 2011). In this way, teachers are simply regarded as consumers of knowledge and recipients of information since the constraints teachers encounter as practitioner researchers leads them to become inactive contributors who lack initiating insights and generating questions in their field. In addition, Allwright (1997) argued that practitioner research constitutes a demanding process where teachers not only lack the time, but also for being autonomous investigators; therefore, being a practitioner researcher considerably becomes an unsustainable and abandoned practice due to the intolerable burdens imposed on educators.

The challenges of teachers being practitioner researchers is also correlated to the lack of coherence and relevance of the institutions vision towards professional development. According to Graczewski, Knudson, and Holtzman (2009), teachers stated that they are eager to be more resourceful about their profession; however, there is an unclear goal and reason as well as no level of understanding towards research since educational stakeholders prioritize classroom observations in order just to identify learners' needs while neglecting in defining teachers' proficiencies. Hence, it depreciates and marginalizes teachers' prior knowledge and input as well as increases their burden which does not result in the establishment of long-term improvement. Kutlay (2012) referred to research as a disjointed practice which is heavily encumbered by theory and fails to focus on teachers' real life experiences. Based on data collected from English language instructors, Kutlay (2012) findings indicated that teachers beliefs towards research is challenging since it deals with perceptual knowledge that is usually sustained by a strategy and lacks a fleeting curiosity. Instead, teachers prefer to rely on spontaneous ideas, informal consultations, internal workshops, and pedagogical printed resources rather than research findings because it does not provide them with practical advice to be used in the classroom. Thus, being a practitioner researchers is not ingrained as a culture in schools; instead, teachers' perception on research is based on doctrines of universal truths and paradigms rather than local understanding (Kutlay, 2012; Allwright, 1997) because they lack the awareness in engaging in research, reflection, and self-development due to the lack of external motives as well as only giving the priority to satisfying learners' immediate needs.

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The relationship between the different goals and objectives of engaging in research is limiting and problematic for language teachers since research is based on the extent of telling teachers what and how to teach (Nassaji, 2012). To explain more, teachers view being practitioner researchers as a challenge since it is not based on their viewpoints and beliefs; therefore, according to Ellis (2006), teachers do not perceive the usefulness of linking research to their practice and development. Borg (2010) similarly supported this notion by stating that teachers have sceptical views towards engaging in research because they believe it lacks value and impact on their field due to the fact that school organizations are purely embedded and underpinned in theories and methodologies. Thus, teachers lack a critical connection and develop peculiar perspectives towards research where they do not find it relevant to their field because they are accustomed to conventional pedagogical practices rather than efficacious inquiry strategies which obstructs their orientation for promoting personal, professional, and social change (Borg, 2010). Moreover, Nassaji (2012) asserted that teachers find it challenging to engage in research since they are more concerned with testing theories that are usually not translatable and applicable to their actual context of what they actually need for their professional growth. These claims are further backed up by Borg (2009), who noted that teachers' perception of research is conveyed as a highly conventional activity since research is usually inaccessible to teachers which makes it harder to bridge between the conceptual and the practical.

Another challenge underlined by Berger, Bole, and Troen (2005) is that teacher research is becoming more institutionalized which is depreciating the role of the teacher as being a decision maker and an agent of change instead of guiding teachers

to gain a deeper insight on maximizing and sustaining their inquisitive stance. Schleppegrell (1997) as well as Berger et al. (2005) asserted that educational stakeholders and administrators view teachers being practitioner researchers as clashing against the standardized components of the school culture rather than as a compelling force that transforms a teacher's practice in order to create a culture of inquiry and reflection. Although being a practitioner researcher is a robust professional development activity which strongly makes a paradigm shift in the teaching and learning of a teacher; this is a contradiction since pressure from educational stakeholders is becoming hostile rather than welcoming where teachers start perceiving engagement in research as a tool to devalue their autonomy and individual achievement. Zeichner (2003) further reinforced the preceding challenge regarding practitioner research as

> It is not a form of teacher education that will produce quick fixes for complex and enduring problems of schooling or compensate for the unsatisfactory working conditions that teachers are often forced to endure…. In this era of educational accountability and standards, teacher research is not a tool that can be used by policy-makers and administrators to externally impose particular changes on teachers' practices. (pp. 320- 321)

Thus, research acts as a barrier because as Borg and Liu (2013) arguably conceded, it overrides the potential for cultivating the educational process through decision-making process; hence, teacher research illustrates a naïve quality as it lacks authentic examination of individualistic motivations. As such, research could be compared to the notion of one-size-fits-all since it does not focus on teachers' personal and informed conceptions as well as the interplay in reflection and

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conversation (DiPardo et al., 2006). Therefore, Berger et al. (2005) stressed that in order to overcome the challenges of practitioner research, administrators and educational stakeholders must take into consideration that research should not be infused just to enhance learners' skills and needs, but engaging in and with research should generate a glimmer of hope for the role of teachers in changing the way they acknowledge their transformative experience throughout their professional career.

2.4 Teachers' Stories of Success with Practitioner Research

Despite the challenges of practitioner research presented in the previous section, success stories of teacher engagement with research, as consumers and producers, will be presented to illustrate how it transformed their practice. According to Bevan (2004), when teachers engage in research and use findings of educational research, then it reveals how these teachers are interested in evidence that rectifies their frustrations and complications which enhances and helps their professional understanding.

 Borg (2009) examined English language teachers' perception of practitioner from 13 countries in the world. Although most teachers reported low levels of doing research due to the lack of time and knowledge, yet a limited number of teachers reported being research-engaged which is driven by personal and professional concerns. Based on the interviews that Borg (2009) conducted, one of the teachers described his/her engagement with research as highly objective since research has helped him/her reflect on the situations and problems existing in present teaching practice. Gunn (2010) also noted that when teachers were involved in the practitioner research endeavour, they noticed it is a multi-faceted process where they were able to reflect on, criticize, and praise their practices continuously in order to gain and reveal

deeper insights on redefining their teaching identities rather than anticipating practical solutions. Capobianco et al. (2006) similarly supported this notion where they asserted that teachers as practitioner researchers act as a means of investigating and examining aspects of their practices through formulating a framework that would guide and transform their inquiry.

In addition, the interviewee noted that the purpose of research is to always test and analyze in order to explore problems in-depth rather than having a conception to prove if a theory is effective or not. Freeman (1996) had sceptical views towards the effective impact of engaging in research since he pointed out that it is an entrenched, one-directional, and hierarchical component which does not influence nor inform teachers' concerns and practices. However, Rankin and Becker (2006) refuted Freeman's (1996) negative notion on practitioner research since they conducted a case study of the engagement in and with research of a teacher in foreign language German which exposed how this teacher's engagement enhanced his pedagogical growth through engaging in enriched reflections by connecting it to events related to his pedagogy. Based on the teacher's perspective, he noted that research engagement is not about a simple transmission of a model nor about knowledge being gathered and put into action (Rankin & Becker, 2006). Instead, the teacher described his engagement in and with research as a matrix of experiences since it involved the integration and contextualization of knowledge about teaching within his personal framework. Despite the complexity of being a practitioner researcher, but for the teacher in foreign German language, he was given the opportunity to merge and rectify his research recognition with his own practical understanding and knowledge (Rankin & Becker, 2006; Allwright, 2005a).

As previously mentioned, exploratory practice is another form of practitioner research which acts as a vehicle to deepen teachers' understandings. Allwright (2005a) conducted an interview with a language teacher from Rio de Janiero who focused on providing rich experiences and procedures rather than on teaching points. As the teacher explained, when she assigned group work, it was impossible for her learners to communicate in English and switched into Portuguese. Therefore, instead of solving the problem by developing new teaching strategies to engage her learners, the teacher discussed the problem with her learners in order to refine her own understanding of what was going on in this situation. For that reason, instead of relying on customary theories, Allwright (2005a) characterized this situation as a fundamental component in establishing exploratory practice since it was an opportunity for proposing and understanding changes that could be feasible and practical rather than just employing and implementing a procedure in itself. In this way, practitioner research was used to draw understandings in a form of dialogue whereby the teacher mediated the meaning of her actions. Moreover, similar results were reported from a study conducted by Borg and Liu (2013) regarding teachers' engagement in and with research where teachers who engaged in research disclosed how it provided them with opportunities to delve into a wide range of relationships between existing practices and research in order to reflect and make connections based on their experiences. In addition, being a practitioner researcher is an intricate practice; however, teachers reported that when they engaged with research, they were able to go beyond the technical knowledge and be bluntly transparent and unambiguous through explicitly voicing out their concerns (Borg & Liu, 2013). As such, reflection becomes an important aspect when engaging in research where Chi (2010) asserted that teachers reflect on 'why' they choose a specific practice over the

other as well as integrating the self and knowledge as one entity by examining their beliefs through inquiry. Chi (2010) wanted to gauge Taiwanese in-service teachers' perceptions regarding practitioner research and reflection by conducting semi-structured interviews. Regardless of the intricacy of engaging in research and reflection, teachers' perceptions indicated how research and reflection are a form of inquiry which functioned as a catalyst to examine their own beliefs, enhance their self-awareness, and conceive the underlying assumptions of their practices; acting as a guide for their future actions (Chi, 2010; Chou 2010), and it depicted how reflection does not occur in abstraction; instead, it is a state of mind that deliberatively nurtures questioning both the theory and practice (Hussein, 2007). Through face-to-face interviews with elementary language teachers, Gilles, Wilson, and Elias (2010) similarly asserted that reflection acted as a lens for teachers which helped them formulate questions and explore their puzzles through research. As such, by taking the initiative to be practitioner researchers which acted as an agent for change, they had to also be reflective about their teaching in order to give life to the inquiry and sustain their research (Gilles, Wilson, & Elias, 2010). Therefore, being involved in practitioner research helps teachers move from an emancipatory into an empowering role which helps them become aware of their role through investigating and reflecting on their pedagogical choices in order to meet their needs (Esposito & Smith, 2006)

