

An Investigation of Iraqi ELT Teachers' Conceptions of Research
Engagement

**An Investigation of Iraqi ELT Teachers' Conceptions of
Research Engagement**

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Abstract:

Recognizing the importance teachers' own conceptions play in their professional development, this study attempts to investigate Iraqi English language teachers' conceptions of research at the departments of English in two colleges at the university of Basra: College of Arts, and College of Education. Depending on a modified version of Borg's (2009) questionnaire and a follow-up discussion, the study focuses on investigating teachers' conceptions of research on ELT, the general attitude to research in the departments of English, the extent to which teachers read research and the reasons for doing so, their conceptions of conducting research, and finally examining whether these conceptions relate to teachers' highest qualifications and years of experience in ELT. Findings revealed that Iraqi ELT teachers conceived objectivity, large population and information as key elements of good quality research. The teachers in question reported moderate to high levels of research engagement for professional and academic development. It is hoped that this study contributes to enrich and maintain the general conceptions of research engagement in ELT in Iraq.

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تصورات تدريسيي اللغة الانجليزية العراقيين حول انجاز البحوث

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المستخلص:

نظرا لاهمية تصورات التدريسيين ومالها من دور كبير في تطوراتهم المهنية انجزت هذه الدراسة لبحث تصورات تدريسيي اللغة الانجليزية فيما يتعلق باجراء البحوث في مجال تدريس اللغة الانجليزية في قسمي اللغة الانجليزية التابعين لكليتي الاداب والتربية في جامعة البصرة. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على استبيان بورغ (٢٠٠٩) بعد اجراء بعض التغييرات عليه وكذلك على مناقشة شفوية لتلك التصورات من قبل التدريسيين المشتركين في الاستبيان. وقد ارتكزت الدراسة على استبيان تصورات التدريسيين حول اجراء البحوث ومعرفة الموقف العام تجاهه ومدى مطالعة التدريسيين للبحوث والاسباب وراء ذلك واخيرا معرفة فيما اذا كان هنالك اي تاثير للشهادة و سنوات الخبرة على تصورات التدريسيين. بينت النتائج ان من اهم تصورات التدريسيين حول اجراء البحوث هو اهمية مسألة الموضوعية من قبل الباحث واختيار مجموعة كبيرة من العينات والمفردات في الاختبارات. أما فيما يتعلق بما تقدمه البحوث من تطور اكاديمي ومهني للتريسيين الباحثين فقد بينت النتائج مستويات تراوحت بين المتوسطة والعالية ولم تسجل أي تغيرات معنوية بين تلك التصورات وبين الشهادة وسنوات الخبرة. تأمل الباحثة بأن تعزز هذه الدراسة من تصورات التدريسيين العراقيين لاجراء البحوث في مجال تدريس اللغة الانجليزية.

1. Introduction

The association between English Language Teaching (ELT) and conducting research emerged immediately with the establishment of language teaching as an academic discipline in the mid-twentieth century (Richards and Rodgers, 2014: 1) resulting in " *the appearance of a range of research methods publications targeting language teachers as a substantial component of their audience*" (Long and Doughty, 2009: 693). Corollary progressing in the information age, including the vast number of electronic bibliographic data base, accessibility of developed indexing services, and availability of evidence- based practice guidelines and their effect on the learning process enabled researchers to access the findings of a great number of research (Howard et. al., 2003: 234).

The question of what exactly counts as 'teacher research' is essential to investigating the issue of teacher engagement with research. Drawing on many different descriptions offered by a range of scholars, Borg (2010: 395) presents the following definition of teacher research:

Systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), which aims to enhance teachers' understanding of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in individual classrooms, and may also inform institutional improvement and educational policy more broadly.

Neumann (1992: 159) states that different views on this relationship have appeared. One of these views indicates that, historically, the research function in universities developed in a closer relation with the teaching function. Although the history of teacher education has been associated with the history of educational research for many years, the position of research is more outstanding today than ever before

(Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005: 69). In the modern world, successful teaching methods require teachers to engage in educational research in order to develop their teaching standards. Teachers are expected to involve in scientific inquiries through rigorous research methods. The recommendation that teachers have to be engaged in research depended upon a further benefit in that research contributes to teachers' professional development. Zeuli (1994) states that "*research of various types forms the bulwark of teachers' professional preparation*". He further states that reading research is essential for learning to teach. When engaged with and in research, teachers can experience the practical implications of different approaches, their validity, capability for pedagogical decisions, solving problems and bringing improvements (Borg, 2009 ; Zeuli,1994). Those aspects of teaching which lead to learning and the learning which occurs through research provide the vital link between teaching and research (Brew and Boud, 1995: 261).

