TEFL teachers' and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions on the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy

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Abstract
This study explores TEFL teachers' and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the relationship between second language acquisition (SLA) research and language pedagogy with regard to familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, relevance, and usefulness of SLA research in L2 pedagogy. To this end, 83 teachers, 40 TEFL teachers and 43 non-TEFL teachers, participated in this study. They filled out a questionnaire addressing their perceptions about SLA research and language pedagogy. The results revealed that the majority of TEFL teachers involved in doing research, at least as their educational term projects, while mostly no contribution was reported by non-TEFL teachers. In addition, TEFL teachers insisted that L2 teachers need to be involved in SLA research to be successful in their teaching career, while non-TEFL teachers were of the opposite opinion. Moreover, it was revealed that TEFL teachers considered the knowledge gained from research studies relevant and useful to their classroom actions, whereas non-TEFL teachers saw their experience more important for managing their classroom actions. Although both groups had contradictory perceptions of the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy, they showed some common points in this regard. That is, both groups reported on their difficulty in having access to the research materials; they also expressed their willingness to do research.
Key words*: SLA research, L2 pedagogy, TEFL teachers, L2 research familiarity

1.Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that bringing research findings to practice is a long-lasting debate and controversial issue not only in second language acquisition (SLA) but also in other fields such as medicine, business, and law (Nassaji, 2012). The main quest of such debates is to specify the relationship between research and practice in different fields. In other words, a controversial debate is in progress on how an interaction can be established between the research conducted in a field and the practice of the findings of that research in the real situations. Heilbronn

(2008), mentions that the relationship between research and practice can be referred to as "evidence-based practice" which is, then, defined by Nassaji (2012, p. 338) as "practice which is based on systematic research evidence." This principle finds its way into research in applied linguistics and taps out the application of SLA research in second language teaching.

According to some researchers (e.g., Davis, 1995; Shavelson & Towne 2002; Tabatabaei & Nazem, 2013; Thomas & Pring 2004), teachers are not just responsible to deliver the assigned curriculum but also to deal with the classroom problems. They need to implement measures successfully to solve the problems which they may face in their L2 classrooms. The findings of the already conducted SLA research can be a resource for L2 teachers to solve these problems. In turn, these issues accentuate the need for SLA research to offer solutions for L2 teaching and learning problems. Nevertheless, there is a two-fold debate between the relationship of SLA research and language pedagogy. On the one hand, formulating the debate in form of a question, some scholars (e.g., Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Pica, 2005) suggest that SLA research is for improving language teaching in L2 classrooms. However, others are of the idea that it is, SLA research, for influencing the teaching in the language classrooms (Block, 2000; Klein, 1998). Because of that, there is a long lasting argument on the probable benefits of engaging teachers in SLA research (Lyle, 2003; Lankshear & Knobel, 2004; Kirkwood & Christie 2006).

The importance of doing SLA research and using its results in L2 classrooms to remove L2 related problems is clear for language organizers (Ellis, 2001). In Iran, which has an EFL context, language teachers are not just those who have a degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) but there are some non-TEFL teachers who teach English in different institutes. In this regard, it is more important to know about the non-TEFL teachers' perceptions of SLA research since sometimes their unfamiliarity with SLA research or their perceptions about SLA research role in L2 pedagogy may have drastic effects on the overall language pedagogy.

This research was an attempt to obtain the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The research went through the familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, and relevance and usefulness of SLA research in the classroom practices; addressing the gap which has been already asked by Nassaji (2012) for further research. One more significant aspect of the study which was not paid attention to before was the EFL context of it. Moreover, different teachers with different culture backgrounds participated in this study. The other strength point of this research was the dichotomy between those teachers who studied TEFL as their major and taught in the language classes and those who had degree in other majors such as engineering disciplines and taught English in the language classes.

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2.Literature Review

The number of research investigating the perceptions of L2 teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy is less than the number of research advising teachers how to conduct it (Borg, 2009). To address this shortage existing between the relationship of SLA research and language pedagogy, one can stick to the dichotomy that made by Nassaji (2012). He asserted that there are two types of knowledge: practical and technical. Nassaji (2012) stated that L2 teachers devote themselves to practical knowledge that can be achieved through practical experiences and are implicit and intuitive. On the other hand, technical knowledge is explicit and systematic and can be attained through doing research. Interestingly enough, Ellis (2001) asserted that while L2 teachers need to have practical knowledge, researchers are adamant in doing studies that have technical outputs. Crookes (1997) mentioned another reason for the mismatches between what L2 teachers need and what SLA researchers do. He, further, suggested that since much of the research done in the SLA realm were viewing learning with the eyes in which the learner is at the center and as an internal process rather than a social phenomenon, it is not an easy job to establish the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy with the centrality of the L2 teachers' perceptions.