Moreover, although teachers being practitioner researchers is a minority activity among teachers, Hanks (2015) study demonstrated how research, specifically exploratory practice, had the potential to move away from the theoretical parameter of focusing on the 'why' approach and move towards exploring 'how' because it is

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not about eradicating a problem, but turning an unfavourable situation into a valuable insight. One of the teachers faced a number of challenges in helping students to recall vocabulary, and she decided to implement exploratory practice for the first time by refining and investigating the puzzles through mutual development with her learners. Through exploratory practice, the teacher was able to move from pretending that she is the knower towards being the researcher which enabled her to view questions and gain understanding from a different perspective. In conjunction with the preceding experience, Zhang (2004) shared his personal experience by incorporating research into pedagogy in order to get rid of the traditional approach by better understanding and developing his practices rather than confiding in problem solving tradition since it is not about adjusting teaching methods in order to produce conclusive outcomes. Instead, Zhang (2004) emphasized that it is about being given the opportunity to engage in continuous exploration in order to find out puzzlements, navigate complexities, and value contributions. Through puzzlements, teachers as practitioner researchers initiate their quest when they recognize there is a state of irritation and alertness as well as discrepancies, so they start to build research connections and inquire further to seek out rationales for teaching and decision-making (Castle, 2006). Thus, being a practitioner researcher is like going through a fog of unaddressed issues in order to reach to an accurate and lucid answer to the puzzling questions (Hanks, 2015). In this way, the teacher stated that through challenging and reconceptualizing the preconceived perceptions of her learning and teaching by developing new interpretations, she was able to transition from infuriation to puzzled curiosity. Hanks (2015), Allwright (2005a), and Allwright (2005b) asserted in order to grasp the connection between teaching, learning, and research and the issues that puzzle them, teachers should be practitioner researchers and engage in exploratory

practice rather than just passively reading about it because it promotes a sense of empowerment and challenges the existing assumptions of his/her performance. In this way, teachers feel genuinely influenced and empowered when they take active roles beyond educational contexts which helps them go beyond their contexts in order to shape their confidence, work, and development (Nelson & Slavit, 2008).

In another study conducted by Hall (2009), she identified that teachers' engagement with research enabled them to move beyond the process of teaching and open up to critical inquiry and deep reflection since teachers were able to immediately explore the problem that have an intrinsic value. One of the interviewees noted that being a practitioner researcher provided an insight on how to improve the quality of teaching through data collection and realistic analysis which provided rigorous evidence on the burden s/he is experiencing in his/her teaching life (Hall, 2009). In addition, another interviewee asserted that being a practitioner researcher helped him/her become an active agent in exploring the ambiguity of teaching in order to identify the areas of challenge and cognitive dissonance. Therefore, based on the interviewees engagement with research, Hall (2009) stated that teachers' pursuit and motivation to undertake inquiry has become a part of their professional practice and identity by dynamically connecting theory and research in order to produce new perspectives. Thus, being a practitioner researcher is neither a static nor linear activity; instead, it is a dynamic process where teachers reflect on their own actions (Bonner, 2006). A similar study was conducted by Brindley (1990) where he conducted a semi-structured interview with language teachers in order to identify their perceptions towards practitioner research. Prior to engaging in and with research, teachers perceived the quality of their classroom as a very complicated place which was based

on definitive judgements from their institution. However, four respondents stressed that being practitioner researchers granted them a sense of ownership especially when research was based on the importance and relevance of their interest since it facilitated to undertake further research in order to justify their views, beliefs, and intuitions.

Teachers' success stories demonstrated that being a practitioner research has a lot of benefits contributing to developing teachers' autonomous and professional judgements in order to move from a submissive position and become more reflective and analytical about their practices.

This section shows the diverse disciplines of researchers who all investigated the various definitions of practitioner research, the challenges of practitioner research, and the success stories of teachers being practitioner researchers. While the emphasis on teachers' engagement with research is only associated to school improvement and the expectations to raise standards, but there is ample evidence from a number of sources that indicate teachers' perceptions regarding practitioner research and the challenges on being practitioner researchers, which either develops or hinders their practice.

Chapter 3
Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore language teachers' perception regarding practitioner research and examine the constraints and challenges regarding their engagement in and with research. The study was designed to examine teachers' stance and beliefs in relation to research practices and to provide an insight into teachers' current status and needs in their context of practices.

3.1 Research Design

The research design chosen for this study was a qualitative research framework which focused on revealing educators' perception concerning practitioner research. To explain further the preliminary qualitative paradigm, thick and rich descriptive data is derived from open-ended questions and dialogue (Maxwell, 2013). Then, based on the reflection and interpretation of the participants' stories, the researcher connects with the phenomena being studied by determining what the experience signifies for the participants, and therefore general understandings are derived in order to conceptualize the data (Maxwell, 2013).

Case study design is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system, which is a case, through detailed, in-depth data collection (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2009) states that the case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence sources such as interviews, questionnaires, and documents which are beyond what might be available in other types of qualitative methods. In addition, Yin (2009) claims that the use of the case study design has a distinct advantage when a how or why question is being

investigated about a contemporary event over which the researcher has little or no control. Thus, implementing a qualitative approach by using a case study design allows researchers to establish understandings and draw interpretations based on the way participants view their experiences as well as retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life settings and events (Merriam, 2009).

Moreover, Stake (2005) asserted that qualitative researchers seek to understand a case through an individual's standpoint by appreciating the uniqueness and complexity of it, its embeddedness, and interaction with its contexts. Within a case study paradigm, the study was based on particularization and not generalization (Stake, 2005) where researchers must overlook all prejudices and judgements in order to achieve an objective inquiry of the participants' perception they deliver throughout the investigation (Padilla-Diaz, 2015).

In addition, Creswell (2013) stated that there is a distinction between qualitative and quantitative research that is framed in terms of using words by providing thick descriptions which is qualitative rather than numbers and statistical descriptions which is quantitative. Therefore, since I am conducting a case study design, my use of the qualitative research method to determine a language teacher's perception regarding practitioner research and the challenges they encounter as an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice would seem the most convenient.

3.2 Terms of Credibility and Trustworthiness

Credibility and trustworthiness are major components in qualitative research. Qualitative credibility means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while trustworthiness indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent.

In regard to credibility with qualitative research, Merriam (2009) stated that it is the responsibility of the researcher to assist readers to reach high quality understanding of the findings by describing the methods of case research used in ordinary language including how the triangulation was carried out, and make available information about the researcher and other sources of input. In addition, trustworthiness was obtained when sources provided corroborating evidence of the topic being studied and created a chain of evidence to support the investigations and conclusions (Stake, 2005).

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) defined triangulation as an attempt to fully explain and understand "the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint" (p. 141). Thus, triangulating the data helped increase confidence that what was observed and heard had been correctly interpreted (Stake, 2005). In this study, data triangulation was established using three instruments which were distributing questionnaires to language teachers (see Appendix A), conducting semi-structured interviews with language coordinators (see Appendix B), and conducting in-depths interviews with teachers who engage in research in order to share their stories and experience (see Appendix C). All three instruments were written in English and were explained to the participants who do not speak the language.

3.3 Restatement of the Research Questions

The main research questions attempted to guide the study in two directions. The first direction aimed to understand language teachers' perception regarding practitioner research, while the other directions intended to target the constraints regarding teachers' engagement in and with research. Therefore, the research questions

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provided guidance in collecting and analyzing data about the perceptions of language

teachers in regard to practitioner research.

1. What are language teachers' perception of engagement in and with

   practitioner research?

2. What reasons indicate constrains regarding their engagement in and with

   research?

The following section highlights the sampling design, and the process of creating

interview questions and questionnaire used for my study. It highlighted the way I

constructed my interview questions and questionnaire, how I piloted the interview

questions and questionnaire, and how they were both modified. The modified

interview questions and questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

3.4 Sampling Design

In this qualitative study, I used snowball sampling since it was a dynamic procedure

that involved identifying and selecting individuals who are knowledgeable about or

experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). In addition to

knowledge and experience, Noy (2007) noted that snowball sampling is like a

repetitive chain where participants refer the researcher to other participants by giving

him/her the contact information. Therefore, this type of procedure offers a main

vehicle to assist researchers in enriching their sampling clusters and accessing new

participants (Noy, 2007), and where participants express their availability and

willingness to participate in order to communicate experiences and opinions in a

reflective manner. Moreover, in snowball sampling, the researcher controls the

sampling phase of the participants by voluntarily deciding and ceasing who and how

many prospective participants to keep in order to contact them and check who will contribute to the study (Noy, 2007).

The research setting for this study were language teachers and coordinators across all grade levels and from various schools in Lebanon in order to gain different viewpoints regarding practitioner research which therefore generated rich data for interpretation and analysis. In addition, a written consent was obtained from all parties: teachers, coordinators, and administrators.

3.5 Instruments

3.5.1 Semi- Structured Interviews with Coordinators

Qualitative interviews are conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion by eliciting depth and detail about a research topic by following up on answers (Merriam, 2009). Because of the nature of my research question, I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews which was based on a mix of open ended and structured questions in order to develop a keen understanding of the research topic as well as obtain more specific and relevant knowledge about the research topic (Merriam, 2009). Through skillful questioning, it allowed the interviewees the freedom to express their views in their own terms, and in this way the interviewer determined the next question based on carefully listening to the previous answer (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Therefore, a skillful qualitative researcher is the one who can quickly adapt to a situation that was totally unexpected (Creswell, 2013).