2. What Do Teacher Researchers Do?

Mohr (1999:2) believes that teacher research empowers teachers to make a positive difference in terms of classroom practice; it enables them to provide relevant information about teaching and learning in actual classrooms. Most importantly, by engaging in reflective practice, conducting research "*improves the lives of students by always seeking to discover better, more effective ways of implementing teaching/learning.*" ELT teachers, as Mohr reports, can do the following:

- Develop questions based on their own curiosity about their students' learning and their teaching
- Collect and analyze data from their classes including their own observations and reflections
- Examine their assumptions and beliefs

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- Articulate their theories
- Discuss their research with their colleagues for support as "critical friends" to validate their findings and interpretations of their data
- Present findings to others
- Talk to their students
- Give presentations (talk to teacher in room next door, go to conferences)
- Write about their research (institutional-wide publication, national) participate in teacher research web sites, online forums, and e-mail communications .

3. Research Questions

This study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. What conceptions of good quality research do Iraqi EFL teachers hold?
2. What are the general attitudes towards conducting research?
3. How frequently do teachers say they do research?
4. What reasons do they give for conducting research?
5. To what extent are teachers' conceptions of research associated with their experience and the highest relevant qualification in ELT?

4. Literature Review

Most previous studies that investigated teachers' engagement in research focused on how much research takes place, where, what are the characteristics of the teachers who do it, what motivates them and what conditions support or hinder them. Borg (2007), a prominent figure in this field, studied teachers' engagement in research of 50 respondents at a university in Turkey. Borg found out that the most important characteristics of research related to its objectivity, hypothesis testing, the control of variables, and the involvement of a

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large-scale sample. She, also found out that among the reasons for not engaging in research were lack of interest and lack of professional and pedagogical benefits that conducting research may result in. Again, Borg (2009) examined teachers' conceptions from 13 countries. Her sample contained 505 teachers, and the data were collected by mixed-methods approach composing of a questionnaire, written follow-up and interviews. The results Borg arrived at showed conceptions aligned to conventional scientific notions of inquiry. The teachers expressed moderate to low degrees of reading and doing research, lack of time and access to sources of knowledge. Borg concluded that the teachers under discussion were influenced by practical and professional factors more than by external factors such as employers or promotion.

Among the issues investigated by Everton et.al. (2002) were related to whether conducting research had any impact on teachers' professions and if they had any interest in research engagement. The findings showed positive views concerning the role of research in the teaching practice, in addition to the need for published research to be accessible to teachers. Statistically, 49% of the teachers reported that studying research improved their views about teaching, 29% said that research questioned their views, and 22% responded that research verified their views.

Macaro (2003) explored how 80 heads of modern foreign language departments in the UK looked at research. Respondents in this study identified the inaccessibility of published language teaching research as an essential obstacle to their engagement with it.

Another reflection of the increasing interest in teachers' engagement in research is found in a study carried out by Alison and Carey (2007) who examined the views about research of 22 teachers at a university language center in Canada. Alison and Carey used two instruments: questionnaires and interviews. Their findings showed that the teachers in question identified that lack of time, encouragement and motivation

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were the key challenges that hindered their engagement in research. McNamara (2002) yielded similar results in that teachers' biggest barrier was workload.

Tabatabaei and Nazem's (2013) investigated 150 teachers' conceptions of research and their findings were consistent with Borg's (2009).

Over all, the findings of these studies cannot mirror the conceptions of teachers in other contexts. Therefore, the findings on Iraqi ELT teachers' conceptions of research complement and expand the understanding of such concepts in a specific context to be compared with the findings of all other studies. Being at the forefront of researching ELT teacher research, Borg (2007: 733) recommends that further empirical research into English teachers' research engagement in different contexts is required *“if we are to develop an evidence-base which can inform policy and initiatives aimed at promoting research engagement by teachers in ELT”*.

5. Methodology

5.1 Participants

The participants in the current study include (30) ELT university teachers at the departments of English at the College of Arts and College of Education/ University of Basra. Information about their highest qualification and years of experience are presented in tables (1) and (2) in section (4.1).

