THROUGH THE EYES OF EFL TEACHERS AT TERTIARY LEVEL: UNVEILING THE IMPACT OF RESEARCH ON INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Nguyen Anh Thi[1], Pham Trut Thuy[2,*], Mai Tan Thien[1], Le Thanh Thao[1], Phuong Hoang Yen[1], Nguyen Huong Tra[1], Huynh Thi Anh Thu[1]

[1] Can Tho University, 3/2 Street, Xuan Khanh, Ninh Kieu, Can Tho, Vietnam
[2] Nam Can Tho University, Nguyen Van Cu Street, An Binh, Ninh Kieu, Can Tho, Vietnam

Abstract: This descriptive study aims to examine the perceptions of Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers on the influence of research on their instructional practices. The study involved 50 highly proficient and experienced teachers from five universities located in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam. A questionnaire consisting of 26 Likert-type items was used to collect data, and the teachers' perceptions of research effects were assessed based on their mean scores. The results indicated that research significantly enhanced teachers' comprehension of their teaching practices, prompting them to reflect more deeply on their teaching methodologies. Additionally, research facilitated the elucidation of language learning processes, widened sources for developing teaching ideas and experience, refined academic instructions, and encouraged reflective teaching practices. The study contributes to the existing literature on the influence of research on instructional practices and provides insight into the critical effects of research on teachers' practices. The results may inform policy and practice decisions on incorporating research into teacher training and professional development initiatives. Overall, this study highlights the importance of research in enhancing instructional methodologies and promoting reflective teaching practices.

Keywords: EFL teachers, research, instructional practices, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Investigation into the interdependence between research and pedagogy has been the subject of scholarly scrutiny for an extended temporal span, with Humboldt (1810) being attributed as the pioneering savant to discern the interconnectedness between these practices in the 19th century. In the intervening years, a plenitude of inquiries has been undertaken to elucidate the symbiosis between research and didactic methodologies, with some academicians positing that research can bolster pedagogy by proffering contemporaneous resources and stimulating student engagement (Burnaford et al., 2000). Research additionally assumes a pivotal role in honing teachers' instructional competencies by harmonizing their pedagogical objectives with commensurate actions.

Within the purview of second language acquisition (SLA), the interrelation between research and instructional techniques is intricate, and the import of such investigations for classroom pedagogy is frequently accentuated. While certain researchers endeavor to ameliorate language education via SLA research (e.g., Erlam, 2008; Nassaji, 2012), others

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* Corresponding author:
 Email address: ptthuy@nctu.edu.vn

manifest trepidations apropos the repercussions of research on linguistic instruction (e.g., Chamot, 2004; Heift & Chapelle, 2013). Divergent perspectives abound with respect to the applicability of research to pedagogy, with some proponents advocating for a propitious nexus, whereas others contend that research and instruction occupy disparate dimensions (Neumann, 1996). Notwithstanding the existence of myriad investigations examining the interplay between research and pedagogy, a paucity of focus on teachers' viewpoints prevails. Therefore, it is incumbent upon scholars to undertake a study probing teachers' perceptions vis-à-vis the impact of research pursuits on their didactic methodologies.

While the universal dialogues on the interplay between research and pedagogy have evolved over the centuries, it is pivotal to situate this discourse within the specific socio-cultural and educational milieu of Vietnam. The Southeast Asian nation, with its rich tapestry of history, culture, and pedagogical traditions, brings forth unique nuances that shape the pedagogical underpinnings and research dynamics (Pham & Hayden, 2019). Vietnam has, in the past few decades, undergone a transformative journey in its educational sector, driven by the nation's keenness to integrate globally and its aspirations to elevate its human development indices (Le & Le, 2020). As part of this transformative narrative, English language instruction has emerged as a paramount arena, given the language's pivotal role as a global lingua franca and Vietnam's ambitions in the domains of trade, tourism, and technology (Tran & Tanemura, 2020). While the nexus between research and pedagogy has been recognized in global academic paradigms, the interplay assumes particular significance in the Vietnamese context.

In Vietnam, a country where pedagogical traditions have historically been influenced by a blend of Confucian values and more recent socialist educational doctrines (Truong et al., 2017), the introduction and acceptance of modern research-driven pedagogical techniques can be seen as both an evolution and a revolution. Recent years have witnessed a burgeoning emphasis on evidence-based teaching in Vietnamese educational institutions. This is driven by both top-down policy reforms advocating for a more research-informed pedagogy and grassroots movements among teachers, many of whom are now exposed to global pedagogical discourses through training programs, international collaborations, and academic exchanges (Tri, 2023). However, challenges persist. While the Vietnamese education sector recognizes the merits of research-driven pedagogy, systemic constraints, including infrastructural limitations, lack of training in research methodologies, and sometimes a cultural hesitance to depart from traditional teaching techniques, may impede the seamless integration of research into classroom practices (Le, 2017). Furthermore, the perceptions of Vietnamese EFL teachers, who operate at the confluence of global English language teaching norms and indigenous Vietnamese pedagogical traditions, are particularly salient. Their lived experiences, intrinsic motivations, and the extrinsic challenges they confront in melding research with pedagogy offer invaluable insights. Such insights not only illuminate the current state of EFL instruction in Vietnam but also guide future policies, capacity-building initiatives, and curricular reforms to ensure that the symbiosis between research and pedagogy is both meaningful and efficacious in the Vietnamese context.