I constructed the interview questions in alignment with my study's core research questions in order to understand the conceptions and characteristics of research

according to language coordinators as well as the extent in which language coordinators encourage or constraint teachers' engagement in and with research. The semi-structured interview consisted of six questions carefully designed to elicit the interviewee's ideas and opinions on the topic, as opposed to leading the interviewee towards preconceived choices. After constructing the interview questions, I piloted my interview questions on three participants before using them on the target population in order to assess whether the sampling frame is realistic and workable, to examine the credibility and trustworthiness of the instrument, and to uncover problems that may affect the research process. After piloting the interview questions on the three participants, I modified the interview questions based on the interviewees' insights and suggestions in order to avoid confusion and misinterpretation as well as have an objective and unbiased manner when implementing it to the target population.

3.5.2 Questionnaire for Language Teachers

Since the interview questions are built upon my research questions, the questionnaire I used was in alignment with the interview questions and research questions. Therefore, I decided to use "English Language Teachers' Conceptions of Research" developed by Borg (2009) questionnaire since it was the most appropriate to the scope of my current study in order delve deeper into language teachers' perceptions towards engaging in and with research. However, before adopting and administering the questionnaire, I requested Borg's permission and approval of using his questionnaire for my current study as part of my instruments. The questionnaire consisted of six sections which aimed to answer the research questions. The first section included ten scenarios through a Likert scale with 4 responses ranging from

"Definitely Not Research" to "Definitely Research", which attempted to elicit teachers' views of what research is and to what extent they felt each activity indicated an example of research. The second section examined teachers' understandings of the characteristics of good quality research where they rated a list of 11 characteristics in accordance with their importance of good quality research. The second part of this section was to give a chance for teachers to list their opinion of what characteristics a study must have for it to be called a 'good' research. The third section focused on teachers' perceptions and attitudes related to the research culture in their institutions. The fourth section dealt with teachers' scope and engagement in reading research as well as the reasons for reading or not reading research. On the other hand, the fifth section dealt with teachers' engagement in doing research along with the reasons behind it. The sixth section included general information about teachers' demographics such as years of experience, qualifications, type of institutions, etc.

Using the same exact way when piloting the interview questions, I used the same way to pilot my questionnaire with a group of ten language teachers in a graduate course where they filled the questionnaire and wrote their insights and feedback, and I modified the questionnaire based on the changes they suggested in order to ensure the best possible use of research results. Then, I checked if the participants were able to comprehend the questionnaire options, and if they suggest any changes just as I did with the interview questions. Therefore, the modification of the questionnaire or eliminating any option depended on the participants' recommendations and feedback. As such, the results of the piloting directed me to be more specific in explaining certain terminologies or acronyms like what ELT means since some

participants did not understand what it stands for. However, Borg (2009) argued that questionnaires usually lead to vague and imprecise responses due to participants avoiding certain open-ended questions which does not enable the researcher to delve and explore further on specific issues.

3.5.3 In-depth Interviews with Teacher-Researchers

In qualitative research, it is important for the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of language teachers' perception regarding practitioner research in order to generate a comprehensive and holistic inquiry (Noy, 2015). Before conducting the in-depth interviews, three teachers were asked to read the questions to check and ensure whether the questions were comprehensible and unambiguous. Consequently, the in-depth interview questions were not modified after piloting them since teachers comprehended the purpose of each question. Thus, in accordance with the acceptance from participants who were willing to participate, I conducted in-depth interviews with teachers who are practitioner researchers and are eager to share their experiences and expectations concerning their involvement in and with research in order to explore their perceptions of being practitioner researchers where teachers elaborated and clarified on their responses. I used purposeful sampling since it involved identifying and selecting individuals that are knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2007). In addition to knowledge and experience, Creswell (2007) noted the importance of availability and willingness to participate, and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in articulate, expressive, and reflective manner. In this way, participants are like travellers who share their personal stories and speak out their minds which leads the researcher to have a deeper insight into their experiences and beliefs by uncovering

more intensive information. The in-depth interviews conducted with the participants were checked for correlation with the themes that arose from the interviews and questionnaires.

Table 1: Summary of the purpose behind instruments used

Participants	Instruments	Purpose
50 Language Teachers	"English Language Teachers' Conceptions of Research" developed by Borg (2009) Questionnaire	Elicit teachers' perception regarding practitioner research
8 Language Coordinators	Semi-Structured Interviews	Understand the extent in which they encourage or constraint teachers' engagement in and with research
9 Language teachers who are practitioner researchers	In-depths Interviews	Share their experiences and expectations concerning their involvement in and with research

3.6 Data Analysis

Once all my data was collected, I analyzed it in two forms: transcribed interviews with coordinators and teachers who are practitioner researchers, and data generated from questionnaire. The interviews conducted with the language coordinators and teachers who are practitioner researchers were fully transcribed and analyzed in order to identify recurrent themes and draw conclusions. Instead of stating what each coordinator and teacher said, the similarities and discrepancies of the interviewees' perceptions and opinions were categorized according to common themes in order to facilitate the analysis process of each interview question. Therefore, the themes were emerged from the interviewees' perceptions and attitudes towards practitioner research and that reflected their thinking process. The data was split and organized according to the information obtained from both teachers and coordinators and analyzed through word processing programs. As for the questionnaire that was given to language teachers, the teachers' responses in each section were combined into three categories: highly important, least important, and unsure (Section 2 of the questionnaire) as well as strongly agree, strongly disagree, and don't know (Section 3 of the questionnaire) for better analysis of associations and their significance in order to determine their perception regarding their engagement in and with research. In addition, since qualitative study is inductive where theory is built from intuitive understandings, common themes and categories are developed through combining and ordering information from interviews and documents; therefore, results of this study will help in building an inductive analysis (Merriam, 2009) on language teachers' perception of practitioner research. Through inductive analysis, the

researcher establishes clear connections between his/her research objectives and findings where concepts, themes, and interpretations are emerged and identified from raw data (Thomas, 2006) rather than testing certain hypotheses (Merriam, 2009).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

To conduct this study, many components were taken into consideration. Therefore, to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of this research, I had informed consent from participants where they voluntarily agreed to participate in the research and were aware of its purpose and procedure. Participants' personal information and responses remained confidential in order to ensure the privacy of their data as well as protect them from any potential harm. As such, the consent form of the instruments on the cover page included the purpose of the study and assured anonymity which gave the participants the choice to either accept or refuse to participate. In addition, using secondary resources were properly cited and referenced. I also received an IRB approval in order to conduct this study.

3.8 Conclusion

Chapter three included the methodology involved in this study where I presented an overview of the design of my study, the selected sample, the instruments used, and the methods of data analysis which will help the reader develop a better understanding of what they are reading.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter presents the results of data analysis and findings generated from the three instruments used for data collection: the questionnaire addressed to language teachers, the interview with language coordinators, and in-depths interview with language teachers who are practitioner researchers in order to understand their perceptions of research as well as the extent to which research is promoted or constrained.

Data results and findings are used to address the two research questions posed by this study:

3. What are language teachers' perception of engagement in and with practitioner research?

4. What reasons indicate constraints regarding their engagement in and with research?

4.1 Questionnaire

4.1.1 Background Information

Data from questionnaires was collected from 50 language teachers across Lebanon and I gave all questionnaires to the teachers in hard copy. The subsequent tables demonstrate the participants' years of experience as language teachers, their highest relevant qualification, the age of the learners they teach most often, and the type of institution they teach at.

Table 2: Years of Experience as Language Teachers

Years of Experience as Language Teachers	Responses
0-4	20
5-9	11
10-14	14
15-19	2
20-24	2
25+	1

Table 3: Language Teachers Highest Qualification

Qualification	Responses
Certificate	0
High School Diploma	0
Bachelor's	22
Master's	28
Doctorate	0
Other	0

Table 4: Age of the Learners They Teach Most Often

Age of Learners	Responses
12 or Younger	36
13- 19	10

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20- 25	4
26+	0

Table 5: Type of Institution

Type of Institution	Responses
Private	47
Public	3
Other	0

As suggested in the following tables, Table 2 reflects the range of the years of experience the participants have in language teaching, and most of the participants have less than 15 years of experience as language teachers where the majority (20 teachers) have between 0 to 4 years of experience. Table 3 indicates that the highest number of participants hold Master's degree, but it does not mention in which field or emphasis. Table 4 shows that the most common age group taught by the majority of participants (36 teachers) is 12 or younger of age range which means that they teach in the Early Childhood or Elementary division, and 42 participants are full-time language teachers whereas 8 participants are part-time language teachers. Moreover, the results in Table 5 illustrate the responses to the questionnaire which indicate that 47 participants work in private institutions which are not affiliated to any university whereas 3 participants work in public institutions which are associated to the state sector.

4.1.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Research

Participants' perceptions of research were elicited through evaluating to what extent they felt each scenario indicated an example of research, and through examining the characteristics of good quality research as well as listing their opinion of what characteristics a study must have to be considered a 'good' research (Appendix A, Section 1 and Section 2).

4.1.3   Evaluating Scenarios

Section 1 of the questionnaire included ten scenarios which involved different forms of inquiry, and through a Likert scale with 4 responses ranging from "Definitely Not Research" to "Definitely Research", language teachers had to evaluate to what extent they felt each inquiry indicated an example of research. Throughout this section, there were no precise answers of whether each scenario is a right or wrong form of research because the aim of Section 1 was to gain a deeper insight into the participants' perceptions of what research was believed to be and what they mostly valued as research. Table 6 summarizes the results gained from participants where they selected one of the four possible ratings for each scenario.