5.2 Data Collection

Data in this study were collected by two methods. The first method was a modified version of Borg's (2009) questionnaire of teachers' conceptions of research. The second method was a follow-up discussion with some of the respondents after answering the questionnaire items.

5.2.1 Questionnaire

Borg's original version included six parts, the first of which contained 10 scenarios. This part was excluded in this study to save time and effort on the part of respondents. The researcher, in this study, changed the whole structures of section 3 and 4, in addition to some wording modifications made to the sections of the original instrument to avoid any misunderstanding that can affect teachers' conceptions. The questionnaire used in this study focused on certain issues such as what characteristics constitute good research (part 1), the general attitude towards research (part 2), how often teachers do and read published research (part 3) and the key reasons for doing research (part 4) as conceived by Iraqi EFL university teachers. The last part (5) included two items requesting personal data.

The first part of the questionnaire is made up of 10 items to which respondents have to indicate their level of importance among five choices ranging from (unimportant) to (very important). Part 2 consists of 8 items concerning the general attitude towards research in the departments where respondents work. For each item, there are five degrees of agreement and disagreement starting with (strongly disagree) and ending with (strongly agree). In part 3, respondents have to respond to two questions. The first question asks teachers about the type of published research they frequently read. This part consists of 6 statements. Each statement has 4 options: never, rarely, sometimes and often. The second question is concerned with the reasons behind reading research. It includes 4 reasons with 5 options for each.

5.2.2 Follow-up Discussion

A group of respondents (only 12) were asked to elaborate on their responses to the quantitative data (some respondents- 18 out of 30- were not able to participate in discussion due to their workload). The discussion was intended to elucidate some concepts in the

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questionnaire as well as to emphasize teachers' ticks. For instance, some teachers were asked to specify what concepts they hold of ELT research not mentioned in the questionnaire. Therefore, the researcher had to discuss teachers' notes individually and in groups.

5.3 Statistical Analyses

First, the responses were analyzed according to frequency and percentage. Then, analysis of variance (one-way and two-way ANOVA) was used to show if any significant differences could be found between ELT teachers' responses and years of experience on the one hand, and qualifications on the other, as well as the interaction between qualification and experience.

6 Analysis and Discussion of Results

6.1 Background Information

Tables (1) and (2) present the sample according to experience and highest qualifications relevant to ELT, respectively. Table (1) shows the range of ELT experience this sample of teachers had, though the largest number was between 15 and 19 years. Table (2) reflects that (15) of the total number (30) of teachers had Master's degree and (15) had Doctorate. These background variables will be referred to below to examine whether they are associated with the extent to which teachers reported being research-engaged.

Table (1): Respondents' Years of Experience

Year of ELT Experience	Number
0-4	4 (13%)
5-9	4 (13%)
10-14	6 (20%)
15-19	9 (30 %)
20-24	1 (3%)
25+	6 (20%)
Total	30 (100%)

Table (2): Respondents' Highest Qualifications

Qualification	Number
Master's	15 (50%)
Doctorate	15 (50%)
Total	30 (100%)

6.2 Characteristics of Good Quality Research

Part 1 of the questionnaire is concerned with teachers' conceptions of good quality research on ELT. Teachers were asked to rate the level of importance to good quality research of a list of 10 characteristics. The ratings are put in order of descending importance in table (3).

It is evident in table (3) that the characteristic which is seen overall to be very important is that good research " *reflects the objectivity of the researcher*", 66.7% of rating for this statement. Objectivity seemed to be an essential characteristic in the way teachers indicated the quality of good research. To be objective, researchers should not include any personal beliefs or emotions; researches have to be solely scientifically based. This result goes in line with Borg's (2009) and contradicts Tabatabaei and Nazem's (2013). The other moderately rated statements "*leads to results that can be applied to many ELT contexts*", "*is based on a large volume of information*" and "*has a large sample of participants*" were ticked as important by a sizeable number (53.3%, 46.7% and 50% of respondents, respectively). These ratings are interesting because they provide some evidence for the notion that Iraqi English teachers tend to think of research in quantitative rather than qualitative terms. However, these results may be justified on the basis that the other half of teachers who conceived the latter two characteristics as less or unimportant may have other disciplinary interests (e.g. literature, stylistics, etc.) not necessarily restricted to ELT. Such fields of interest do not require participants and

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are not based on a large amount of information as questionnaires or tests.