Not all the researchers accepted the importance of doing research in language pedagogy. Block (2000), for instance, stated that since the aim of SLA research is to quench the theoretical aspects in L2 teaching rather than the practical aspects, it is not that much helpful for the real language learning situation. In this way, SLA research emphasizes on underlying theoretical aspects of SLA not the practical considerations. Nevertheless, some such as Freeman (1998) expressed their opposite ideas about the utility of SLA research in language pedagogy. She asserted that SLA research contributed to language learning/teaching and material designing. It should be mentioned that she did not mean that SLA research had to be defined just as a way to provide appropriate materials for teaching purposes. However, she declared that SLA is a broad term of inquiry including psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and linguistics and defining SLA just as "*research"* for designing material is not appropriate. Because of this, the mentioned perspective about SLA research may downplay its roles in language pedagogy.

Nassaji (2012) defined another term of difficulty existing between the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy. He stated that due to the different research methods in SLA research it is hard to establish a straightforward relevance relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. In the domain of SLA research methods Nassaji (2012) mentioned the various type of research studies "ranging from those conducted under highly controlled experimental conditions or in lab settings to those conducted qualitatively or in

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classroom settings." (Nassaji, 2012; p. 341). As he stated, while some classroom-based research may be well-relevant to the real classroom conditions, other research which are tightly experimental are not that much resemble to what happen in the real situations.

SLA research should be relevant to language pedagogy; however, it should be specified that this relevancy is from whose perspective and to what extent. According to Bartels (2003) SLA teachers and researchers have different discourses of practice which force them to have different demands. Ellis (1997) mentioned two approaches to bridge the gap. First, applied linguist may work on different aspects of SLA research to obtain its utility for the language teaching. As one may complain, this approach uses an outsider view to this phenomenon. Consequently, some discrepancies may happen between the applied linguists and the classroom teachers. The second approach opens up the case with the problems which the teachers and the educators state about their classrooms. Ellis (1997) stated that this approach is more advantageous since the findings may be used by the practitioners and teachers in the language classrooms. As a result, doing an investigation to obtain teachers' perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy is important in SLA realm.

This section of the literature review is devoted to some operational studies conducted to achieve teachers' perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The forerunner of these studies is Simon Borg. In different studies, among them there were some international studies, Borg considered this issue. Borg (2009) examined the conception of research by 505 language teachers in 13 countries by using a questionnaire and a follow up interview. His study showed that "teachers held conceptions of research aligned with conventional scientific notions of inquiry" (p. 358). Borg's study indicated that teachers did not do research due to the reasons such as lack of knowledge, resource, and time. Moreover, his study demonstrated that teachers "engaged in research reported being driven largely by practical and professional concerns rather than external drivers such as employers or promotion" (p. 358).

Macaro (2003) conducted a study on 80 heads of foreign language department to obtain their perceptions about doing SLA research and its relevance to language teaching. Participants of this investigation asserted that they ran into problems in having access to research resources. This inaccessibility was dichotomized into both conceptual and physical aspect of it.

The perceptions of 22 Canadian language teachers, instructing English language at university, were investigated through the use of questionnaire and interview in a study conducted by Allison and Carey (2007). The overall results of their study indicated that the time left after teaching for the teachers constrained them in doing any research. Besides, since doing research is not a part of teaching requirement the encouragement and motivation of doing it remain at low.

One can refer to Tabatabaei and Nazem's (2013) study as an example of a research conducted in an EFL context to obtain teachers' perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. Investigating the conception of 150 English language teachers, Tabatabaei and Nazem study's (2013) showed that teachers referred to lack of research knowledge, time, and support by their institutions as the foremost reasons for restricting their engagement in doing SLA research.

Referring to the aforementioned studies, the thrust of this study is to explore the perceptions of EFL English language teachers both those who have degree in Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and those who do not about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. To do so, the perceptions of TFEL and non-TEFL teachers about the familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, and relevance and usefulness of SLA research in L2 pedagogy were investigated. This investigation is an attempt to address the following research questions to address the further research posed by Nassaji (2012):

1. To what extent TEFL and Non-TEFL language teachers are familiar with SLA research?
2. How easily can they access SLA research, and what sources do they consult?
3. To what extent do they read research articles and, if they do not read them, what are their reasons?
4. How do they perceive the relevance and usefulness of SLA research for classroom teaching?
5. How do they perceive the relationship between researchers and teachers?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants and Setting

For the purpose of obtaining the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy, 87 teachers from two institutes in Tehran, Iran participated in accomplishing a questionnaire extracted from Nassaji (2012). After collecting the questionnaires four of them were eliminated since they were incomplete. Teachers who participated in this study had the following background characteristics illustrated in Table (1).

