

## The Influence of Higher Education Research Methodology Teachers' Academic Identity on EFL Students' Attitudes toward Research

### تأثير الشخصية الأكاديمية للأستاذ الجامعي على موقف طلبة اللغة الانجليزية تجاه مقياس منهجية البحث

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Received in	2019-09-10	accepted in	2020-10-13
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#### Abstract

Teaching research methodology to undergraduate students at the departments of English in Algeria is considered a big challenge for both teachers and students. This paper attempts to find the extent to which the academic identity of research methodology teachers plays a role in shaping their students' attitudes toward research and research methodology subject. An interview and a questionnaire are conducted with the research methodology teachers and EFL Students at Batna 2 University. The results reveal that research is a minor part of the work of these teachers; there is a lack of research experience transfer from teachers to students; and, students are interested to learn this subject but they complain about the way it is taught. Hence, it is recommended for teachers to employ effective and interactive means which allow them to act their roles as teachers and as researchers and help students develop more positive attitudes toward research.

#### Key words:

Research methodology; higher education teachers; researcher-identity; EFL students; attitudes toward research.

#### الملخص:

إن تدريس منهجية البحث العلمي لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة باتنة<sup>2</sup> يعد تحدياً بالنسبة لكل من الأساتذة والطلبة على حد سواء. في هذه الدراسة تطرقنا الى مدى تأثير الشخصية الأكاديمية لاساتذة منهجية البحث على موقف الطلبة تجاه هذا المقياس. من خلال مقابلة شفوية مع اساتذة المقياس واستبيان للطلبة توصلنا إلى عدة نتائج: اساتذة المقياس لا يولون أهمية كبيرة لتطوير مهاراتهم في البحث العلمي بل للتدريس وحسب. إضافة الى ذلك، تقرب البحث العلمي من خلال مناقشات حول خبرات الاساتذة في مجال البحث الأكاديمي ليس من اولويات الاساتذة. تبين أيضاً ان طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية مدركون و مهتمون بالبحث لكن يرون أن طريقة تدريس منهجته غير مناسبة. ولهاذا، فلا بد على أساتذة هذا المقياس توظيف طرق فعالة و تفاعلية قادرة على خلق جو ملائم اين يلعب الأستاذ دوره كأستاذ و باحث في نفس الوقت من جهة و أيضاً يمكن الطلبة من تطوير مواقف إيجابية تجاه البحث العلمي من جهة أخرى.

#### الكلمات المفتاحية:

منهجية البحث العلمي؛ هوية الباحث؛ الأستاذ الجامعي؛ طلبة؛ مواقف تجاه البحث

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## **Introduction**

In the wide range of educational research conducted in Algeria, classroom-based research is hugely conducted on primary and secondary education, and higher education classroom is under-researched (Messekher, 2013; Riche, 2010). Hence, this study ventures to unveil a critical aspect in the teaching profession of Higher Education (HE, henceforth) teachers; that is teacher academic identity. Understanding the latter can help in examining "...aspects of teaching: the ways in which students integrate a range of influences, the necessary confronting of tensions and contradictions in their careers"(Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 175). Moreover, explorations of HE teachers' academic identity in different EFL contexts revealed that it is "...a crucial component in determining how language teaching is played out"(Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson 2005, p.10). Furthermore, Pennington and Richards (2016) claimed that "In teaching, identity emerges as a dynamic construct that is shaped by the context in which the teacher works and that may have different features at different times" (p.2). Therefore, university teachers, including EFL teachers, have to combine the teaching role with the researcher role in building their academic identity.

This study investigated the influence of higher education research methodology teachers' academic identity on EFL students' attitudes toward research. What motivates this study is that we are currently teaching research methodology to undergraduate third year EFL students at the department of English, Batna 2 university. We have noticed through four years of experience that, compared to the other courses, this course is given relatively little attention by the students and it is not among their favorite subjects. They tend to view this course with negative attitudes which constitute obstacles to their learning (Murtonen & Lehtinen, 2003; Papanastasiou & Zembylas, 2008; Wilson, 1998). As part of a whole PhD project on analyzing students' problems with the research methodology course and hence developing both the teaching and assessment of this course to undergraduate EFL students, this paper focuses on examining the role that the teacher's academic identity plays in classroom practice within the context of the research methodology course taught to third year EFL students hoping to answer the following questions:

- a. How do the teachers of research methodology course work on developing their academic identity, especially their research identity at the department of English, Batna 2 University?
- b. How do EFL Students view the research methodology course?
- c. How can academic identity of the teachers influence their students' attitudes towards the course?

## **1. Literature Review**

Investigating the students' attitudes toward research methodology course with respect to their teachers' academic identity requires a good understanding of teachers' academic identity development especially their researcher identity which clarifies their readiness to transmit not only the course knowledge but also values,

behaviors, and skills of research. In addition, a thorough examination of the main factors influencing the students' attitudes toward their learning and toward research is critical. To this end, this section will examine literature on the following areas: university teachers' academic identity, including teacher researchers, undergraduate students' attitudes toward research and the state of the research methodology course in human science majors.