Concomitantly, this study's primary aim is to examine the perceptions of Vietnamese EFL teachers concerning the effects of research initiatives on the enhancement of their teaching methods. The research question guiding this study is, "*How do Vietnamese EFL teachers perceive the impact of research on their pedagogical practices?*" The study strives to identify distinct elements of research that influence teachers' teaching practices, providing EFL teachers with insights into harnessing research to amplify their instructional skill and efficacy. In

addition, this study aims to delve into teachers' anticipations of how research can bolster their pedagogical strategies and teaching techniques. This study, therefore, motivates teachers to engage in research with the aim of consistently improving their instructional standards and proficiency.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of "Research"

Research can be characterized as an erudite exploration that engenders novel cognition through the unearthing and systematization of unprecedented information, or the inception of profound comprehension of extant knowledge and praxis (Kim, 1990). This process necessitates the formulation of perspicacious inquiries, scrutinizing phenomena, extrapolating interpretations, and amassing, orchestrating, and appraising empirical evidence (Bryman, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). Additionally, it encompasses the execution of inferential reasoning, arriving at cogent deductions, and subjecting said conclusions to meticulous evaluation in order to ascertain their congruity with the postulated hypotheses (Hartwick & Barki, 1994; Mohammadi, 2016). In this study, "research" is conceptualized as an intellectual endeavor that fosters the development of new understanding by uncovering and organizing previously unexplored information or by deepening the grasp of existing knowledge and practices. The process entails formulating astute questions, examining phenomena, deriving insights, and gathering, arranging, and assessing data. Furthermore, it involves employing logical inference to reach sound conclusions and rigorously evaluating these conclusions to ensure their alignment with the proposed hypotheses.

2.2. Research Features

Research can be delineated as methodical, deliberate, and inquisitive in nature, encompassing the utilization of veracious and dependable procedures, methodologies, and techniques devised to maintain impartiality and objectivity (Manfra, 2019). In the realm of higher education, establishments have transitioned their concentration from pedagogical endeavors to incorporate investigative pursuits, with didactic prowess and inquiry constituting paramount indicators of quality within the academic institutions (Coate et al., 2001; Richard et al., 2009; Tennant et al., 2009). Teachers have perpetually demonstrated adroitness in scholarly examination, and research constitutes an indispensable facet of their vocational trajectory as it cultivates their erudition and domains of proficiency, facilitates the unearthing of contemporary ideations, and augments their scholastic competencies (Babkie & Provost, 2004; Ulla et al., 2017). Ellis (2012) postulates that pedagogical milieu-based research can contribute tripartitely to the orchestration of instructional modalities. Primarily, it proliferates the repertoire of pedagogical schemas accessible for lesson preparation. Subsequently, it codifies the gamut of examined pedagogical schemas, proffering a systematic classification of schema varieties. Lastly, it furnishes empirical scrutiny of the application of these schemas within learning environments, empowering teachers to prognosticate the outcomes engendered by the execution of a particular schema. It behooves instructors to make autonomous determinations regarding the incorporation of pedagogical schemas into their lesson plans, predicated upon their pragmatic acumen, with research equipping them with the requisite tools to make judicious decisions.

2.3. Nexus between Research and Teaching Practices

Nassaji (2012) posited an inquiry into the usefulness of SLA research for language teaching. Diverging views on this subject exist, with some proponents suggesting that SLA research generally improves language teaching practices (Larsen-Freeman, 1998; Pica, 2005), while detractors argue it has little impact (Block 2000; Crookes, 1993). Early SLA researchers (Hatch, 1978; Tarone et al., 1976) cautioned against heedlessly applying SLA research to teaching, citing the limitations of scope and methodology. However, beyond the confines of SLA, there are vast territories of pedagogical research spanning areas such as curriculum design, technology-enhanced teaching, and educational psychology. These areas, too, have seen their share of debate regarding the application of research to direct classroom practices.