Table 1: Teachers' background characteristics

		TEFL Teachers	Non-TEFL Teachers	Total
Age	**Mean**	25.5	23	24.25
	SD	6.60	2.94	4.77
Years of Teaching Experiences	**Mean**	6.5	5	5.75
	SD	3.10	2.44	2.77
Highest Degree Completed	**BA**	78.2%	71.4%	74.8%
	MA	21.8%	29.6%	25.7%
	PhD	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Age Group Teaching at the Time of the Study	**Adult**	64.8%	49.7%	59.25%
	Children	35.2%	50.3%	42.75%
Additional Teaching Certificates		15%	89%	

As Table (1) shows, the participants in this investigation were young teachers with the age average of 24.25, yet they had fair teaching experience in terms of years of teaching experiences with the mean of 5.75. If one compares the participants of this study in terms of teaching experiences with that of Nassaji's (2012) whose participants had average years of experience of 8.15, he/she understands the similarity of the two studies in terms of the participants' teaching experience. The most frequent degree accomplished by the participants of this study was Bachelor of Art (BA) with total percentage of 74.8%, next, Master of Art (MA) with percentage of 25.7%. Nonetheless, no participant in this study had a Philosophy of Doctor (PhD) degree. Table (1) also indicates that 59.25% of teachers instructed adult L2 learners while 42.75% of them were teaching children. Finally, in terms of additional teaching certificates non-TEFL teachers had a higher frequency with the percentage of 89%, however, just 15% of TEFL teachers had additional teaching certificates. The rationale behind the higher percentage of the non-TEFL teachers who had additional teaching certificate is that in Iran there are two approaches to employ an English teacher. First, if they have TEFL or TEFL related discipline degrees there is no need for another language teaching certificate. However, if they are from other majors such as chemical engineering with a good language background they have to take part in SLA related instructions such as TTC or CELTA.

3.2 Instrumentation

3.2.1 Questionnaire

To achieve the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy a questionnaire was used which was extracted from the study done by Nassaji (2012). This questionnaire included five sections. The first section of the questionnaire was devoted to draw the background information of the participants. Then, the second section of the questionnaire was to find out about the educational background of the participants including the courses they had in SLA. Additionally, this section investigated about the participants' involvement in doing research study. The third part investigated the attitudes of the respondents about action research and their opinions about the responsibility of the researchers and teachers. Next, the respondents' attitudes about doing SLA research was sought. Finally, the last section of the questionnaire including two open-ended questions investigated respondents' expectations of SLA research. It should be stated that to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach's alpha was calculated. The results showed a high index of reliability (0.81).

3.3 Data collection procedure

For collecting the information about the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy, the researchers visited two language institutes to distribute the questionnaires. The respondents were told about the purpose of the research. The questionnaire was anonymously filled and no time constraint was set.

4. Results

The first research question of this study was *"To what extent TEFL and non-TEFL language teachers are familiar with SLA research?"* The first section of the questionnaire designed to answer this question by tapping upon teachers' familiarity with SLA research. Table (2) demonstrates the results.

As Table (2) indicates, all of the TEFL teachers (100%) had a course in second language acquisition while only 34% of the non-TEFL teachers had such a course in their educational program. In their education, 95% of the TEFL teachers reported that they had courses in second language research methods whereas just 8% of the non-TEFL teachers reported it. The statement that sought about either the teachers did research or not shows that 78% of the TEFL teachers conducted a research on SLA subjects (not always for publication but for their projects in their careers in teaching or as their educational term projects); however, this is 12% for non-TEFL teachers. Finally, 25% of the TEFL teachers stated that they published a research; yet, just 4% of non-TEFL teachers reported that (sometimes they meant contribution with others not individually publication). The teachers were also asked to provide reasons for which they did not do research. Table (3) shows the results for which teachers did not conduct research.

Table 2: Teachers' familiarity with SLA research

		YES	NO	Total
Courses in second language acquisition	**TEFL Teachers**	40 (100%)	0 (0%)	40 (100%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	15 (34%)	35 (81%)	40 (93%)
Courses in second language research methods	**TEFL Teachers**	38 (95%)	2 (5%)	40 (100%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	8 (18%)	35 (87%)	43(100%)
Conducting research	**TEFL Teachers**	35 (78%)	5 (13%)	40 (100%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	5 (12%)	37 (86%)	42 (98%)
Publishing research	**TEFL Teachers**	10 (25%)	25 (62%)	35 (87%)
	Non-TEFL Teachers	2 (4%)	39 (90)	41(95%)

Note: Total is not equivalent with 83 since not all respondents provided response for all items.