As Table 6 presents, the most highly rated scenarios that were considered to be 'Definitely Research' by the participants were numbers 2, 3, and 4, and the least rated scenarios where participants considered them not to be research were scenarios 1, 7, and 8. Rating scenarios did not provide an overall insight into teachers' perceptions of research behind their evaluation; accordingly, participants were asked to comment and explain their choice on the scenario that they felt was mostly research and least research. Based on the language teachers' evaluation, scenario 4 had the highest rating as research, and they provided an explanation on why they

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believed it is 'Definitely Research'. The comments and explanations were highlighted by the participants in the following responses:

"Scenario 4 is definitely research because the lecturer used statistical analysis"

"There is a large sample of 500 teachers which means it would lead to richer results"

"It is research because statistics was used and it was published in an academic journal"

"Writing an article about the work in an academic journal means that results are publically shared"

Scenario 8 had the least rating as research, and two participants commented on why they assumed it is "Definitely Not Research".

"The sample is too small to have valid results"

"A sample of 5 students is not enough to reflect on their ideas and achieve reliable conclusions"

Thus, the participants' comments on Scenario 4 and Scenario 8 gave an insight into their perceptions of research where they focused on the importance of having a large sample as well as involving statistical analysis in order to be shared with others. This reveals that teachers have a conventional notion towards research which indicates whether research is a vital and feasible activity to be engaged in, as I will subsequently discuss.

Table 6: Teachers' Evaluation of Ten Scenarios (Appendix 1, Section 1)

Scenario	Definitely Not Research (Responses)	Probably Not Research (Responses)	Probably Research (Responses)	Definitely Research (Responses)
1	14	14	20	2
2	0	4	18	28
3	2	5	16	28
4	3	2	13	32
5	9	12	20	9
6	1	9	20	20
7	10	11	19	10
8	18	14	17	2
9	7	11	16	16
10	7	15	22	7

4.1.4 Characteristics of Good Quality Research

The second section of the questionnaire focused on teachers' perceptions of research where they rated a list of 11 characteristics that make good quality research. Teachers were asked to rate each characteristic as 'unimportant, moderately important, unsure, important, and very important'. However, for the purpose of efficiently analyzing the results, 'Important' and 'Very Important' ratings for each characteristic were categorized as 'Highly Important while 'Moderately Important' 'Unimportant' were characterized as 'Least Important', and 'Unsure' was left as it is. Table 7 summarizes participants' responses to each characteristic.

Table 7: Teachers' Perceptions on the 11 Characteristics of Good Quality Research

Characteristic of Good Quality Research	Highly Important (Responses)	Least Important (Responses)	Unsure (Responses)
a large # of people are studied	41	12	3
a large volume of information is collected	40	6	4
experiments are used	30	19	4
Hypotheses are tested	42	4	4
information is analysed statistically	41	5	4
questionnaires are used	40	7	3
the researcher is objective	47	0	2
the results apply to many ELT contexts	13	10	28
the results are made public	40	10	1
the results give teachers ideas they can use	35	3	6
variables are controlled	37	2	11

As Table 7 shows, the most important characteristic of good quality research rated by teachers was "hypotheses are tested", followed by "the researcher is objective". Another important characteristic highlighted by teachers was 'information is analyzed statistically' as well as "a large number of people are studied" which also showed how teachers' perception of research is also associated with the typical scientific conception of research. In addition, what is worth noting is that the characteristic 'the results apply to many ELT contexts' generated the highest rating as an 'unsure' response due to the uncertainty teachers usually struggle with, which is whether research findings are applicable in their classrooms.

Moreover, the second part of this section was an opportunity for teachers to articulate their own opinion of what characteristics a study must have in order for it to be considered good quality research. Here are some responses which provided an insight into teachers' clarifications on the characteristics of good quality research:

"Topic must be up-to-date and of teachers interest"

"It is not necessary that a hypothesis is tested, but there must be some research question or target; it is not random"

"Observation, reflection, and revisiting with an amended plan"

"It can be replicated and doable, tied to theory or logical rationale, and leads to future research."

"There should exist a variety of different participants to represent different genders, ethnicities, and age groups"

"There should be a real-life problem occurring with teachers rather than having preconceived assumptions"

"Confidentiality"

"It is not necessary that a hypothesis is tested, but there must be some research question or target; it is not random"

"The topic should interest the researcher himself/herself, and it should be about current issues in the field of study at hand"

4.1.5   Research Culture

The third section of the questionnaire focused on teachers' perceptions and attitudes related to the research culture in their institution. Teachers were asked to rate each statement as 'strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, and don't know'. However, for the purpose of effectively analyzing the results, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' ratings for each characteristic were categorized as 'Agree Strongly' while 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree' were characterized as 'Disagree Strongly', and

'Don't Know' was left as it is. Table 8 summarizes participants' responses to each statement.

Table 8: Teachers' Perceptions related to the Research Culture

Statements	Agree Strongly (Responses)	Disagree Strongly (Responses)	Don't Know (Responses)
Teachers do research themselves	32	8	11
The management encourages teachers to do research	8	37	5
Teachers feel that doing research is an important part of their job	22	23	8
Teachers have access to research books and journals	9	32	9
Teachers have opportunities to learn about current research	8	37	5
Teachers talk about research	16	28	7
Teachers are given support to attend ELT conferences	11	35	3
Time for doing research is built into teachers' workloads	18	23	9
Teachers read published research	13	22	13

As Table 8 presents, most teachers responded to the statements related to the research culture in their institutions as "disagree strongly". Interestingly enough, most teachers strongly disagreed that the management does encourage teachers to engage in research followed by teachers do not have the opportunities to learn about current research.

4.1.6 Reading Research

The fourth section of the questionnaire dealt with participants' extent in reading

research as well as the reasons for reading or not reading research.

Frequency of Reading

A total of 50 teachers reported on how frequently they read published research

related to language teaching from academic journals, professional journals, and web-

based sources. 26 teachers reported they sometimes read research, 7 teachers

reported that they often read research, and 17 teachers mentioned they rarely read. In

addition, in order to understand what teachers meant by rarely reading research, they

identified reasons in order to elaborate further on this issue. Below are some of the

predominant teachers' concerns related to reading research:

"School administration is not interested in research"

"I do not have time to search for articles and read research"

"Research does not give me any practical advice to enhance my practices"

"I find that table talk, other teachers' experiences, and other unofficial
publications are often more useful and unbiased"

"Published research is hard to comprehend"

"Research is too broad, too theoretical, and too limited that does not provide
any practical use"

Based on teachers' responses, their concerns to reading research stipulate an

attitudinal barrier rather than being impeded by external constraints.

Table 9: Reasons for not Reading Research

Reasons	Responses
I am not interested in research	**0**
I don't have time	**4**
I don't have access to books and journals	**1**
I find published research hard to understand	**4**
Published research doesn't give me practical advice for the classroom	**8**

4.1.7 Doing Research

Section 5 of the questionnaire focused on teachers' engagement in doing research along with the reasons behind it.

Frequency of Doing Research

A total of 50 teachers reported on how frequently they did research related to language teaching. 23 teachers reported they sometimes did research, 4 teachers reported they often did research, 21 teachers reported they rarely did research, and 2 teachers reported never. However, the teachers who reported that they did research sometimes and who rarely did it were cautiously interpreted in order to report on their perceptions related to engagement in research.

Reasons for Doing Research

Teachers (27 teachers) who reported that they 'sometimes' or 'often' did research were asked to specify their reasons by picking more than one item from a list provided to them. The teachers' responses are shown in Figure 1.
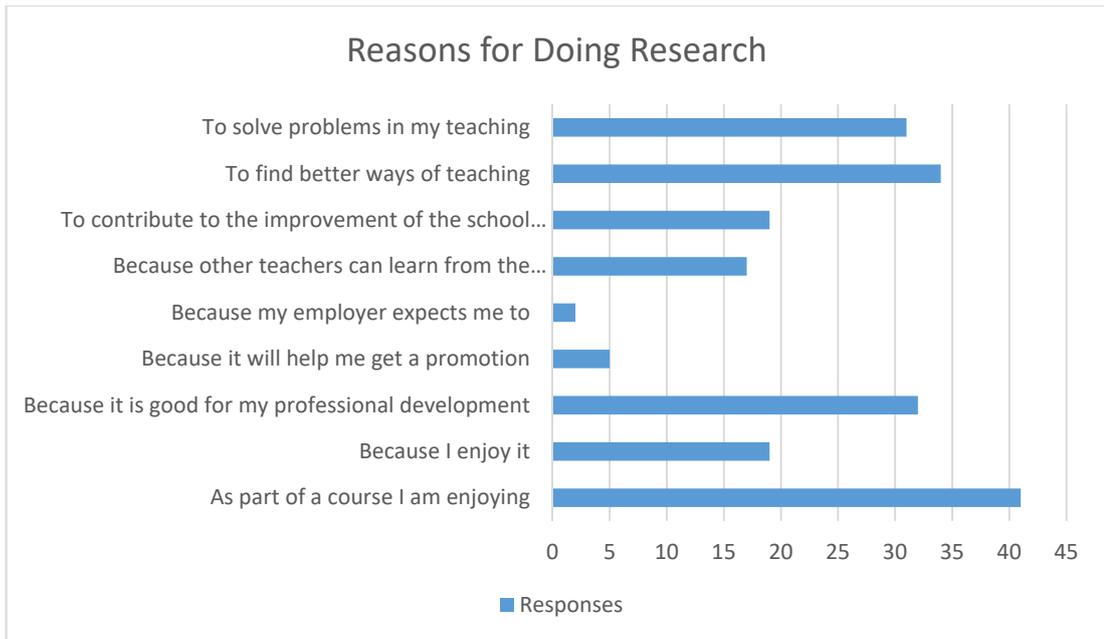
Figure 1: Reasons for Doing Research

The three major reasons for doing research, as highlighted by teachers, were it is as a part of a course I am enjoying (41 responses), to find better ways of teaching (34 responses), and because it is good for my professional development (32 responses). The most chosen reasons evidently indicate a substantial personal and professional motive rather than having an instrumental focus such as the responses that were least eminent which were it will help me get a promotion (5 responses) and my employer expects me to (2 responses).