It is worth noticing that "*includes experiments*" (16.7%), "*has to include a statistical analysis of information*" (30%) and "*has results that give teachers ideas they can use*" (33%, cf. 66% in Borg, 2009) were conceived as moderately fundamental signaling a low concern with the standard scientific view of research, where a large amount of data is used, a large sample, and use of statistical analyses (Robson, 2002: 19). Tabatabaei and Nazem (2013) found that only (18%) of their sample viewed experiments in research as important, 48% supported research with statistics, and 87% of their sample view good research has results that teachers can use in the classroom. Research which contains a questionnaire was rated as unimportant by only 30% of ELT teachers. This reveals a high tendency on the part of teachers to include questionnaires within research to get reliable and valid data collection.

Table (3): Percentages of Good Quality Research

statements	unimportant %	Less important %	Undecided %	Important %	v. important %
1. reflects the objectivity of the researcher	0	0	3.3	30	66.7
2. tests hypotheses	0	13.3	10	40	36.7
3. has results that give teachers ideas they can use	3.3	6.7	13.3	43.3	33.3
4. has to include a statistical analysis of information	3.3	10	20	36.7	30
5. includes variables that are controlled	0	20	26.7	23.3	30
6. leads to results that can be applied to many ELT contexts	0	0	20	53.3	26.7
7. is based on a large	0	13.3	20	46.7	20

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volume of information					
8. has a large sample of participants	6.7	10	16.7	50	16.7
9. includes experiments	0	16.7	30	36.7	16.7
10.contains questionnaires	30	6.7	30	26	6.7

Respondents were also asked to suggest any more characteristics of good research not mentioned in the list, either by writing a note below (please specify) or orally during the discussion phase. One of the teachers participated in this study said that research must follow the conventional rhetorical patterns in writing so as to be reliable and coherent to the readers. Other teacher emphasized that a good quality research is related to whether it has statistics or not, paying attention to the fact that researches without statistics are unfounded. The same teacher said that the methodology of research should be clearly stated and smoothly presented. Besides, novelty of references was looked upon as a prerequisite in good research, i.e. sources of research should be up to date. Another teacher noted that hypotheses are no longer used in modern ELT research methodology; instead, they address questions and try to answer them through the research.

In order to find out any significant differences between teachers responses concerning the characteristics of good quality research, one-way ANOVA table was conducted. Table (4) summarizes the detailed process of analysis (which cannot be included here due to space restriction). Examining the ANOVA table, one can easily identify the significant differences ($.000 \geq 0.05$) between the responses of Iraqi ELT teachers to the first part of the survey.

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Table (4): ANOVA of the Comparison between ELT Teachers' Conceptions of Good Quality Research

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	130.927(a)	38	3.445	3.807	.000
Intercept	4263.870	1	4263.870	4711.492	.000
TEACHERS	80.630	29	2.780	3.072	.000
Part 1	50.297	9	5.589	6.175	.000
Error	236.203	261	.905		
Total	4631.000	300			
Corrected Total	367.130	299			

a R Squared = .357 (Adjusted R Squared = .263)

On the other hand, to investigate any significant differences between good quality research and the highest qualifications and years of experience of respondents, another ANOVA analysis was conducted. The characteristics of a good quality research were analyzed based on five choices (unimportant, less important, undecided, important, very important), the teachers' highest qualifications in ELT based on two choices (master's and doctorate) and years of experience in ELT based on six choices (0-4, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24, 25+). The means of the data in table (3), the highest qualifications of the respondents together with years of experience were analyzed. According to ANOVA table (5), no significant differences were found between teachers' conceptions and qualification on the one side and experience on the other as the calculated *f* values (.285) and (.275) were higher than (0.05). Yet, there was a significant difference ($.000 \geq 0.05$) in the interaction between teachers' qualification and their experience.

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Table (5): The Relationship between Teachers' Responses to Part 1, Qualification and Experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	33.488(a)	8	4.186	3.651	.000
Intercept	2942.527	1	2942.527	2566.452	.000
Qualification	1.317	1	1.317	1.149	.285
Experience	7.310	5	1.462	1.275	.275
Qualification * Experience	24.897	2	12.449	10.858	.000
Error	333.642	291	1.147		
Total	4631.000	300			
Corrected Total	367.130	299			

a R Squared = .091 (Adjusted R Squared = .066)

That there were no significant differences between how Iraqi ELT teachers perceived good research and their highest qualifications together with years of academic experience reflects a high concern with research conceptions regardless of any other variables, though they reported different priorities to the list of features.