Table 3: Teachers' reasons for not conducting research

	No time	No ability	No interest	Not useful	No need	Others	Total
TEFL Teachers	1 (12%)	5 (62%)	1(12%)	0	0	0	8 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	6 (16%)	10 (27%)	3 (8%)	8 (21%)	5 (13%)	5 (13%)	37 (100)

Table (3) shows that 62% of the TEFL teachers that did not conduct research studies were of the belief that they were unable to do research. For the non-TEFL teachers also inability in doing SLA research was the foremost reason for not doing research studies with a percentage of 27%. They also claimed that time limitation (16%) and research uselessness (21%) were among other reasons for not doing research. In addition, 8% reported that they were not interested in doing SLA research.

The second research question in this study was an attempt to achieve information about the research accessibility and research consultation for the

TEFL and non-TEFL teachers. First, they were asked about the research material accessibility. Almost 75% of the TEFL teachers reported that it was easy for them to have access to research resources while 24% of the non-TEFL teachers declared this. Then, those who reported they could easily have access to research resources were asked to define their consultation resources. Table (4) indicates the results of teachers' consultation resources.

Table 4: Teachers' consultation resources

Sources	TEFL Teachers	Non-TEFL Teachers
Books	6 (15%)	4 (9%)
Internet	12 (30%)	6 (13%)
Journals	5 (13%)	1 (2%)
Online Journals	6 (15%)	0
Data Bases	1 (2%)	0
Total	30 (75%)	15 (24%)

As it can be seen, both the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers consulted their issues by using the Internet (30 % and 13% respectively). A total of 13% TEFL teachers and 2% of non-TEFL teachers asserted that they found journals useful as a consultation resource. The TEFL and non-TEFL teachers also used books as their consultation resource (15% and 9 % respectively).

One section of the questionnaire was devoted to address the third research question referring to the frequency of reading the research studies by the teachers and the reasons for not reading. Table (5) indicates the results.

Table 5: Frequency of reading research by the teachers

	Always	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never	Total
TEFL Teachers	15 (37%)	5 (13%)	13 (32%)	5 (13%)	2 (5%)	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	3 (7%)	8 (19%)	12 (28%)	19 (44%)	1 (2%)	43 (100)

Table (5) shows that while 37% of the TEFL teachers "always" read research studies, 7% of the non-TEFL teachers did so. Another difference in the percentage of reading research between the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers was for the frequency of "rarely" reading research studies with TEFL teachers 13% and non-TEFL teachers 44%. Both the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers had similar percentage for reading research studies "sometimes." To find out the reasons for

which the participants did not read research studies a part of the questionnaire was designed to investigate it.

Table 6: Reasons for not reading research

	No time	Diffi-cult	No interest	No access	No useful	Others	Total
TEFL Teachers	12 (30%)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	15 (37%)	0	1 (3%)	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	2 (5%)	13 (30%)	2 (5%)	16 (38%)	10 (23%)	0	43 (100%)

As can be seen, Table (6) shows that the most cited reason for not reading research for TEFL teachers is time limitation (30%) whereas it is inaccessibility for non-TEFL teachers (38%). One significant difference between the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers is the difficulty perceived by them (10 % and 30% respectively). Moreover, 20% of the TEFL teachers reported that they were not interested in reading research studies while it was 5% for the non-TEFL teachers. Following that, both groups of teachers were asked whether they were provided with any kinds of support for doing research in the institution they taught. The answer to this question was another common point for both groups. Of the total, 95% of the TEFL teachers reported that they were not provided with any sort of research supports. The same percentage of the non-TEFL teachers, 97%, reported that they did not get any research supports.

The fourth research question of this investigation sought to obtain the perceptions of the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers about the usefulness and relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy. Table (7) shows the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about SLA research usefulness.

Table 7: Teachers' perceptions about SLA research usefulness

	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful at all	Total
TEFL Teachers	18 (45%)	12	8	2	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	3	12	17	11	43 (100)

In its second part, the fourth question investigated the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy.

Four statements in the questionnaire were assigned to fulfill this quest. Table (8) illustrates the results.

Table 8: Teachers' perceptions on the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewh at agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Knowing about second language acquisition research improves second language teaching practice:							
TEFL Teachers	11 (27%)	14 (35%)	5 (12%)	6 (15%)	4 (11%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	3 (6%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)	9 (20%)	15 (39%)	11 (25%)	43 (100%)
Second language acquisition research is not relevant to language teaching:							
TEFL Teachers	0	2 (5%)	3 (8%)	14 (35%)	20 (50%)	1 (2%)	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	5 (12%)	10 (24%)	9 (21%)	10 (24%)	8 (18%)	1 (2%)	43 (100%)
Second language acquisition research provides teachers with practical suggestions for improving second language instruction:							
TEFL Teachers	15 (38%)	18 (45%)	6 (15%)	1 (2%)	0	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	5 (12%)	8 (18%)	10 (24%)	12 (28%)	5 (12%)	3 (6%)	
The knowledge I gain from teaching experience is more relevant to my teaching than the knowledge I gain from second language acquisition research:							
TEFL Teachers	6 (15%)	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	9 (22%)	7 (18%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	16 (38%)	9 (20%)	10 (24%)	5 (12%)	3 (6%)	0	43 (100%)