Recent SLA studies offer valuable insights into learners' consciousness in SLA processes, input and interaction, and learners' needs and motivation, but their relevance to teaching practices requires careful evaluation. Such evaluation necessitates an instructor's intimate knowledge and experience with classroom teaching practices (Clements & Sarama, 2008). One approach to determine the pedagogical relevance of SLA research is to utilize it to address practical difficulties that teachers have identified as significant. However, this method can be challenging, given that researchers in various areas of SLA may lack familiarity with the challenges surrounding classroom teaching, and their sense of relevance may differ from that of teachers. Therefore, researchers require the assistance, understanding, and engagement of teachers to draw appropriate conclusions about the relationship between research and teaching practices. Understanding the nature and situations of practical difficulties is necessary to solve problems in language teaching (Labaree, 2003).

The significance of this topic, particularly within the context of Vietnam, cannot be understated. As Vietnam strives towards educational modernization, the alignment of research with practical teaching methods is imperative to elevate its pedagogical standards. While there are scattered studies addressing the implications of research in Vietnamese pedagogy, a consolidated exploration, particularly concerning tertiary EFL teachers, is largely absent. Notwithstanding the existence of inquiries delving into the efficacy of research in bolstering teachers' instructional techniques on a global scale (e.g., Elsen et al., 2009; Geschwind & Broström, 2015; Neumann, 1992; Tight, 2016), the examination of tertiary-level teachers' perceptions vis-à-vis the ramifications of research endeavors on their didactic methodologies within the Vietnamese milieu remains conspicuously deficient. Few localized studies in Vietnam have grappled with this complex intersection, thereby underscoring a gap in the literature. Therefore, it is imperative to undertake a scholarly investigation to ascertain the degree to which Vietnamese EFL tertiary teachers discern the impact of research pursuits on their pedagogical practices.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This study embodies a descriptive nature and employs a quantitative approach to scrutinize the perceptions of Vietnamese teachers regarding the efficacies of research in enhancing their instructional practices. A descriptive study utilizing a quantitative approach is deemed suitable for this study because its aim is to furnish a comprehensive and precise picture of the present state of teachers' perceptions of research impacts on their teaching practices. The quantitative approach enables the study to collect numerical data that can be analyzed

statistically, providing objective and accurate results that can be extrapolated to a larger population of teachers (Brannen, 2005; Plonsey et al., 2007). Descriptive research is especially useful when the intention is to accurately depict a phenomenon or existing conditions. In this instance, the study seeks to describe teachers' perceptions of the impact of research on their teaching practices, thus rendering the descriptive study an appropriate approach. Furthermore, the quantitative approach allows for a standardized method of data collection, which can bolster the reliability and validity of the results (Libarkin & Kurdziel, 2002).

The quantitative research design proves to be the optimal choice for this study due to a multitude of reasons. Firstly, it aligns seamlessly with the study's descriptive nature, catering to its need for a meticulous portrayal of the current scenario surrounding Vietnamese teachers' perceptions about research's influence on their instructional methods. Secondly, this design's ability to collect, process, and analyze numerical data in a standardized manner ensures the generation of objective, precise, and statistically robust outcomes, lending credibility to the research findings. Additionally, it bolsters the validity and reliability of the results, creating a strong foundation for future references. Finally, the quantitative design's potential for extrapolation facilitates generalization of results, thereby making the study findings applicable to a broader teacher population. Thus, through its provision of clarity, objectivity, and wide applicability, the quantitative research design fulfills the unique requirements of this study at a certain level.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 50 English language teachers recruiting from five esteemed universities located in the southern region of the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. This specific focus on the target participants from these research sites was due to several reasons. These universities are renowned for their high standards of English language instruction, making their faculty a rich source of experienced and knowledgeable professionals. Furthermore, the Mekong Delta region represents a diverse cultural and socio-economic spectrum, allowing the study to capture a wide range of teaching experiences and perceptions. It should be mentioned that the selection of 50 participants in this study was not arbitrary. In fact, the sample size is often determined based on the study's goals, the depth of data required, and the practicalities of data collection (Desu, 2012). While larger samples can provide a broader overview, smaller samples allow for a more detailed, thorough, and nuanced exploration of each participant's responses. For this particular study, 50 participants were considered sufficient to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, while also ensuring that each participant's experiences and perspectives were thoroughly analyzed. In addition, by choosing those teachers from this specific demographic and geographic location, the research sought to tap into their unique experiences of using research to enhance their teaching practices, thereby making the findings more nuanced and representative.