6.3 The General Attitude to Research Engagement

The second part of the questionnaire is concerned with the general attitude to conducting research on ELT. Teachers were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement regarding a list of 8 attitudes. Table (6) summarizes the percentages of this part in a descending order of agreement.

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Table (6): Percentages of the General Attitude to Research Engagement

	Strongly disagree %	disagree %	undecided %	agree %	Strongly agree %
1. Teachers read published research	0	3.3	13.3	63.3	20
2. Teachers volunteer to do research	3.3	0	6.7	60	30
3. The head of the dept. encourages teachers to do research	0	13.3	13.3	60	13.3
4. Teachers feel that conducting research is an important part of their job	0	10	10	50	30
5. Teachers talk about research	6.7	10	23.3	50	10
6. Teachers are encouraged to attend ELT conferences	3.3	10	10	40	36.7
7. Teachers have opportunities to learn from current research	6.7	13.3	6.7	40	33.3
8. Teachers have access to research books and journals	6.7	23.3	3.3	36.7	30

As table (6) shows, the statement that was most highly rated was 8, about 63.3% of ELT teachers agreed that they read published research. As reflected by the participants in this study during the follow-up discussion, reading research is an important building block for understanding and enabling good research to be undertaken. Interestingly, the fourth and fifth choices, "agree" and "strongly agree",

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have got the highest frequencies when compared to the other three choices; teachers highly agreed that they volunteered to do research, the heads of the departments encouraged them, they were aware that research was part of their jobs, and they talked about research. This indicates that teachers were aware that the overall institutional research culture had a fundamental effect on teachers' research. They looked into their departmental support as a motivating factor that encouraged them to be engaged with and in research.

Table (6), also, shows that only 36.7% agreed that they had access to books and journals, and 40% agreed that teachers had the opportunity to learn from current research. These low percentages yield useful results about one of the most serious obstacles that hinder research engagement, namely, inaccessibility of printed sources of research (electronic sources are accessible) and practicality of research findings. The findings show that a large number of Iraqi ELT teachers suffer from the unavailability and shortage of sources of knowledge particularly printed ones. Above all, a considerable number of teachers could not have the opportunity to make use of other research findings, either because findings cannot be generalized or that it is not easy to have access to current research, as reflected by some teachers in the discussion process.

Table (7) presents the ANOVA analysis to show any significant differences between the teachers' responses regarding the second part of the survey. As the table shows, highly significant differences (.000) were found among teachers' responses.

Table (8) is a summary of the relationship between teachers' responses to the general attitude to research, qualification and years of experience. Significant differences ($.000 \geq 0.05$) existed only in the interaction between qualification and experience but no significant differences in teachers' responses in relation to their qualification and experience.

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Table (7): ANOVA Table of the General Attitude to Research

source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	116.833(a)	36	3.245	4.734	.000
Intercept	3519.004	1	3519.004	5133.264	.000
TEACHERS	108.871	29	3.754	5.476	.000
Part 2	7.962	7	1.138	1.659	.121
Error	139.163	203	.686		
Total	3775.000	240			
Corrected Total	255.996	239			
a R Squared = .456 (Adjusted R Squared = .360)					

Table (8): The Relationship between Teachers' Responses to Part 2, Qualification and Experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	30.100(a)	8	3.762	3.848	.000
Intercept	2270.971	1	2270.971	2322.284	.000
Qualification	1.554	1	1.554	1.589	.209
Experience	10.792	5	2.158	2.207	.054
Qualification * Experience	20.179	2	10.089	10.317	.000
Error	225.896	231	.978		
Total	3775.000	240			
Corrected Total	255.996	239			
a R Squared = .118 (Adjusted R Squared = .087)					

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6.4 Reading Research on ELT

This part of the questionnaire addressed two questions. First, teachers were asked to indicate how frequently they read types of published research. Second, they were asked to indicate their levels of agreement or disagreement to some reasons behind their engagement in research.