Table (8) shows that there are some differences between the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers in terms of their perceptions on the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy. Of the total TEFL teachers, 74% of them agree (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) that knowing about SLA research could improve their teaching practice. However, 16% of the non-TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) on this statement. The reverse statement of the first statement was that no relevance between SLA research and language pedagogy. As expected, this time more than half of the non-TEFL teachers (57%) agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) on it while less than one third of TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) (13%). Next, the

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third statement sought to see how teachers perceived SLA research as practical suggestion provider for teaching. The results showed that up to 98% of the TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) on it whereas 54% of the non-TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) that SLA research could bring practical suggestions to the language classrooms. It should be stated that there was almost no disagreement (Strangely disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree) opinion on the third statement by the TEFL teachers (2%), nevertheless, up to 46% of the non-TEFL teachers were in disagreement (Strangely disagree, Disagree, Somewhat disagree) with this statements. The final statement to obtain language teachers' perceptions on the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy was about the knowledge which teachers achieved through their classroom experiences. Of the total, 60% of the TEFL teachers agreed (Strangely agree, Agree, Somewhat agree) that their classroom experiences were relevant to their teaching while this was 82% for the non-TEFL teachers.

The last question of this study was to investigate the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the teacher-researcher relationship. Five statements in the questionnaire were devoted to this quest. Table (9) indicates the five statements with the results obtained.

The results obtained and shown in Table (9) indicate that both the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers agreed that researchers should be university professors (68% and 88% respectively); however, the disagreement opinions of the TEFL teachers were more frequent (32%) in comparison with the non-TEFL teachers (12%). The non-TEFL teachers agreed more (79%) on the second statement stated the teachers should teach and the researcher should conduct research. Equal to three-fourths (75%) of the TEFL teachers agreed that the teachers and researchers should work together. Nonetheless, less than half (41%) of the non-TEFL teachers agreed on this statement and they showed 59% disagreement in this regard. When teachers were asked that the researchers need to consult with the teachers for research issues the TEFL teachers agreed up to 82% while the non-TEFL teachers agreed on it 61%. Finally, the non-TEFL teachers showed their strong disagreement (68%) with the statement that the teachers should consult with the researchers for advice on teaching and learning while the TEFL teachers indicated their strong agreement in this regard (78%).

Table 9: The teacher-researcher relationship

	Strogly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Researchers should be university professors or academics, but not teachers:							
TEFL Teachers	8 (20%)	10 (25%)	9 (23%)	11 (27%)	2 (5%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	14 (32%)	16 (38%)	8 (18%)	0	5 (12%)	0	43 (100%)
Researchers should carry out research and teachers should teach:							
TEFL Teachers	7 (18%)	4 (10%)	10 (25%)	15 (38%)	4 (10%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	15 (34%)	10 (24%)	9 (21%)	4 (9%)	5 (12%)	0	43 (100%)
Teachers and researchers should work together:							
TEFL Teachers	15 (38%)	10 (25%)	5 (12%)	10 (25%)	0	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	8 (18%)	6 (14%)	4 (9%)	15 (34%)	10 (25%)	0	
Researchers should consult teachers for advice on issues they want to research:							
TEFL Teachers	20 (50%)	5 (12%)	8 (20%)	7 (18%)	0	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	12 (28%)	10 (24%)	4 (9%)	15 (34%)	0	2 (5%)	43 (100%)
Teachers should consult researchers for advice on teaching and learning issues:							
TEFL Teachers	13 (33%)	10 (25%)	8 (20%)	5 (12%)	4 (10%)	0	40 (100%)
Non-TEFL Teachers	4 (9%)	2 (5%)	8 (18%)	19 (44%)	10 (24%)	0	43 (100%)

5. Discussion

This study was an attempt to investigate the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. To do so, different aspects were investigated. These aspects turned into five research questions seeking to answer the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perceptions about the familiarity, involvement, accessibility, consultation, and relevance and usefulness of SLA research in L2 pedagogy. The first research question of this study was "*To what extents TEFL and non-TEFL language teachers are familiar with SLA research?*" The statistical evidence achieved from the answers provided by the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers demonstrated that the majority of the TEFL teachers were familiar with the concept of SLA research and had passed courses in both SLA and research methodology. On the other hand, the non-TEFL teachers' reports on the questionnaire showed that they were not