Furthermore, these participants were carefully chosen based on their considerable proficiency in the English language, substantiated by their advanced academic qualifications and recognized language certifications. Many of the teachers held advanced degrees, such as Master's or Doctorates in English language teaching or Applied Linguistics, and a significant portion had internationally recognized English proficiency accreditations such as IELTS or TOEFL. This intentional focus on teachers with advanced degrees aimed to delve into a specific niche within the broader spectrum of EFL teachers at the tertiary level, understanding that these teachers represent a subgroup within that demographic. Out of the participant, 60% were males (n=30 out of 50), while the remaining 40% were females (n=20 out of 50). On average, these

pedagogues had been imparting knowledge on the English language for roughly 14.6 years, with an experience range spanning between 5 and 29 years. Notably, every participant enlisted in this research endeavor had extensive experience not only in teaching the English language but also in conducting research activities, thereby rendering them highly suitable for the purpose of the study. The selection process for the participants was especially rigorous and significant. This was because the study needed participants who had substantial experience in conducting research, in order to have an accurate understanding of the impact of research on their teaching strategies. Only such experienced individuals could offer valuable insights into how research impacts instructional practices. This experience-based knowledge was considered critical to contribute meaningfully to the study's objectives. Conversely, it was strongly believed that teachers with little or no research experience could not fully comprehend the importance of conducting research in their field, and thus would not be suitable for the study. Therefore, ensuring participants met these specific criteria of substantial research experience and a keen awareness of its impact was an essential part of the selection process.

3.3. Questionnaire as the Data Collection Instrument

The present inquiry was conducted utilizing a questionnaire as the preeminent instrument for data collection. This particular methodology was selected due to its practicality and convenience, particularly when dealing with a large and heterogeneous population (Bartram, 2019; Kabir, 2016). In addition to its feasibility, employing a questionnaire guaranteed ethical considerations, such as preserving participants' anonymity and confidentiality, and reinforced the study's veracity (Bartram, 2019). The questionnaire adopted in this study encompasses three distinct sections. The first section primarily aimed to acquire demographic information from the participants, encompassing parameters such as age, gender, teaching experience, and research experience. The second and third sections, consisting of 26 Likert-type items, are classified into five clusters, scrutinizing two fundamental issues: (1) teachers' perceptions of the influence of research activity on their teaching practices, and (2) their anticipations towards research.

The items' ratings range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The design of the five clusters and 26 items employed in this study was constructed on Nassaji's (2012) theoretical framework, whose aim was to scrutinize instructors' viewpoints on the correlation between SLA research and language pedagogy. These clusters represent distinct thematic areas related to how SLA research impacts teaching practices. To illustrate, four items (1, 2, 6, and 25) address the theme of "Reflective Teaching and Decision Making," investigating how SLA research assists teachers in understanding, reflecting upon, and making decisions about their teaching practices. Three items (3, 12, and 19) fall into a cluster relating to "Understanding Language Learning Processes," focusing on how SLA research helps elucidate the processes of language acquisition and the challenges associated with it. Three items (4, 14, and 26) might form a "Instructional Design and Planning" cluster, looking at how research can expand sources for teaching ideas, influence the design of teaching materials, and inform theoretical frameworks for effective classroom teaching. Eight items (7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 23, and 24) comprise a "Teaching Methods and Evaluation" cluster, examining how SLA research guides teachers in selecting appropriate teaching methods, planning and modifying their lessons, and evaluating their effectiveness. Finally, eight items (5, 9, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, and 22) belong to a cluster on "Professional Development (PD) and Classroom Management," looking into how SLA research aids in the development of academic instructions, classroom management skills, understanding of students' related factors, and provision of supportive feedback. Each of these

clusters directly relates to the study's research objectives, which aim to investigate the impacts of SLA research on various aspects of English language teaching. By dividing the questionnaire items into these thematic clusters, the study can systematically explore teachers' perspectives on these different areas, providing a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the research's influence on teaching practices. It should be noted that the questionnaire used in the current study was adapted and modified to fit the specific objectives of the study. Moreover, the questionnaire was composed in English, undergoing meticulous review by a field specialist to ensure accuracy and appropriateness.

To guarantee the questionnaire's reliability and validity, a series of actions were undertaken. Firstly, the Likert-type items were meticulously constructed to ensure clarity, brevity, and precision. This process involved consulting with experts in the field of SLA and Language Pedagogy to confirm the suitability of the used items. Secondly, the questionnaire was pretested with a sample of participants to ensure that the questions were comprehensible and that the Likert scale was appropriate. Thirdly, the questionnaire was administered to a pilot group of participants to confirm that it measured what it was intended to measure. Fourthly, the data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using statistical software to ensure that it could be accurately measurable. Finally, the questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. In addition, the validity of the questionnaire was evaluated using content validity, a measure of whether the questionnaire measured what it was intended to measure. By adopting these measures, it can be concluded that the questionnaire was highly valid and reliable which could be officially used for data collection.