Table (9): Percentages of Reading Published Research

	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %
1. Books	0	30.0	43.3	26.7
2. Academic Journals	3.3	46.7	26.7	23.3
3. Magazines	10	70	16.7	3.3
4. Newsletter	23.3	56.7	16.7	3.3
5. Web-based sources of research	13.3	20	40	26.7

Responding to the first question, as shown in table (9), teachers reported that the least read research (70%) is that related to magazines. Teachers, also, responded that they rarely read newsletters (56.7%) or academic journals (46.7%). They sometimes read books (43.3%) and web-based sources (40%). During the discussion process, teachers stated that lack of time and workload were the key barriers that hindered their reading published research whatsoever. One of the teachers wrote a note- in suggesting other sources of reading research- that he often read from CDs, DVDs, and youtube.

ANOVA shows significant differences among the conceptions held by Iraqi ELT teachers on reading research (table 10), but no significant differences were found in the interaction between teachers' responses, qualifications and years of experience (table 11).

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Table (10): ANOVA of Teachers' Conceptions of Reading Research

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	135.735(a)	33	4.113	7.449	.000
Intercept	917.135	1	917.135	1660.954	.000
TEACHERs	25.408	29	.876	1.587	.045
Part 3	110.050	4	27.513	49.826	.000
Error	63.500	115	.552		
Total	1123.000	149			
Corrected Total	199.235	148			

a R Squared = .681 (Adjusted R Squared = .590)

Table (11): The Relationship between Teachers' Responses to Q1 of Part 3, Qualification and Experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5.808(a)	8	.726	.526	.836
Intercept	598.064	1	598.064	432.873	.000
Qualification	.224	1	.224	.162	.688
Experience	4.086	5	.817	.591	.706
Qualification* Experience	.320	2	.160	.116	.891
Error	193.426	140	1.382		
Total	1123.000	149			
Corrected Total	199.235	148			

a R Squared = .029 (Adjusted R Squared = -.026)

As for the second question in this part, teachers reported that 60% of them do not have enough time to read research, which was nearly identical with what Borg (2009) had arrived at; 66% of her sample reported that they had no time to read research. Given their heavy work

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load and tight schedule, some of the teachers participated in this study asserted that they have difficulties finding time to read or otherwise engage in research. Another major and related reason articulated by teachers was the recurrent issue of inaccessibility of research reports. Table (12) shows that 46.7% emphasized the inaccessibility of books and other sources of research, another hindrance also reported in Borg's (2009). Although a small number of teachers indicated that they use the internet to find useful and practical techniques of teaching, many asserted that they do not have easy access to research papers particularly those conducted in Iraq. Only 30% agreed that they had some interest in reading research, while other 30% strongly disagreed.

It is note-worthy to state that in table (12), the highest percentages go with the first two options: "strongly disagree" and "disagree". This proves that reading research by ELT teachers is impeded by lack of interest, lack of time, and unavailability of sources of research.

The ANOVA analysis of the reasons teachers had about reading research (tables 13 and 14) showed no significant differences between all variables under analysis.

Table (12): Percentages of Teachers' Conceptions of Reasons Behind Reading Research

Reasons	Strongly disagree %	disagree %	undecided %	agree %	Strongly agree %
1. I am interested in research	30.0	23.3	10	30	6.7
2. books and other sources of research are accessible.	46.7	36.7	3.3	10	3.3
3. I do have time	60.0	23.3	6.7	10	0

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Table (13): ANOVA of Teachers' Conceptions of Reading Research

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	36.033(a)	31	1.162	1.229	.245
Intercept	348.100	1	348.100	367.979	.000
TEACHERs	29.567	29	1.020	1.078	.394
Part 4	6.467	2	3.233	3.418	.040
Error	54.867	58	.946		
Total	439.000	90			
Corrected Total	90.900	89			

Table (14): The Relationship between Teachers' Responses to Q2 of Part 3, Qualification and Experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	7.067(a)	8	.883	.853	.559
Intercept	228.281	1	228.281	220.565	.000
Qualification	.108	1	.108	.105	.747
Experience	4.176	5	.835	.807	.548
Qualification * Experience	3.955	2	1.978	1.911	.155
Error	83.833	81	1.035		
Total	439.000	90			
Corrected Total	90.900	89			

a R Squared = .078 (Adjusted R Squared = -.013)

During the discussion phase of data collection of the current study, some teachers (5 teachers) mentioned other reasons for not reading research. One of the reasons was that they viewed reading research as a

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process that could not provide them with any practical use in the classroom. Their main interest was how to keep focused on students language development and achievement. This conception is highly needed to be revised, as McIntyre (2005) argues, teaching is an essentially practical activity and in evaluating research evidence teachers will naturally look for ideas that enhance pedagogy and not just propositional knowledge.