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familiar with SLA courses and research methodology. Moreover, the information obtained from Table (2) illustrated that the non-TEFL teachers were not that much involved in SLA research as the TEFL teachers were. This may be due to the syllabus that these two groups went through to be L2 teachers. The TEFL teachers have a syllabus including courses to familiarize them with SLA principles and research methodology; besides, during their courses their professors also require them to conduct research for their educational term projects; even those papers are not often for the purpose of publication. However, the non-TEFL teachers are required to participate in some Teacher Training Courses (TTC) designed to make them familiar with the principles of SLA that are relating to teaching and language classrooms. Consequently, they are not familiar with research methodology or even different aspects of SLA. This way of thinking may cause the non-TEFL teachers to consider themselves as just responsible for teaching and not researcher or even making use of others research. When they were asked why they did not conduct research both the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers perceived inability in doing research as the most frequent reason for that. This shows the paucity of practical research courses not only for the non-TEFL teachers but also for the TEFL teachers. Here, the syllabus format which once was proposed by Gass (1995) draws the attentions of teacher trainers. This syllabus called SLA research based course was designed to make language teachers familiar with SLA research to augment their ability not only in conducting SLA research studies but in using them. However, one dramatic difference can be spotted between the TEFL teachers and non-TEFL teachers for not conducting research: it was the conception of the non-TEFL teachers that SLA research is of no use. Hence, this may be caused with the lack of knowledge that the non-TEFL teachers had about SLA research.

The second research question investigating the accessibility and resource consultation of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers came to the evidence that it was easier for the TEFL teachers to have access to research materials. It might due to the fact that they practiced more different methods and ways of finding and using research materials in their courses while these practices were rarely done by the non-TEFL teachers. For consultation resources, both groups of the teachers showed the same points of commonality. The books and the internet were among the most frequent consultation resources that both TEFL and non-TEFL teachers used.

One another area of discrepancy between the perceptions of the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy was the percentage of reading research studies. According to Table (5), up to 82% of the TEFL teachers reported that they read research studies whereas this was 54% for the non-TEFL teachers. This percentage in total (63%) was more than what the study of Nassaji (2012) indicated (53%). In his study, EFL teachers read more research studies than ESL teachers (61% and 38% respectively).

Knowing that, the current study was conducted entirely in an EFL context so it is sound to have a higher percentage of reading research studies. The second part of the third research question designed to obtain information about the reasons for which the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers did not read research studies. Table (6) showed that for the TEFL teachers' lack of time and accessibility issues were the major reasons for not reading research studies, yet for the non-TEFL teachers the difficulty level of the research and accessibility issues were the main reason. Time constraint issue is not a far reason for consideration since the previous research conducted with the same theme of the current study also indicated higher percentage for this factor (Borg, 2007; Fullan & Steigelbauer, 1991; Nassaji, 2012). The difficulty level of the research studies for reading was also the point of discussion in the previous contributions (Crookes, 1997; Ellis, 1997). It is the fact that sometimes researchers write their research in the way that just people who specially work in their specific field can figure them out (Ellis, 1997). One suggestion for removing the problem is what Crookes (1997) proposed. Crookes suggested that the researchers need to be informal in their research writing and have in mind the level of classroom teachers in terms of theoretical background. One can extend this proposal by the same token that for the non-TEFL teachers it will be harder to come up with SLA research due to the lack of related courses they have, so the researchers may even be more informal when writing research for classroom teaching.

The data obtained about the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers' perception about the usefulness and relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy indicated that the TEFL teachers were more of the opinion that the research studies were relevant and useful to language pedagogy than what the non-TEFL teachers thought. In like manner, the cause for such results might be for two reasons. First, this study was conducted in an EFL context and the results of the previous studies showed that in EFL contexts the research studies were read more than ESL ones. Second, the TEFL teachers confirmed the usefulness and relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy since they had more interaction with them in comparison to the non-TEFL teachers.

Both Lightbown (2000) and Pica (2005) suggested that the teacher-researcher collaboration could improve both teaching and researching in L2. The teacher-researcher collaboration is referring to as the relationship between the teachers and researchers in which they conduct a research together (Nassaji, 2012). In this relationship the L2 teachers use the research findings provided by the L2 researchers and in this way improve their knowledge of SLA research. Besides, the L2 researchers consult the problems of the L2 teachers. Consequently, they conduct their research based on the problems expressed by the L2 teachers. In this study, the TEFL teachers agreed more than the non-TEFL teachers on the collaborative relationship between the teachers and researchers. Two reasons can

Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 2016, 4(3)
ISSN 1339-4045 (print), ISSN 1339-4584 (online)
SlovakEdu, o.z.

be mentioned for these results. First, the TEFL teachers see themselves as action researchers who do action research. As Nassaji (2012, p. 358) stated "action research is a kind of research to improve practice." They perceive the problems existing in the L2 classrooms contexts and try to do research to remove them to improve the L2 classroom practice. The second reason is that the non-TEFL teachers in this study did not show good relationship with SLA researchers, SLA research, and SLA research courses. The fact of the teacher-researcher collaboration is not of importance for them since they think L2 teachers should teach and L2 researchers should do research. They perceived the responsibilities of the teachers and researchers separate from each other. For this reason, they did not accept the concept of action research.