3.4. Procedures

At the onset of the study, the research team utilized electronic means of communication to contact prospective participants, disseminating information regarding the objective of the study and soliciting their voluntary participation. The data collection process comprised two sequential stages. The first stage was a pilot phase aiming at ensuring the questionnaire's reliability while the second involved the formal administration of the questionnaire to gather quantitative data on teachers' perceptions concerning the impact of research on their pedagogical practices and their anticipations of research's potential to promote pedagogical practices. To ensure the questionnaire's soundness, the researcher meticulously fashioned it and subjected it to the scrutiny of two experts within the relevant field. Subsequently, the questionnaire underwent a pilot phase, wherein it was administered to a sample of ten university teachers to assess its content, form, reliability, and validity. The pilot phase sought to unearth any prospective blemishes in the questionnaire and assure the dependability and validity of the instrument. The outcome of the Cronbach alpha analysis indicated that the questionnaire manifested a high degree of reliability ($\alpha=0.93$), signifying the questionnaire's suitability for employment in the study. The questionnaire was then dispensed officially to 50 teachers via Google Forms, with a response rate of 100%. The researcher disseminated to each teacher a hyperlink to the Google Form, accompanied by a formal communication detailing the research's objectives and requesting their participation. Furthermore, in-depth guidelines were proffered to assist the participants in completing the questionnaire.

3.5. Data Analysis

In the present investigation, the information procured from the questionnaire was analyzed using version 22 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software. The

primary objective of the analysis was to scrutinize the teachers' perceptions concerning how research impacts their pedagogical practices and their anticipations for the influence of research on their teaching activities. Descriptive statistics tests were utilized to estimate the central tendencies and variability of the data. Additionally, Paired Sample t-tests were executed to compare and evaluate any significant differences between paired responses, offering insights into specific areas where teachers might perceive different levels of impact from research on distinct aspects of their teaching. To guarantee that the data collected from the questionnaire was reliable, a Cronbach alpha analysis was conducted. This analysis exhibited a significant degree of reliability for the questionnaire, manifested by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92. This coefficient suggests that the questionnaire has a substantial level of internal consistency, which indicates that the data derived from it is dependable and can be employed for further data analysis.

4. Results and Discussions

Table 1 presents the outcomes of the Descriptive Statistics test based on teachers' responses regarding the influence of SLA research on their teaching performance.

Table 1

Teachers' Perceptions of the Impact of Doing Research on Their Overall Teaching Practices

Clusters	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Reflective Teaching and Decision Making	50	1.87	5.00	4.30	.46
Understanding Language Learning Processes	50	1.74	5.00	4.27	.52
Instructional Design and Planning	50	1.54	5.00	4.21	.42
Teaching Methods and Evaluation	50	1.51	5.00	4.23	.42
Professional Development and Classroom Management	50	1.48	5.00	4.24	.41

The results show that there is consistency in the teachers' responses across different clusters. All of the means are above 4.0, which implies a general agreement or positive stance towards the impacts of SLA research on their pedagogical performance. The relatively low standard deviations suggest that there is not much variability in the responses and most teachers have a similar viewpoint regarding the matter. This observation aligns well with the broader discourse in the field. For instance, Nassaji (2012) had earlier highlighted the potential benefits of utilizing SLA research in refining language teaching practices. The current findings corroborate these sentiments, pointing to an industry-wide recognition of these benefits. However, it is equally essential to consider counter-narratives. Block (2000) argued that SLA research might have limited practical implications in classroom settings. Yet, the data in Table 1 suggests that on the ground, practitioners — in this case, teachers — perceive tangible benefits from SLA research, at least in their self-assessment of their pedagogical performance. Another critical perspective that emerges when juxtaposing the current results with past studies is the shifting stance over time. Early SLA researchers like Hatch (1978) cautioned against the direct application of SLA research to teaching, emphasizing the potential limitations. Fast forward to the present, the prevailing trend, at least as evident from the current dataset, indicates that teachers are more open, if not enthusiastic, about integrating SLA research insights into their pedagogical strategies.

In the endeavor to understand the perceived impact of research involvement on teaching practices, the study probed into teachers' perspectives across five pivotal competency clusters, stated in Table 1. Among these, teachers stated that their involvement in research had the most pronounced effect on "Reflective Teaching and Decision Making", registering a mean score of 4.30. Paired sample t-tests revealed a significant difference in perception between "Reflective Teaching and Decision Making" and "Instructional Design and Planning" (t=2.95; p<.05). These findings suggest that the teachers perceived their research engagements as being particularly influential in enhancing reflective and decision-making capacities. Akin to findings from Hagevik et al. (2012), the current results reiterate the importance of research in fostering a reflective teaching approach.

The results of the Descriptive Statistics test (see Table 2) present a succinct synopsis of teachers' perceptions concerning the impact of research on their advancement in instructional practices.