### **1.1. The Algerian Higher Education (AHE) Teachers' Academic Identity Formation**

Though the concept of identity is complex to understand, it is certain that it is a result of various factors interacting with each other in a long, on-going, spontaneous, contextual, and dynamic process (Epstein, 1978; Kondo, 1990; Beijaard et al., 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Varghese, 2005). It is well documented in literature that identity theorists have thoroughly covered these factors in different contexts and they have clearly explained this process of identity formation using different approaches (Richards, 2006; Sachs, 2005; Wenger, 1998; Parkison, 2008; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Hence, identity is a reflection of the context where the individual is frequently active (Pennington & Richards, 2016). For instance, in their study, Lankveld, Schoonenboom, Volman, Croiset, & Beishuizen (2016) approached university teacher identity from a socio-cultural point of view and stated that they "develop and maintain their identity in relation to the 'collective regard' that others have for their role" (p. 2). By this, they stressed the social and cultural factors influencing university teachers' identity construction. Identity formation is also viewed as "communicative action" (ibid); that is, it is a result of interactions with others. In the case of teachers, it is in their "community of practice" (Lankveld et al., 2016) where most of their interactions take place. Other identity theorists assumed that in different contexts individuals have multiple and competing identities (ibid). In other words, in varied social contexts and circumstances, individuals go through multiple experiences that, in their turn, contribute to the process of their identity formation. Identity formation is also tightly connected with practice and, in this regard, Wenger (1998) argued that "There is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants" (p.149). So, referring back to the example of teachers, identity shifts could occur throughout a teacher's career as a result of interactions within broader communities. Therefore, individuals can hold different professional identities depending on the different connections they make and roles they play in different contexts. Indeed, there is much to understand if one is to appreciate the importance of identity in any individual's development.

The Academic identity, that is the focus of the present study, in its turn, is subject to different and various interpretations. It is, however, agreed that academic identity is particularly work-related and it is shaped by the institutional context

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(Pennington & Richards, 2016). In the context of academia, it results from a combination of meanings of 'lived experiences' of work (Mathe, 2018). A more elaborate definition is given by Feather (2010) who viewed academic identity "A representation of an individual's inner being, his or her values, beliefs and attitudes. Thus, academic identities are a manifestation of numerous complex experiences and representations of a culture or defining communities that a person is based in" (p.189). Academic identities are simply viewed as "...a trinity of research, teaching and scholarly activities that are subject or discipline-based" (Clarke, Hyde, & Drennan, 2013, p.7). In this trinity of voices, research is seen as crucial to defining academic identity and what it is to be an academic at the university (Harris 2005). Academic identities are considered to be "a source of '*meaning*' for the academics and their '*identification*' with the university" (ibid, p. 10)

Through their academic careers, all academics working at the Algerian universities build their identities through official and personal ways. First of all, to be accepted to teach at the Algerian university a 'Magistère' degree, for the classical system, or a doctorate degree for the LMD system, is required. More than half of the Algerian university teachers start teaching at the university when holding a 'Magistère' degree, and then they simultaneously prepare their doctorate degree. This is how most of them develop their research identities as the doctorate degree requires candidates to publish articles and, of course, to write their theses. Few teachers are also members in research laboratories where they also build their research identities. Moreover, there are some teachers who even voluntarily participate in study days, conferences, and other national or international scientific events to develop their professional identities. Unfortunately, there is another category of Algerian teachers who are just satisfied with their 'Magistère' degree and university teaching and do nothing for their academic career and who, we think, negatively influence their students' attitudes toward research.

Research on academics' identity working in the Algerian higher education has almost no trace. Hence, in the the body of literature very little is known of how their identities and practices, especially EFL teachers, are formed and developed. As such, a fuller understanding of their identity is hard to realize. The only study that explored how EFL teachers construct their identities is conducted by Messekher (2013). Using narrative inquiry, her study tried to explore lived experiences of two Algerian EFL teachers in order to find about their academic identity formation. She emphasized that, because of the educational reforms implemented, especially in the English Language Teaching, the Algerian context had witnessed many changes which, in their turn, seriously had influenced teachers' identity formation processes. She also regretted the lack of resources and professional training opportunities in many EFL workplaces including the university. Through the analysis of the narratives of her participants, who were full time and part time teachers at the university, she revealed that the Algerian identity of teachers is chiefly featured by: identification, negotiability, alignment, imagination and engagement. That is, by identifying and

negotiating their past EFL learning experiences, teachers shape their future EFL teaching practices and, through imagination, they develop their prospective identities. For developing their identities, teachers need also to align with their communities of practice and engage in training programs. She concluded by emphasizing the fact that teachers need to take a course in "Reflections on EFL Teaching and Learning" especially in training programs. So, though our study focuses only on research methodology teachers at the department of English, it will hopefully address the absence of discussion on HE teachers' academic identity and especially the Algerian researcher identity.