6.5. Reasons for Conducting Research

This part of the survey focused on conducting research. It asked teachers to agree or disagree to six reasons to conduct research. They were asked to suggest other reasons not mentioned in the list. Table (14) presents the findings which show that respondents' highest percentages were rated to "agree" and "strongly agree" to "*it is good for my professional development*" (56.7%), "*it will help me get a promotion*" (46.7%), "*as part of my job*"(36.7%). These reasons have professional and personal concerns. Other reasons such as "*I enjoy it*", "*to find better techniques of teaching*", and "*to contribute to the improvement of the department generally*" were less agreed upon.

Table (15): Percentages of Teachers' Conceptions of Conducting Research

	Strongly disagree %	disagree %	undecided %	agree %	Strongly agree %
1. it is good for my professional development	0	0	6.7	56.7	36.7
2. it will help me get a promotion	3.3	3.3	3.3	46.7	40.0
3. as part of my job	0	6.7	23.3	36.7	33.3
4. I enjoy it	0	33.3	26.7	23.3	16.7
5. to contribute to the improvement of the	16.7	40	23.3	16.7	3.3

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department generally.					
6. to find better techniques of teaching	13.3	26.7	30.0	13.3	16.7

To investigate any significant differences between Iraqi ELT teachers' responses to research engagement an ANOVA table was designed. This analysis (table 16) showed no significant differences (.971) <0.05. Similarly, no significant differences were found between teachers' responses, qualification and experience nor in the interaction between the last two variables (table 17), (.408) and (808) <0.05.

Table (16): ANOVA of Teachers' Conceptions of Conducting Research

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	145.456(a)	34	4.278	3.382	.000
Intercept	2240.139	1	2240.139	1771.049	.000
TEACHERS	20.028	29	.691	.546	.971
Part 5	125.428	5	25.086	19.833	.000
Error	183.406	145	1.265		
Total	2569.000	180			
Corrected Total	328.861	179			

a R Squared = .442 (Adjusted R Squared = .312)

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Table (17): The Relationship between Teachers' Responses Qualification and Experience

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	4.611(a)	8	.576	.304	.964
Intercept	1524.707	1	1524.707	804.086	.000
Qualification	1.306	1	1.306	.689	.408
Experience	4.331	5	.866	.457	.808
Qualification * Experience	.570	2	.285	.150	.861
Error	324.250	171	1.896		
Total	2569.000	180			
Corrected Total	328.861	179			

a R Squared = .014 (Adjusted R Squared = -.032)

7. Conclusions

This study focuses on Iraqi ELT teachers' engagement in research, the extent to which ELT teachers read and do research, and other issues related to it. Key ideas which echoed with teachers' notions of good quality research were objectivity, large samples, and a great amount of information. The results arrived at denoted moderate levels of research engagement (not exceeding 66%) whether in relation to reading or conducting research. Iraqi teachers reflected that lack of time, and workload were the major barriers behind not reporting high percentages in reading or conducting research.

That there were no significant differences between how Iraqi ELT teachers perceived good research and their highest qualifications together with years of academic experience reflects a high concern with research conceptions regardless of any other variables, though they reported different priorities to the list of features.

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The importance of this study is attached to the idea that localized studies of research engagement can extend understandings of how research is conceived by particular groups of teachers in a particular context. Such studies can help and promote more knowledge and reflections of what is feasible and prior to research engagement in those contexts (Borg, 2007).

Iraqi ELT teachers' reflections in this study can fulfill a valuable awareness in individuals involved in supporting teacher research engagement. Such individuals will achieve success when they take into consideration teachers' conceptions and the factors which exercise one effect or another on the feasibility of research. Productive teacher research engagement, then, is unlikely to occur without the organizational, collegial, emotional, intellectual, and practical support which are needed not only to initiate it but also more importantly to sustain it and enhance its quality. A positive attitude towards research is a key to success and progress in the knowledge based societies.

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