Reasons for not Doing Research

Teachers (23 teachers) who reported that they "rarely" or "never" did research were correspondingly asked to indicate their reasons by choosing more than one item from a list provided to them. The teachers' responses are found in Figure 2.
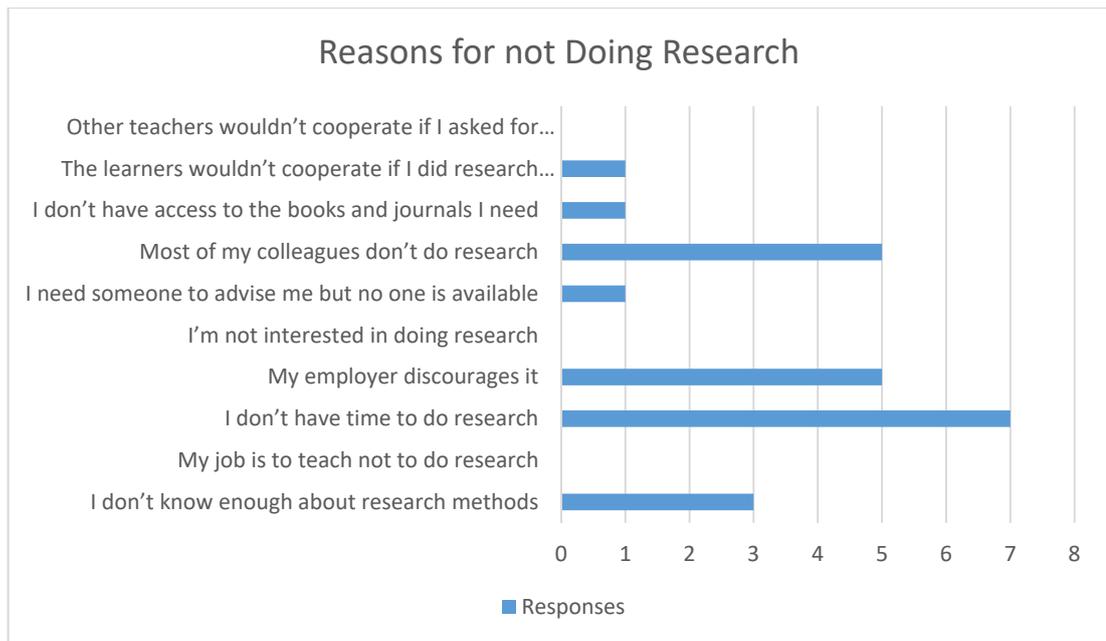
Figure 2: Reasons for not Doing Research

The three main reasons for not doing research, as indicated by teachers, were I do not have time to do research (7 responses), my employer discourages it (5 responses), and most of my colleagues do not do research (5 responses) which shows how colleagues can have a negative impact on teachers' engagement in research. In addition, teachers also mentioned that they lack the knowledge about research methods which indicates that they lack the self-efficacy and confidence to accomplish goals related to research due to being affected by their social surrounding and teaching work load.

4.2 Interviews with Language Coordinators

Interviews were conducted with eight language coordinators, all of whom answered all six questions. The interview questions aimed to understand the conceptions and characteristics of research according to language coordinators in

order to examine if undertaking research contributes to the teachers' personal and professional growth as well as the extent at which they encourage or constraint teachers' engagement in and with research. In addition, the questions aimed at understanding the extent to which the workplace is conducive to research engagement, and the skills teachers need to acquire in order to engage in research. In order to avoid repetition and redundancy, coordinators' responses to each question were combined according to common themes.

1. **What reasons do you attribute to teachers being more or less interested in conducting research (research-engaged)?**

Lack of time and being theoretical and statistical were the most common reasons that the language coordinators attributed to teachers being less research engaged. Coordinator 1 and Coordinator 2 stated that teachers are being less interested in conducting research since it is theoretical and a time-consuming process. On the other hand, according to Coordinator 3, research lacks practicality because it is linked to statistics. Coordinator 4 mentioned that time is a key factor which affects teachers' engagement in research, and Coordinator 5 similarly pointed out that research is a time constraint because it demands a lot of time and effort, in addition to all the other responsibilities teachers have. Coordinator 6, Coordinator 7, and Coordinator 8 correspondingly iterated that research is discouraged due to lacking support, being overloaded with tasks, and having low income which makes them less inclined to conduct research. However, most of the language coordinators gave several reasons that attribute to teachers being more research engaged. Coordinator 1 stated that when leaders engage teachers in reflecting on what they used to do and help them set a personal plan for themselves, then it paves the way for being more inclined towards conducting research. Coordinator 4 mentioned that teachers should

have a disposition towards research in order to reflect and get fruitful results to improve their practice, and Coordinator 5 also addressed that when teachers have certain problems, they decide to conduct research in order to find if there is a possibility that they can solve the problem. In addition, Coordinator 7 and Coordinator 8 similarly stated that research creates opportunities for professional growth because it helps teachers find ways to identify the things that are not working in their classroom as well as help them respond to a problem.

2. What are your perceptions of the extent to which the teachers' workplace is conducive to research engagement?

According to the eight language coordinators who were interviewed, the school environment and collaborative work are what make the teachers' workplace conducive to research engagement. Coordinator 1 stated that the learning environment is the third teacher because it should foster open communication and meet the different needs of its members. Coordinator 4 mentioned that the school environment usually encourages teachers to conduct research because it provides channels of communication where teachers collaborate to share resources which enhances teachers' practices as well as it is an environment that invites for collaboration where teachers share their results, which is a key factor in research engagement. Moreover, Coordinator 5 mentioned that the school's environment is what makes a teachers' workplace conducive to research engagement because through sharing of information as well as sharing of the findings can be very important for creating an environment that encourages teachers and faculty to become research-oriented, and based on this, collaboration becomes an important aspect in creating a learning community that is conducive to research because two brains are better than one. In addition, Coordinator 6, Coordinator 7, and Coordinator

8 claimed that the workplace environment should be down to earth in order to be conducive to research engagement where there is significant interaction among staff members in order to foster positive relationships, test new ideas, and support their needs. However, Coordinator 3 stated that the teachers' workplace is not conducive to research engagement because it not part of the school policy or the Lebanese curriculum. In addition, Coordinator 3 affirmed that the teachers' workplace is not a community that values research because it does not impact a teacher's professional life, and that is why some teachers feel that they do not belong in this community.

3. What skills and knowledge do you feel teachers need to acquire in order to engage in research?

Coordinators' responses varied according to the skills and knowledge that need to be acquired by teachers in order to engage in research. Coordinator 1 stated that teachers are supposed to be problem-finders and problem-solvers in order to grow as researchers because it will help them define the problem, ideate solutions, test these solutions, collect data related to implementation, and analyze and inform teaching again. This could be linked to what Coordinator 2 mentioned that teachers need to apply the steps of the scientific methods through coming up with hypotheses and questioning. Moreover, Coordinator 3 and Coordinator 7 claimed that not everybody understands the language of research, so teachers should know how to look at the validity and reliability of the source in order to properly engage in research and communicate their findings. According to Coordinator 4, teachers need to have systematic and strategic thinking in order to come up with researchable questions in order to assess and synthesize different situations rather than just rely on observation. Similarly, Coordinator 5 mentioned that teachers need to conduct research on the topic or problem at hand where teachers need to indicate the question that they want

to research and the tools that they need to have in order to transform it into information and knowledge, and of course they need to analyze. In addition, Coordinator 8 indicated that teachers should possess excellent management skills as well as critical thinking skills in order to analyze data, come up with conclusions and syntheses as well as having writing skills to document and write reports. On the other hand, Coordinator 6 stated that the important skills that teachers need to have are adaptability, imagination, commitment, and innovation.

4. **What do you see as the main benefits of teachers reading and engaging in research?**

The language coordinators mentioned several main benefits of teachers reading and engaging in research. Coordinator 1 referred to research as a process of learning because its ultimate purpose is to improve the teacher's practice and consequently empower themselves with the knowledge and skills in the best way. Coordinator 2 said that it can make teachers' teaching experience more fruitful. Coordinator 3 mentioned that some teachers live on research and they need evidence-based strategies which are evolving. Moreover, Coordinator 4 claimed that reading and engaging in research contributes to a growth mind-set, basically an intellectual and personal growth, due to the exposure to different approaches and perspectives. In addition, Coordinator 5 stated that reading research helps teachers identify problems and associate what they see in the teaching process whereas engaging in research is an ongoing personal and professional development because it keeps teachers up-to-date and helps in making the environment around them more prosperous. Coordinator 6 also stated that teaching requires research engagement and reading because in this way, teachers demonstrate their effectiveness and reduce their feeling of frustration which develops their capacity. Coordinator 7 similarly claimed that

when teachers research topics which are closely related to their problems, they will stop feeling frustrated when they apply findings which they themselves were engaged in collecting; therefore, teachers will have better knowledge and understanding of current problems and the proper ways to avoid or solve them. On the other hand, Coordinator 8 stated that reading and engaging in research expands teachers' knowledge in finding solutions to problem that arise in the classroom where educational stakeholders and administrators would be proud because it is a way of improving the institution.