Overall, the results of this study showed that the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers perceived the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy in different ways and with different opinions. They also showed difference in the research familiarity, and involvement. The two similar points for them were that both found reading research difficult and the shortage of research related courses in their institutes. The first reason for the information obtained about the opinions of the non-TEFL teachers might be their TTC classes. In Iran like many other EFL/ESL contexts, upon the interest and their job requirements, the students of other majors try to be English language teachers. To do so, they will be required to participate in some TTC classes to prepare their theoretical and operational background for language classes. These intense TTC classes, ranging from one week to at most three weeks, are held around some predetermined principles of teaching second language to EFL students. In these classes no teaching time is devoted to SLA research, its methodology, and the relationship between these two. Consequently, the teachers receiving TTC certificate have no idea of SLA research and think of SLA research as the responsibility of SLA researchers. They do not see any relationship between them. TTC classes need to be more than instructing some methods of teaching L2. TTC classes should increase teachers' knowledge of the statistics and their ability in reading research text (Brown, 1991; Hedgcock, 2001). Moreover, top-down model of teacher education (Nassaji, 2012) in which the researchers are perceived as knowledge producers and the teachers are seen as knowledge consumers should be replaced with more collaborative teacher-researcher relationship. Another way to improve TTC classes to change teachers' perceptions of SLA research and language pedagogy is to prepare sessions for the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers to discuss different aspects of SLA. One more way to involve teachers (both the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers) is action research. In their TTC classes and their syllabus, the non-TEFL and TEFL teachers respectively should be provided with instruction on doing action research (Nassaji, 2012). Finally, it should be stated that the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy need to be always in progress and assessment of that should

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Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 2016, 4(3)
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SlovakEdu, o.z.

be taught to the teachers so they can see the relevance of SLA research and language pedagogy more useful.

6. Conclusions and implications

The results of the current study showed that the TEFL and non-TEFL teachers had different opinions about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The results supported the hypothesis that due to the lack of SLA research courses and the scarce interaction with SLA research, the non-TEFL teachers think that SLA research is not that much relevant and useful for the purpose of teaching L2 and there should be a distinction between what a researcher does and an L2 teacher does. Thus, this study supports Stewart's (2006) study that reflects on the division of the teachers and researchers' responsibility since teachers' research is not that much rigor in methodology. This study is also in line with the one conducted by Nassaji (2012) when EFL teachers' research reading is considered.

It is an undeniable fact that each research study has some limitations. For this study, first, the questionnaire did not show why participants selected the answers like that. Second, more participants are needed for the survey studies like this one. Hence, further research may be conducted on the perceptions of the teacher trainers about the relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy. The results of the study shed light on the fact of including courses such as SLA research in the TTC programs held for guiding the novice L2 teachers. These courses could help the teachers to obtain an in-depth knowledge of SLA research and language pedagogy.

The implications of this study bear some reasons for the teacher trainers and teacher program designers to pay more attention to consider different aspects of SLA research in their programs. In this regard, they can familiarize the novice teachers with the fact of SLA research and finally can help them to be action researchers and do research for removing their problems in their L2 classes.

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JoLaCE

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Appendix   Teachers' questionnaire

A.   Background Information

1. Gender: ☐Male   ☐Female

2. Age: _____
3. Years of teaching experience: _____

4. Age group you are teaching: ☐Adult   ☐Children

5. Level(s) you are teaching: ☐Beginner ☐Low intermediate

   ☐High intermediate   ☐Advanced ☐Other

   6. Highest degree completed: ☐BA in … ☐MA in … ☐PhD in ……   ☐Other
7. Do you hold an additional teaching certificate?

                              ☐Yes   ☐No

If yes, please specify the kind of certificate.

_____
_____
_____

B.   Please answer the following questions by checking the options provided.

JoLaCE

Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 2016, 4(3)
ISSN 1339-4045 (print), ISSN 1339-4584 (online)
SlovakEdu, o.z.

1. Have you ever taken any course(s) in second language research methods (i.e. courses that teach you how to conduct research)?

    ☐Yes   ☐No

    If yes, how useful have you found the course(s)?

    ☐Very useful   ☐Useful   ☐Somewhat useful   ☐Not useful at all

2. Have you ever taken any course(s) in second language acquisition (i.e. courses on how people learn a second language)?