Table 2

Teachers' Perceptions of the Impact of Doing Research on Their Specific Instructional Practices

Research helps…	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
assist them in the development of a better understanding of their teaching practices	50	1.00	5.00	4.42	.36
encourage them to become more reflective about their teaching practices	50	1.00	5.00	4.36	.21
explain the language learning processes that create conditions for effective language teaching	50	1.00	5.00	4.34	.65
expand sources that could help them build their teaching ideas and experience	50	1.00	5.00	4.32	.33
develop their academic instructions	50	1.00	5.00	4.30	.12
foster their reflective teaching practices	50	1.00	5.00	4.30	.36
utilize appropriate teaching methods	50	1.00	5.00	4.28	.14
guide their teaching planning	50	1.00	5.00	4.28	.28
provide guided practices for teachers to complete their teaching job effectively	50	1.00	5.00	4.28	.33
enable them to make necessary changes in their teaching content and methods	50	1.00	5.00	4.26	.19
aid in their adaptation to changes in their teaching content and methods	50	1.00	5.00	4.26	.28
provide insights into the nature of second language acquisition, from which teaching processes that could best facilitate students' natural language learning processes could be designed	50	1.00	5.00	4.26	.21
verify their understanding of the subject matter	50	1.00	5.00	4.24	.29
contribute significantly to the process of designing teaching	50	1.00	5.00	4.22	.15

materials					
design more comprehensive lesson plans	50	1.00	5.00	4.22	.22
enable them to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching content and methods	50	1.00	5.00	4.20	.69
facilitate the development of classroom management skills	50	1.00	5.00	4.20	.45
enable them to understand their students' related factors more insightfully	50	1.00	5.00	4.20	.47
aim to discover the problems of L2 learning, from which the most practical methods to tackle them could be suggested	50	1.00	5.00	4.20	.69
uncover and develop practical solutions for their teaching problems	50	1.00	5.00	4.20	.58
provide teachers with supportive feedback, from which they could adjust and develop their teaching practices	50	1.00	5.00	4.20	.54
establish a fundamental interrelation between the aims and purposes of teaching and research	50	1.00	5.00	4.18	.51
suggest appropriate teaching strategies that could help develop students' academic knowledge	50	1.00	5.00	4.18	.78
provide teachers with sound evaluation systems that could help assess students more thoroughly	50	1.00	5.00	4.16	.65
enhance their decision-making ability during their teaching practices	50	1.00	5.00	4.10	.89
focus on a theoretical framework to drive effective classroom teaching practices	50	1.00	5.00	4.10	.78

Overall, the highest mean score (M=4.42) was for assisting teachers in developing a better understanding of their teaching practices, followed by encouraging them to become more reflective about their teaching practices (M=4.36), explaining the language learning processes that create conditions for effective language teaching (M=4.34), expanding sources that could help them build their teaching ideas and experience (M=4.32), developing their academic instructions (M=4.30), fostering their reflective teaching practices (M=4.30), utilizing appropriate teaching methods (M=4.28), guiding their teaching planning (M=4.28), providing guided practices for teachers to complete their teaching job effectively (M=4.28), enabling them to make necessary changes in their teaching content and methods (M=4.26), aiding in their adaptation to changes in their teaching content and methods (M=4.26), providing insights into the nature of second language acquisition, from which teaching processes that could best facilitate students' natural language learning processes could be designed (M=4.26), verifying their understanding of the subject matter (M=4.24), contributing significantly to the process of designing teaching materials (M=4.22), designing more comprehensive lesson plans (M=4.22), enabling them to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching content and methods (M=4.20), facilitating the development of classroom management skills (M=4.20), enabling them to understand their students' related factors more insightfully (M=4.20), aiming to discover the problems of L2 learning, from which the most practical methods to tackle them could be suggested (M=4.20), uncovering and developing practical solutions for their teaching problems (M=4.20), providing teachers with supportive feedback, from which they could adjust and

develop their teaching practices (M=4.20), establishing a fundamental interrelation between the aims and purposes of teaching and research (M=4.18), suggesting appropriate teaching strategies that could help develop students' academic knowledge (M=4.18), providing teachers with sound evaluation systems that could help assess students more thoroughly (M=4.16), enhancing their decision-making ability during their teaching practices (M=4.10), and focusing on a theoretical framework to drive effective classroom teaching practices (M=4.10), according to the test results.

The results of this study present a nuanced understanding of teachers' perceptions of the role of research in their pedagogical practices. It offers a novel emphasis on the benefits of research as a catalyst for self-awareness and introspection in teaching methodologies, providing insights that extend beyond those established in prior studies. This research's focus on the internal dimensions of teaching, namely self-reflection and self-awareness, provides a unique perspective within the context of English language instruction in Vietnam, a field where this aspect may have previously been underexplored. What sets this study apart is the strong correlation it establishes between teacher-led research and a deeper understanding of pedagogical practices. While earlier research by Farrell (2013) and Lambirth et al. (2021) had also suggested that teachers who engage in research tend to evaluate and modify their teaching practices more effectively, this study adds further depth by connecting research with the development of self-awareness and self-reflection in teachers. This complements and extends the theoretical frameworks proposed by Schön (1983) and van Manen (1991) and solidifies the role of research as a tool for continuous reflection and improvement in teaching practices. Additionally, this study adds to the current discourse on teaching improvement by re-emphasizing the importance of feedback and continuous PD, which have been previously discussed by Hattie and Timperley (2007) and Day and Gu (2014). However, it does so by intertwining these concepts with teacher-led research, offering a novel perspective on how teachers can better utilize feedback and PD opportunities to refine their teaching methods. In doing so, it pushes the boundaries of the current understanding of effective pedagogy and invites further investigation into the role of teacher-led research in the PD of teachers.