5. How does undertaking research contribute to a teacher's personal and professional growth?

Diverse responses were given by the language coordinators regarding how research contributes to a teacher's personal and professional growth. According to Coordinator 1, research allows the teachers to better understand the underlying conceptual base of every single practice which helps strengthens the teachers' vision and allows them to embrace change. In addition, Coordinator 4 stated that through research, teachers avoid stagnation and break out of their comfort zone because they get involved in the habit of self-assessing and self-questioning. Coordinator 2 mentioned that research makes better teachers especially in helping them solve problems. As stated further by Coordinator 5, research does play a major role in a teacher's professional development because the more research they conduct, the more hands-on they have to identify the problems and find answers to certain problems which improves the abilities of teachers and their quality of teaching. Coordinator 7 and Coordinator 8 likewise mentioned that research not only contributes to the professional growth, but also to the personal growth because it enriches their skills, creates a feeling of self-confidence, and boosts their self-esteem.

Moreover, Coordinator 3 mentioned that research widens teachers' horizon in how they think, and it exposes them to what others think and the problems others are facing since there is no perfect case scenario.

6. What are some problems teachers experience in doing research?

There were prevalent responses from language coordinators regarding the problems teachers experience in doing research. Coordinator 1 and Coordinator 2 mentioned that teachers will always face the problem of having time, the resources and databases, and the support to do it as well as the other facilities including funding. Coordinator 3 claimed that if teachers do not know how to look at research, it can be a downfall instead of contributing to their growth. Moreover, as stated by Coordinator 4, it is not only the lack of time, but also the lack of motive is a key problem because teachers work under rigid systems and approaches where they become limited to certain plans and executions which hinders their critical thinking and other transdisciplinary skills. Coordinator 5 and Coordinator 6 also claimed that time management is the major barrier in doing research because teachers are swamped with work hours, are under so much pressure, and lack guidance. In addition, Coordinator 5 and Coordinator 8 stated that if the research is quantitative, most teachers lack the knowledge to conduct a statistical analysis unless they are trained and it requires a lot of time. Furthermore, Coordinator 7 iterated that empowerment is extremely lacking in institutions which makes teachers feel frustrated and pressured due to the lack of time and resources to follow through. Coordinator 8 similarly claimed that despite being overloaded with work, yet there is a lack of cooperation in the workplace which leads to misunderstandings.

4.3 In-depth Interviews with Teacher-Researchers

In-depth interviews were conducted with nine language teachers who are involved in research, where they answered all five questions. The aim of the in-depth interviews was to explore language teachers' perceptions of being practitioner researchers through sharing their experiences and expectations concerning their involvement in and with research. Teachers who are practitioner researchers responded to all five questions, and their responses to each question were combined based on certain themes.

1. Could you explain what your involvement with research was and why you consider it to be research?

Teacher 1 conducted research to know when teachers face problems in their classes especially when it comes to motivating students because the goal of conducting research in the educational fields should be related to students rather than teachers. Teacher 2 conducted research during her senior study course and she considered it research because it had different resources, contained statistics, and was written by professionals. Similarly, Teacher 8 mentioned that she is involved in research because she is in the process of completing her masters and it sort of comes with the responsibility whether she likes it or not, but she stated that it really helped her in terms of pedagogical approaches since research is just a little bit of extending your finger to reach your goals. Teacher 3 conducts research on an on-going basis because it is one of her job requirements; however, Teacher 3 considered her own publication of a short story and ontology to be research because she was able to speak and spend time through travelling, living, and experiencing, so it was also based on that living alive in the flesh and blood. Teacher 4 stated that research is a holistic approach in her daily life without really noticing and it depends on each situation such as linking

it to her own experience or to her practices with her students. Teacher 5 also
mentioned that she does research related to the new teaching methods because it is
important to come up with new techniques and tools especially when working with
pre-schoolers. Moreover, Teacher 6 engaged in research prior to teaching a new
lesson because students usually go deeply into details of a topic that they find
interesting, so as a teacher, he had to research for more information from different
sources. Similarly, Teacher 7 stated that his research was a quest to find answers and
solutions related to the topics he is teaching because he had a lot of questions and
challenges to solve and overcome. In addition, Teacher 9 engaged in research in
order to find different ways to introduce spelling routines where she started
observing students, applied strategies and applications, and generated beliefs on how
learners work and reflected on students' writing behaviors in order to improve their
skills.

2. **How did engagement in and with research help you with your personal and
   professional career?**

Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 both stated that research assisted them in finding new
teaching methods, but did not mention how it helped them with their personal career
since they haven't practiced or worked enough in the field. Moreover, research has
helped Teacher 3 professionally through enhancing her critical thinking and critical
reading because it helped her engage her learners in writing and developing their
research skills, whereas on a personal level, the exposure to multiple rhetorical
situations helped her become a life-long learner where she was able to compose her
own research article. Teacher 4 mentioned that her engagement in and with research
helped her with her personal and professional career at the same time since she
became more knowledgeable about the different strategies as well as what works

culturally. Teacher 5 similarly stated that with her personal career, research has helped her find a lot of information by being more knowledgeable whereas with her professional career, it helped her develop new ways to develop and work as a team with other teachers. Moreover, Teacher 6 said that if one wants to succeed in his/her profession as a teacher, s/he has to be involved with research since it helped him empower himself with evidence from readings in order to bridge the gap and prove certain points. Teacher 7 stated that research has helped him with strategies to manage his classroom, to deal with different students, to raise students' curiosity, and to deal with administration team. According to Teacher 8, research has been an innate characteristic since it is a sign of professionalism, evolution, and self-worth; it is like a badge of honour. On the other hand, Teacher 9 mentioned that on a professional level, research helped her become more knowledgeable by having a wider bank of strategies and approaches to dealing with non-behaviors or students as well as solving problems, experimenting, and developing her understanding. She also stated that engaging in research helped her create a thinking culture through networking and team-building.

3. Why do you think engagement in and with research is relevant and important to your career?

Teacher 1 and Teacher 4 stated that we are living in a changing world especially in the field of education, so it is important to stay up-to-date especially in terms of finding the newest strategies such as motivating learners. Similarly, Teacher 8 claimed that engaging in research is quintessential especially in today's world where pedagogical practices are always changing, so research helped her follow the hottest trends and issues in education as well as adapt and evolve in her classes accordingly. Teacher 2 and Teacher 5 mentioned that research helped them improve and

implement better teaching methods and better ways of dealing with students. Moreover, Teacher 3 claimed that since we are in a larger way involved in the production of voice, research has helped in the cultivation of inner voice especially when it comes to reading and engaging in other literatures and writings. So, she further added that one has to participate in active research and active writing in order to cultivate one's own voice and participate into that conversation. In addition, Teacher 6 stated that that being engaged in and with research would lift up his profile and pave the road for better learning outcomes. He also added that being engaged in research is vital in his domain because we are we are delivering information and these information should always be credible and reliable, and without research you can't make it. Furthermore, Teacher 7 indicated how research speeds professional development, creates positive attitude towards work, encourages collaboration among colleagues, increases productivity at work as problems get solved faster and questions are answered quickly, increases professionals' independence at work, and provides a lot of background knowledge and resources. On a personal level, it sharpened his critical thinking and problem solving skills, helped him become knowledgeable, helped him become a lifelong learner, discovered new perspectives, and followed up on recent theories and practice. Teacher 9 stated that she does not believe in givens in education because it is a critical field that has zero givens and it is field that doesn't have absolute facts. So, she stated research is definitely important to stay updated which helped her have hands-on on the credibility of the resources, approaches, and strategies as well as defend her claim if a certain strategy works or not.

4. What can be the major difficulties and constraints of doing research by teachers?

According to Teacher 1, the major constraint of doing research is allocating time, having access to research articles that are recent or new in the field, and being bombarded with administrative tasks. Teacher 2 and Teacher 8 also stated that they can't always find the topics they are researching for, and Teacher 8 stated that discerning what is good information from all of the garbage online is a time-consuming job in itself. Teacher 3 mentioned that a major difficulty of doing research is time because teaching takes all your time. In addition, Teacher 4 claimed that the biggest problem is time and energy because there are a lot of demands on teachers these days like writing lesson plans and personally research is not a built-in activity since she does not have quality time. Teacher 5 similarly mentioned that teachers are overloaded with tasks and teachers do not have free access to research. According to Teacher 6, the major constraints and difficulties of doing research by teachers are attributed to the lack of time due to their work load and tough schedules, the absence of trainings on how to research, the lack of concerns or support from the school itself, and mostly the lack of motivation to go spend time on researching a topic. Teacher 7 also mentioned that the major difficulties of engaging in research are the lack of administration support and encouragement, administration that gives you answers rather than questions and resources to search on your own, lack of time to research, and lack of resources in school that supports teachers' professional development. Teacher 9 claimed there is a lack of flexibility in applying and engaging in research since school system are not objective, teachers are faced with objections, and under so much stress and work.

5. In your opinion, what should be done to make teachers become practitioner researchers?

According to Teacher 1, in order for teachers to become practitioner researchers, there should be collaboration between universities and administrators because the key is when administrators decrease the load and burdens on teachers, then teachers will be able to conduct and engage in research. Teacher 2 as well as Teacher 5 stated that teachers should be motivated, and should know why research is important so it could be part of their daily routine. Moreover, Teacher 4 claimed that administrators should recognize that teachers already conduct and engage in research, so the definition of what research is should be widened by including what teachers are already exisitingly doing rather than have them so something out of the blue. Teacher 3 stated that one of the best way to make teachers become practitioner researchers is creating a culture of sharing information because some teachers can use this information if they need help for their lesson and so on. Teacher 9 similarly said that there should be a wider sharing and awareness because a network functions through collaboration and sharing of results rather than doing a research for the sake of adding it on the resume. Furthermore, Teacher 6 asserted that officials of the country should take the issue of research as a main concern so it becomes part of their education system and curriculum. Teacher 6 further added that schools should provide educational resources for teachers and should conduct professional development workshops and trainings in order to guide teachers find trustworthy sources. Similarly, Teacher 8 iterated that continuing professional development workshops as well as changing the general consensus of research in education should take place. In addition, Teacher 7 stated that educational stakeholders should believe in teachers as researchers by pushing them and giving them time to inquire through

questioning and researching for answers since there is no one correct way for education to take place and he believes in trial and error. Teacher 9 mentioned that we should change in our way of adopting applied theory, and instead there should be initiative and self-motivation to change.