    ☐Yes   ☐No

    If yes, how useful have you found the course(s)

    ☐Very useful   ☐Useful   ☐Somewhat useful   ☐Not useful at all

3. Have you ever conducted any second language acquisition research?

    ☐Yes   ☐No

    If no, could you please indicate why? Check all the options that apply.
    Because:

    ☐I don't have time to do research.

    ☐I don't have the ability to do research.

    ☐I am not interested in doing research.

    ☐I think research is not needed.

    ☐Second language acquisition research is not very useful for language teaching purposes.
    Others

    _____
    _____

4. Can you easily access readings on second language acquisition research?

    ☐Yes   ☐No

    If yes, please indicate how (e.g. through books, journals, the internet, etc.).

    _____
    _____

5. Have you ever published any research on second language acquisition?

    ☐Yes   ☐No

    If yes, please mention where (i.e. the name of the journal(s))

    _____

JoLaCE

Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 2016, 4(3)
ISSN 1339-4045 (print), ISSN 1339-4584 (online)
SlovakEdu, o.z.

6. At the institution where you teach, is there any support for teachers to do research on second language acquisition?

    ☐Yes   ☐No

    If yes, please indicate what kind of support.

    _____
    _____
    _____

7. Do you make any use of second language acquisition research findings in developing ideas for teaching?

    ☐Yes   ☐No

    If no, could you please mention why?

    _____
    _____
    _____

C. *Please kindly check your position regarding the following statements using the scale*

    provided. Please indicate what you believe rather than what you should believe.

    1. Researchers should be university professors or academics, but not teachers.

    ☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

    ☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

    2. A teacher should also be a researcher.

    ☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

    ☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

    3. In order to be a good teacher, you should also be a good researcher.

    ☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

    ☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

    4. Researchers should carry out research and teachers should teach.

    ☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

    ☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

    5.Teachers and researchers should work together.

    ☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

    ☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

    6. Teachers should consult researchers for advice on teaching and learning issues.

    ☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

JoLaCE

Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 2016, 4(3)
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SlovakEdu, o.z.

☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

7. Researchers should consult teachers for advice on issues they want to research.

☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

8. Knowing about second language acquisition research improves second language teaching practice.

☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

9. Second language acquisition research provides teachers with practical suggestions for improving second language instruction.

☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

10. Second language acquisition research contributes to second language pedagogy.

☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

11. Second language acquisition research is not relevant to language teaching.

☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

12. The knowledge I gain from teaching experience is more relevant to my teaching than the knowledge I gain from second language acquisition research.

☐Strongly agree   ☐Agree   ☐Somewhat agree

☐Somewhat disagree   ☐Disagree   ☐Strongly disagree

D. *Answer the following questions by checking the options provided.*

1. How interested are you in doing second language acquisition research?

☐Very interested   ☐Interested   ☐Somewhat interested

☐Somewhat uninterested ☐Uninterested ☐Not interested at all

2. How useful do you think second language acquisition research is for second language teaching?

☐Very useful   ☐Useful   ☐Somewhat useful ☐Not useful at all

JoLaCE

Journal of Language and Cultural Education, 2016, 4(3)
ISSN 1339-4045 (print), ISSN 1339-4584 (online)
SlovakEdu, o.z.

3. How often do you read second language acquisition research articles?

☐Always ☐Often ☐Sometimes ☐Rarely☐Never

a. If your answer to question 3 is positive (i.e. if you have chosen 'Always,' 'Often,' or 'Sometimes'), have you found the information useful for your own language teaching purposes?

☐Yes ☐No

b. If your answer to question 3 is negative (i.e. if you have chosen 'Rarely' or 'Never'), could you please indicate why? Please check all the options that apply. Because:

☐I don't have time.

☐Research articles are very difficult to read and understand.

☐I cannot easily access them.

☐I am not interested in reading them.

☐I do not find them very useful to read.

☐Others _____

4. If you want to find information about issues related to language teaching, you usually (You can check more than one option):

☐Talk to your colleagues ☐Read books

☐Read journal articles ☐Attend conferences or workshops

☐Do empirical research ☐Please specify if others _____

5. Which of the following research journals do you usually read or consult for information on second language acquisition issues?

☐Language Teaching Research ☐The Modern Language Journal

☐TESOL Quarterly ☐The English Teaching Forum

☐Foreign Language Annals ☐ELT Journal

☐Language Learning Journa ☐Language Learning

☐Studies in Second Language Acquisition ☐Applied Language Learning

☐Annual Review of Applied Linguistics ☐Applied Linguistics

☐Applied Psycholinguistics ☐Language Testing

☐None of them

Please mention any other journals that you usually consult but not listed above.

_____
_____

E. *Please kindly write your answers to the following two questions*

1.   What would you expect or would like to learn from second language acquisition research?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2.   Please add any other comments you have about the role of second language acquisition research in second language teaching.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your cooperation.