This study further presents a fresh perspective on the utility of research as a tool for fostering self-reflection among teachers, elucidating language acquisition processes, and expanding available resources for pedagogical improvement. The novelty lies in the connection it makes between these three areas and the resultant impact on instructional practices. Notably, the study moves beyond the established understanding of the benefits of teacher reflection and continues learning, as proposed by Korthagen and Kessels (1999). It extends their postulation by providing empirical evidence of how self-reflection triggered by research can help teachers bridge the gap between theoretical pedagogical knowledge and its practical application, especially within the context of English language instruction. Additionally, the study offers a fresh contribution by linking the expansion of teaching resources to research. While Desimone (2009) highlighted the concept of teacher PD, this study adds a new layer by demonstrating how research can enrich the resources available to teachers, thus enhancing their PD. Importantly, this study reiterates the importance of understanding language acquisition processes for effective language instruction, a concept highlighted by Ellis (2012). However, it adds nuance to this understanding by emphasizing how teacher-led research can deepen teachers' comprehension of these processes, enabling them to develop more effective teaching strategies. This observation provides an innovative lens to view the role of research in language instruction, underscoring its importance not only as a tool for understanding pedagogical practices but also as a method for enhancing the efficacy of language teaching.

Moreover, the research presents new findings indicating that teachers value research not just for its role in enhancing self-reflection and comprehension of pedagogical strategies, but also for its practical applications, such as improving lesson plans, instructional materials, and content delivery. A unique contribution of this study is the empirical demonstration of how research aids teachers in making critical changes to their teaching methodologies and content. While previous research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Hargreaves, 1996) have attested to the positive impact of teacher engagement in research on PD and student outcomes, this study illuminates how research specifically assists in transforming pedagogical practice. Moreover, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the notion of "reflective teaching." Beyond reiterating the importance of teachers scrutinizing their instructional practices and making necessary adjustments, as emphasized by Schön (1983) and Zeichner and Liston (1987), the study shows how research can act as a catalyst for such reflection. The study also enriches previous findings on the role of PD in bolstering teaching practices (Desimone, 2009; Guskey, 2002; Wei et al., 2009). It explores how research, as a form of PD, can provide teachers with a diverse array of resources to support their teaching practices, adding depth to the perspectives of Darling-Hammond and Sykes (1999) and Fullan (1991). In essence, this research breaks new ground by revealing the practical and transformative benefits of teacher engagement in research, demonstrating its value in promoting reflective teaching, fostering PD, and enhancing instructional practices.

Last but not least, this study sheds new light on the role of feedback in teacher PD and instructional enhancement. While previous research (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) has established the positive impacts of feedback on student learning and teacher improvement, this study explores how teachers themselves perceive feedback as a catalyst for refining their instructional strategies. This represents a notable shift in focus, illuminating how teachers internalize and apply feedback to enhance their professional growth. Moreover, the research introduces the concept of "instructive feedback," which offers a nuanced perspective on how feedback can function as a mechanism for identifying both strengths and weaknesses in teachers' instructional practices. This innovative concept furthers the understanding of the comprehensive nature of feedback, emphasizing its role not just in pinpointing areas of improvement, but also in highlighting areas of proficiency. The study also underscores the significance of a culture of perpetual learning within the teaching profession. While it reinforces findings from Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) about the importance of continuous PD, it expands on these by arguing that feedback is central to fostering a culture of continual learning. This illustrates how feedback can act as a driving force for unending professional growth, keeping teachers updated on the evolving needs of students, emerging instructional strategies, and technological advancements. In sum, the study extends the understanding of the role of feedback in teacher PD and instructional enhancement when teachers do research, introducing novel perspectives on the concept of instructive feedback and the significance of a culture of perpetual learning within the teaching profession.

5. Conclusion

This study carves out a unique position in research literature on the influence of research activities on teaching, with its focus on Vietnamese EFL tertiary teachers, a relatively underexplored demographic. The detailed exploration of their perspectives on the interplay between research and pedagogy provides fresh insights into the enhancement of teaching efficacy, emphasizing the reflective and transformative potential of research engagement. The

study uncovers that research not only deepens teachers' comprehension of their teaching practices but also nurtures a culture of introspection and self-awareness - adding a novel layer to the existing body of literature on teacher research and practice. Furthermore, the investigation illuminates the role of research in explicating language acquisition processes, thereby enriching language instruction, and its capacity to expand the range of available resources for refining teaching methods and experiences. Employing a comprehensive and nuanced questionnaire to explore these dimensions further distinguishes this study. The findings underscore the need for teacher involvement in research and PD, reaffirming their significant roles in improving classroom practices and student outcomes. The emphasis on reflective teaching, continuous learning, and access to diverse resources and feedback for professional growth aligns with previous research, confirming the importance of keeping abreast of the evolving needs of students, emerging pedagogical techniques, and technological advancements. These insights carry considerable implications for teacher education and PD programs, suggesting a need to accentuate research engagement, reflective teaching, and continuous learning in fostering effective teaching practices and improving student outcomes. Consequently, this study substantially contributes to understanding the relationship between research and teaching, offering invaluable guidance for future policies and practices related to integrating research into teacher education and PD initiatives.