4.4 Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented the results related to the study based on the questionnaire, interview questions, and in-depth interviews. The following chapter aims to delve further into the analysis of the results and offer prospective reasons to explain them.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study aims to answer two research questions that were part of a qualitative study related to language teachers' perceptions of practitioner research, and they were conveyed in the international literature reviewed prior to carrying out the data collection. The questions are about language teachers' perception of engagement in and with practitioner research, and the reasons that indicate the constraints regarding their engagement in and with research. Therefore, this chapter presents a synthesis and discussion of the findings of the questionnaire, interviews, and in-depth interviews related to pertaining issues which are teachers' perception of research as well as their level of engagement in attempt to answer the research questions.

To answer the first question, "what are language teachers' perception of engagement in and with practitioner research?" data revealed that teachers' perception varied and differed based on every scenario and situation. To explain more, after conducting the questionnaire with 50 language teachers, it indicated that their perceptions of research are aligned with conventional scientific concepts of research that were emergent based on teachers' notions in Table 7, and the key ideas were objectivity, statistics, large samples, and hypotheses used by the researcher. Cain and Milovic (2013) asserted that teachers are engrossed by a preoccupied notion of research where they assume that their practices can be known objectively through statistical and controlled methods rather than being based on an encountered paradigm. Hence, this indicates that teachers lack the practical knowledge of research which is based on reflecting and experimenting with their own practices; instead, teachers'

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comments indicated that research should not be based on their personal opinions, assumptions, and beliefs; instead, it should be based on scientific evidence in order to have valid results.

Moreover, teachers' practices are based on prescribed theories and standards which hinders their understanding of the research process; thus, leading to an insignificant reform where teachers will not be able to voice out their concerns as well as lack ownership over their practices (Kiely & Davis, 2010). This is also noted in Table 8 in Chapter 4- Results section, where most teachers agreed that the management does not encourage teachers to engage in research. This is a significant finding that can be corroborated in the research of Cain and Milovic (2013), who stated that engaging in research is not encouraged because it is based on a top-down scheme where there is a despotic and weary relationship between administrators and teachers. As such, teachers become bombarded by high expectations which leads them to potential resistance towards monitoring the change in their practices as well as evaluating their practices. In addition, teachers stated that they lack the opportunity to learn about current research, and this can be justified by looking at how educational institutions fear change which leads teachers to be unwilling to explore and engage in new approaches.

As for research engagement, it was divided into two distinctive domains in order to be investigated further. The first domain in research engagement was the teachers' extent in reading research, and the majority of teachers stated that they rarely read research, and based on their responses, their concerns to reading research is stipulated by an attitudinal barrier rather than being impeded by external constraints since it does not offer them any practical advice for their classroom practices. As

such, teachers' perception towards reading research indicates that they oppose this practice and do not want to have control over the process of engaging with research since it does not concur with their practices as well as impinges their practices; therefore, they prefer to lean towards their own personal and cultural perspective in order to maintain a degree of interest in informing and analyzing their practices. However, as discussed in the literature, it is believed that when teachers read research, the findings and data will help teachers inform, analyze, and interpret the challenges they are handling (Borg & Sanchez, 2015), but it is clear that teachers are less keen in using findings as a vehicle to justify certain actions (Everton, Galton, & Pell, 2002). The second domain, which is teachers' extent in doing research, was investigated in order to further understand the reasons behind the reluctance or avoidance of engaging in research. Based on the literature, engaging in research is an abandoned practice due to the lack of time and burdens imposed on teachers (Allwright, 1997), and this issue is reflected in teachers' responses where the majority stated that they do not engaging in research since they do not have time. It would have been a critical step to understand further why teachers stated that they do not have time to engage in research. According to Collinson and Cook (2001), teachers in reality lack the time due to the intolerable demands as well as the absence of opportunities to discuss and disseminate what they know or what they learned due to how educational institutions create barriers for change and development. Thus, when teachers are under pressure, it leads them to a reactive mode where they prioritize dealing with deadlines, responsibilities, or student behavior rather than focusing on engaging in research and becoming practitioner researchers through assessing, learning, and sharing puzzling situations for improving their roles not only as educators but as lifelong learners. In addition, teachers also stated that their

colleagues do not do research, so they also do not engage in research. Therefore, this shows how teachers are affected by external motivators that can either hinder or facilitate their roles as practitioner researchers. Despite teachers' responses to engaging in research reflect that they are driven by personal and professional motives rather than being based on external intentions such promotion and expectations; however, there should have been a more inclusive insight into the teachers' responses who stated that they engaged in research as part of a course as shown in Figure 1 in Chapter 4 in order to better understand how course requirements play a role in providing a systematic route for fostering research engagement among teachers. Thus, teachers' perception towards practitioner research shed light on why engaging in and with research is not a recommendable activity throughout their professional career, and it is unlikely to occur if there is no practical support to alter, sustain, and enhance the quality of research in order to endorse practitioner researchers in the field of education.

To answer the second question, "what reasons indicate constrains regarding their engagement in and with research?" the results of this study are based on the interviews conducted with coordinators and teachers who engage in research. Hahs-Vaughn and Yanowitz (2009) asserted that a teacher should not be a consumer of information, but also a producer of knowledge since the latter leads teachers to become reflective practitioners through allocating resources and engaging in research in order to alter and shape the complexity and enduring problems of their working conditions. Unfortunately, this is a utopian scenario since teachers are ostensibly facing a lot of constraints when it comes to engaging in and with research. The major issue that is recurrent among all teachers is lack of time where teachers do not have

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control on how much time and space should be used for engaging in research. Moreover, Hargreaves (1990) claimed that the key issue in research is not based on the needs and demands of teachers' immediate contexts; instead, it is established for administrative purposes that erodes teachers' professional development and subjects them to constant surveillance. This is further backed up by what Coordinator 4 iterated that teachers work under rigid systems where they only execute limited plans without promoting their critical thinking.

Another interesting finding of this study was teachers' lack the flexibility to engage in research since they are faced with too many rigid tasks, objections, and workloads. This further confirms that teachers work under unfavorable conditions where they do not have the potential to reform their practices and revolutionize their thinking and practices (Valli, Zee, Ariev, Mikeska, Muhammad, & Roy, 2006). This shows how educational institutions' central focus is on pure theoretical and pedagogical discussions rather than envisioning a community of educators that can contribute to the development of human learning (Valli et al., 2006) through sustaining an inquisitive disposition where teachers keep on questioning and reflecting, and that could only occur when teachers themselves engage in research. In addition, teachers addressed that they feel disconnected from engaging in research because their practices are framed based on the institution's vision and policies. According to Teacher 7's response, he stated that the administrations always gives the answers rather than having teachers autonomously research for their own questions and resources. This constraint can be related to the fact that teachers' research stance is intentionally relegated which leaves them with a limiting possibility of transforming personally and professionally within their realm (Fulmer & Bodner, 2017).

After the discussion of my findings, the next chapter concludes the study, discusses several limitations, and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine language teachers' perception of practitioner research. Therefore, the study attempted to investigate language teachers' perception of engagement in and with practitioner research, and the reasons that indicate the constraints regarding their engagement in and with research. Despite the replete synthesis and arguments that the literature offered in favor of the benefits and importance of teachers being practitioner researchers and engaging in research, teachers' perceptions of research are indoctrinated by the typical scientific research paradigm. As Borg (2009) iterated that research is a "systematic, rigorous enquiry by teachers into their own professional contexts" (p. 377), but this study revealed that research is a minority activity for teachers due to the common issues which are their overwhelming working conditions, lack of time, lack of motivation, and lack of knowledge of what good quality research constitutes.

6.1 Limitations

Although this research has reached its goals, but like any other research, it has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The major limitation is the data from questionnaires was collected from 50 language teachers which shows that the sample number is relatively small. In addition, teachers' responses to the questionnaire have been quite vague in order to further understand their perception of practitioner research, so it would have been better if I asked teachers to provide an explanation regarding their choices related to the reasons of doing and not doing research in order to establish credibility and avoid response bias where participants'

responses tend to be based on what they believe is socially acceptable. Moreover, most of the coordinators and teachers that I contacted were not very cooperative when asked to conduct interviews and in-depth interviews, which also left me with a bounded number of interviewees.

6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the evidence provided by the aforementioned synthesis of the literature review, there is not much research about practitioner research and the importance of engaging in and with research within the Lebanese educational setting. Therefore, more studies with Lebanese language teachers and coordinators regarding their perceptions of practitioner research should be part of future research in order to have a profound understanding of how research is appraised in particular contexts. Moreover, it is encouraged to have a better insight by asking teachers to reflect on what kind of research they engage in, how they read research, and what impact research has on their practices rather than just investigating how often they do and read research. In addition, implementing a program where teachers and faculty can actually try to apply a certain research model in their schools based on a problem they are facing for a given period of time or semester would be more helpful in gathering more realistic data about the actual effects of being practitioner researchers. However, such an approach should take place in more than one setting in order to get more credible and accurate results. A possible scenario would be having several teachers investigate existing concerns, problems, or puzzlements within their practices through being practitioner researchers while other teachers keep the rest of their classes under the normal school policy and compare the results accordingly. Finally, more studies should be done on why educational stakeholders and

administrators do not create and promote a culture of practitioner researchers where

teachers would be able to reflect on their practices and disseminate findings.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Language Teachers

Dear Participants,

The purpose of the questionnaire is to establish an understanding about language teachers' perception regarding their engagement in and with research in order to have a better understanding whether research comprises a fundamental component in their career.

I decided to use "English Language Teachers' **(ELT)** Conceptions of Research" developed by Borg (2009) questionnaire since it is the most appropriate to the scope of my current study. Please find proof of Borg's approval for using the questionnaire at the end of this document.

The first section attempts to elicit teachers' view of what research is where teachers respond to ten scenarios indicating to what extent they feel the inquiry in each case is research. The second section examines teachers' views of the characteristics of good quality of research. The respondents rated a list of 11 characteristics in accordance with their importance to good quality research. The third section focuses on teachers' perception of their institutional culture in relation to research. The fourth section deals with teachers' engagement in reading research. Similarly, the fifth section deals with teachers' engagement in doing research. The sixth section includes teachers' demographic information.

English language teachers' views of research

What does 'research' mean to you and what role does it play in your life as a professional English language teacher? These are important questions in our field-especially at a time when in many countries teachers are being encouraged to do research as a form of professional development. This International Survey of English Language Teachers asks you for your views on these issues and will take 15–20 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary. Thank you for your interest in contributing.

SECTION 1: SCENARIOS

The purpose of this section is to elicit your views on the kinds of activities that can be called research. There are no right or wrong answers. Read each description below and choose one answer to say to what extent you feel the activity described is an example of research.

1. A teacher noticed that an activity she used in class did not work well. She thought about this after the lesson and made some notes in her diary. She tried something different in her next lesson. This time the activity was more successful.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

2. A teacher read about a new approach to teaching writing and decided to try it out in his class over a period of two weeks. He video recorded some of his lessons and collected samples of learners' written work. He analyzed this information then presented the results to his colleagues at a staff meeting.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

3. A teacher was doing an MA course. She read several books and articles about grammar teaching then wrote an essay of 6000 words in which she discussed the main points in those readings.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

4. A university lecturer gave a questionnaire about the use of computers in language teaching to 500 teachers. Statistics were used to analyze the questionnaires. The lecturer wrote an article about the work in an academic journal.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

5. Two teachers were both interested in discipline. They observed each other's lessons once a week for three months and made notes about how they controlled their classes. They discussed their notes and wrote a short article about what they learned for the newsletter of the national language teachers' association.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

6. To find out which of two methods for teaching vocabulary was more effective, a teacher first tested two classes. Then for four weeks she taught vocabulary to each class using a different method. After that she tested both groups again and compared the results to the first test. She decided to use the method which worked best in her own teaching.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

7. A headmaster met every teacher individually and asked them about their working conditions. The head made notes about the teachers' answers. He used his notes to write a report which he submitted to the Ministry of Education.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

8. Mid-way through a course, a teacher gave a class of 30 students a feedback form. The next day, five students handed in their completed forms. The teacher read these and used the information to decide what to do in the second part of the course.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

9. A teacher trainer asked his trainees to write an essay about ways of motivating teenage learners of English. After reading the assignments the trainer decided to write an article on the trainees' ideas about motivation. He submitted his article to a professional journal.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

10. The Head of the English department wanted to know what teachers thought of the new course book. She gave all teachers a questionnaire to complete, studied their responses, then presented the results at a staff meeting.

Definitely not research ☐	Probably not research ☐	Probably research ☐	Definitely research ☐

SECTION 2: CHARACTERISTIC OF GOOD QUALITY RESEARCH

1. Here is a list of characteristics that research comprises. Tick **ONE** box for each to give your opinion about how important it is in making a piece of research 'good'.

	Unimportant	Moderately important	Unsure	Important	Very important
a. A large number of people are studied	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. A large volume of information is collected	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Experiments are used	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Hypotheses are tested	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Information is analysed statistically	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Questionnaires are used	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. The researcher is objective	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. The results apply to many ELT contexts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. The results are made public	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. The results give teachers ideas they can use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Variables are controlled	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. If there are any other characteristics which in your opinion a study must have for it to be called 'good' research, please list them here.

_____

_____

_____

SECTION 3: RESEARCH CULTURE

Tick **ONE** box for each statement below to give your opinion about the general attitude to research in your school.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Don't Know	Agree	Agree strongly
Teachers do research themselves	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The management encourages teachers to do research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers feel that doing research is an important part of their job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers have access to research books and journals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers have opportunities to learn about current research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers talk about research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers are given support to attend ELT conferences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time for doing research is built into teachers' workloads	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teachers read published research	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 4: READING RESEARCH

1. How frequently do you read published language teaching research? (Tick **ONE)**

Never ☐	Rarely ☐	Sometimes ☐	Often ☐

If you chose *Rarely* or *Never* go straight to Question 4 in this section.

2. You said that you read published language teaching research ***often*** or ***sometimes.*** Which of the following do you read? (Tick all that apply)

Books ☐
Academic journals (e.g. TESOL Quarterly) ☐
Professional Journals (e.g. ELT Journal) ☐
Professional Magazines (e.g. ET Professional) ☐
Newsletters (e.g. IATEFL SIG Newsletters) ☐
Web-based sources of research ☐
Other (please specify) ☐

_____

3. To what extent does the research you read influence your teaching? Choose **ONE.**

It has no influence on what I do in the classroom ☐
It has a slight influence on what I do in the classroom ☐
It has a moderate influence on what I do in the classroom ☐
It has a fairly strong influence on what I do in the classroom ☐
It has a strong influence on what I do in the classroom ☐

Now go to Section 5

4. In Question 1 of this section you said that you read published research *rarely* or *never.* Here are some possible reasons for this. Tick those that are **true for you.**

a. I am not interested in research ☐
b. I do not have time ☐
c. I do not have access to books and journals ☐
d. I find published research hard to understand ☐
e. Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom ☐
f. Other reasons (please specify) ☐

[ ]

SECTION 5: DOING RESEARCH

1. How frequently do you do research yourself? (Tick **ONE)**

| Never ☐ | Rarely ☐ | Sometimes ☐ | Often ☐ |

If you chose Rarely or Never go straight to Question 3 in this section.

2. You said you do research *often* or *sometimes.* Below are a number of possible reasons for doing research. Tick those which are **true for you.**

'I do research….
a. As part of a course I am studying on ☐
b. Because I enjoy it ☐
c. Because it is good for my professional development ☐
d. Because it will help me get a promotion ☐
e. Because my employer expects me to ☐
f. Because other teachers can learn from the findings of my work ☐
g. To contribute to the improvement of the school generally ☐
h. To find better ways of teaching ☐
i. To solve problems in my teaching ☐
j. Other reasons (please specify) ☐

[ ]

Now go to Section 6

3. You said that you do research *rarely* or *never*. Below are a number of possible reasons for not doing research. Tick those which are **true for you**.

'I don't do research because…

a. I do not know enough about research methods
b. My job is to teach not to do research
c. I do not have time to do research
d. My employer discourages it
e. I am not interested in doing research
f. I need someone to advise me but no one is available
g. Most of my colleagues do not do research
h. I do not have access to the books and journals I need
i. The learners would not co-operate if I did research in class
j. Other teachers would not co-operate if I asked for their help
k. Other reasons (please specify)

SECTION 6: ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Country where you work: _____
2. Years of experience as a language teacher (Tick **ONE**)

   0-4   5-9   10-14   15-19   20-24   25+

3. Highest relevant qualification (Tick **ONE**)

   Certificate   High   Bachelor's   Master's   Doctorate   Other
                   School
                   Diploma

4. Types of institution you teach in (Tick **ONE**)

          Private   Public   Other

5. Is your language school or centre part of a University? (Tick **ONE**)

          Yes _____   No _____

6. The age of the learners you teach most often (Tick **ONE**)

          12 or   13- 19   20- 25   26+
          younger

7. How would you describe your work as a language teacher? (Tick **ONE**)

   I teach language full-time _____

   I teach language part-time_____

Appendix B

Interview Questions with Language Coordinators

Interview questions to understand the conceptions and characteristics of research according to language coordinators as well as the extent at which language coordinators encourage or constraint teachers' engagement in and with research.

1. What reasons do you attribute to teachers being more or less interested in conducting research (research-engaged)?

2. What are your perceptions of the extent to which the teachers' workplace is conducive to research engagement?

3. What skills and knowledge do you feel teachers need to acquire in order to engage in research?

4. What do you see as the main benefits of teachers reading and engaging in research?

5. How does undertaking research contribute to a teacher's personal and professional growth?

6. What are some problems teachers experience in doing research?

Appendix C

In-depths Interview Questions with Teacher-Researchers

I plan to conduct in-depth interviews with teachers who are involved in research and are eager to share their experiences and expectations concerning their involvement in and with research in order to explore their perceptions of being practitioner researchers. The in-depth interviews conducted with the participants will be checked for correlation with the themes that arise from the interviews and questionnaires.

This is a general outline of the in-depths interview questions:

Based on your questionnaire responses, you mentioned that you engaged/participated in an activity that you consider to be a research project.

1. Could you explain what your involvement with research was and why you consider it to be research?

2. How did engagement in and with research help you with your personal and professional career?

3. Why do you think engagement in and with research is relevant and important to your career?

4. What can be the major difficulties and constraints of doing research by teachers?

5. In your opinion, what should be done to make teachers become practitioner researchers?