The study exclusively scrutinized English language teachers at quintet academic institutions situated in the Mekong Delta region of southern Vietnam, which may circumscribe the generalizability of the extrapolations to alternate locales and subject matter. Furthermore, the diminutive sample size comprised a mere 50 exceptionally adroit and seasoned teachers, which might not accurately typify the more extensive population of instructors in Vietnam. Additionally, the employment of the quantitative methodology may have been inadequate in capturing the full gamut and profundity of the teachers' perceptions apropos the ramifications of research on their pedagogical techniques. In an effort to surmount these constraints, prospective studies may undertake a more expansive examination, encompassing a diverse cohort of teachers hailing from a multiplicity of regions and disciplinary fields, with the aim of procuring a comprehensive comprehension of the manner in which research shapes instructional stratagems in Vietnam. Furthermore, the adoption of a mixed-methods paradigm, amalgamating quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, could potentially elicit more profound insights into the pedagogues' experiential knowledge and viewpoints concerning the repercussions of research on their didactic practices. Lastly, probing the potential impediments and challenges that teachers encounter whilst incorporating research into their instructional methodologies, and discerning efficacious approaches to surmounting these obstacles, could facilitate the formulation of well-informed policy and practice determinations concerning the integration of research into teacher education and professional advancement initiatives.

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TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA NGHIÊN CỨU KHOA HỌC
ĐỐI VỚI THỰC TIỄN GIẢNG DẠY MÔN TIẾNG ANH
DƯỚI GÓC NHÌN CỦA GIẢNG VIÊN ĐẠI HỌC

Nguyễn Anh Thi[1], Phạm Trút Thùy[2], Mai Tấn Thiện[1], Lê Thanh Thảo[1],
Phương Hoàng Yến[1], Nguyễn Hương Trà[1], Huỳnh Thị Anh Thư[1]

*[1] Trường Đại học Cần Thơ, Đường 3 tháng 2, Phường Xuân Khánh, Quận Ninh Kiều,
Thành phố Cần Thơ, Việt Nam*

*[2] Trường Đại học Nam Cần Thơ, Đường Nguyễn Văn Cừ, Phường An Bình, Quận Ninh Kiều,
Thành phố Cần Thơ, Việt Nam*

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm hiểu quan điểm của một số giảng viên tiếng Anh về tác động của nghiên cứu khoa học (NCKH) đối với hoạt động giảng dạy. Khách thể nghiên cứu bao gồm 50 giảng viên hiện đang công tác tại 5 trường đại học tại khu vực Đồng bằng sông Cửu Long ở miền Nam Việt Nam. Công cụ thu thập dữ liệu cho nghiên cứu bao gồm một bảng câu hỏi khảo sát với 26 tiểu mục được thiết kế theo thang đo Likert. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy hoạt động NCKH góp phần cải thiện đáng kể sự hiểu biết của giảng viên về các nội dung liên quan đến việc thực hành giảng dạy, thúc đẩy họ suy ngẫm sâu hơn về phương pháp giảng dạy của mình. Ngoài ra, NCKH giúp giảng viên hiểu rõ và sâu sắc hơn về quá trình học tập, mở rộng nguồn cho việc phát triển ý tưởng và kinh nghiệm giảng dạy, tinh chỉnh hướng dẫn học thuật, và khuyến khích khả năng chiêm nghiệm trong quá trình giảng dạy. Kết quả nghiên cứu còn góp phần làm giàu nguồn tài liệu về việc đánh giá tác động của NCKH đối với thực hành giảng dạy của giảng viên. Có thể thấy, kết quả nghiên cứu mang lại giá trị tham chiếu quan trọng cho các quyết định về chính sách cũng như thực tiễn về việc kết hợp hoạt động NCKH vào đào tạo và các sáng kiến phát triển chuyên môn. Nghiên cứu cũng nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của hoạt động NCKH trong việc cải thiện phương pháp giảng dạy và thúc đẩy sự chiêm nghiệm trong dạy học của đội ngũ giảng viên tại Việt Nam.

Từ khóa: giảng viên tiếng Anh, nghiên cứu khoa học, thực hành giảng dạy, Việt Nam