## **1.2. Research Methodology Teacher's Researcher Identity**

As has been mentioned before, research is the trademark activity of the university academic. Lamar and Helm (2017) defined researcher-identity as " an individual's self-concept as a researcher and includes the process of understanding experiences, increasing awareness, and incorporating both into the sense of self" (p.4), and as a "unique concept that possibly includes research self-efficacy and interest" (p.4). Lankveld et al. (2016) stressed the fact that at higher education "Roles like teaching and research were mixed; some academics saw themselves as researchers who teach while others perceived themselves as blended professionals who bring teaching and research together in the quest for learning" (Lankveld, et al. 2016, p.5). Hence, the university environment requires teachers to project both roles of a teacher and a researcher in their classrooms. However, these too critical roles may pose a conflict of choice to some HE teachers and end up with preferring teaching over research without trying to integrate research in their instruction. In a very real sense, they may identify themselves better with teaching than with research. In their study, Lamar and Helm (2017) claimed that in the literature the main focus is professional identity rather than research identity as it specifically relates to research. Riche (2010) insisted that "Teachers, no matter what module they are in charge of, are required to change roles and identities from those of purveyors of encyclopedic knowledge, that quickly dates, to that of methodologists who show the one way to remain updated on the major academic issues confronting their students." (p.3). Indeed, for the general professional development of teachers, and for the overall benefits of students, the researcher identity is part and parcel of teachers' identities.

Therefore, for research methodology teachers, who are the focus of the present study in all domains, the researcher identity is what chiefly matters. In addition to projecting an effective teacher identity, RM teachers in particular are logically expected and required to show in action, through their knowledge, behaviors and skills, and activities, that they are too engaged in research and they are updated with novelties especially in EFL research to ensure that students develop a positive attitude toward research in general and the course in particular. Indeed, the quality of what and how these teachers teach is primarily affected by their views of their own professional identity especially the researcher identity.

### **1.3. Research Methodology as Course in the English language Studies Curriculum**

Studying at the university requires much knowledge of research in the field and also knowledge of how it should be conducted. In Algeria, research skills are taught to EFL students as soon as they join the university. For EFL students, undergraduates or postgraduates, methodology is considered as an independent pedagogic unit in their curriculum. The content of the course is covered in six semesters of the bachelor degree and four semesters of the two levels of the master degree. The course is assessed at all levels by adopting a continuous evaluation method where most of the teachers prefer to assign students small project works. This implies that it is considered a critical course in the English language studies program. Riche (2010) identified three main reasons for giving such a course much significance. First, higher education reform requires students' acquisition of skills such as autonomy, learning to learn, mastery learning, etc. Second, students need to cope with the emerging information and learn how to access and understand it, critically evaluate it, and use it for the sake of their learning. Third, students are encouraged to raise their learning potential, rate of success and their capacity to learn by conducting research in different areas of their learning. In spite of the fact that syllabus designers were right to incorporate research methodology as a fundamental unit, they indicated neither the type of the content that should be covered nor the ways and means by which it should be assessed and graded (ibid). It is aimed through this course to develop students' research skills like documentation and referencing, note taking, academic writing, etc. in order to handle their research tasks. Moreover, this course offers students the opportunity to learn the different steps of research process such as framing research questions, designing a study, gathering data and analyzing and presenting the findings. The overall aim is not only to produce consumers of research but also producers of research.

### **1.4. Students' Attitudes toward Research and Research Methodology Course**

Developing students' knowledge of research is critical at all stages of their university studies. Hence, developing positive attitudes toward research seems to be a worthy goal that could be achieved especially through a module in research methodology. Evans (2011) argued that research is based on someone's "willingness", which, according to her, is based on motivational and attitudinal preparedness. Bezuidenhout and Alt (2011) urged lecturers to develop not only students' knowledge and understanding but also skills and attitudes that will last in the long term. Indeed, the attitudinal aspect of learning that is simply explained in terms of positive perception of the relevance and usefulness of research may determine to a great extent students' willingness and motivation to learn the content of the compulsory research methodology course.

The small number of studies which focused on research methodology course and covered the student aspect have agreed that undergraduate students develop

negative attitudes toward this course and they are most of the time reluctant to engage in research (Panastasiou & Zembylas 2008; Kracker, 2002). In this regard, by developing such attitudes, student's learning and performance in this module could make later on an obstacle when engaging in Master's or doctoral studies (Onwuegbuzie, 1997). As students are strongly influenced by the teacher, they sometimes hint that lecturers serve just as "gatekeepers"(Onwuegbuzie & Wilson, 2003) to their achievement and they perceive them as the anxiety-makers (Ibid.). What is more, teachers in charge of the research methodology course are seen as to repeat the same content for many years using the same methods that are mainly based on lecturing despite the changing nature of data and students preferences. Also, students are not satisfied with the way this course is designed, delivered, and assessed (Ben, 2018). Moreover, some students even question the relevance of research skills to their studies and their life in general. Therefore, the amount of effort students make to develop their skills in research and their active engagement will be influenced by such attitudes and perceptions. Hence, building more positive attitudes towards research will lead to intrinsic motivation to engage in research (Evans, 2011).

## **2. Methodology**

Since this study aims at finding the relationship between the dependent variable "students' attitudes toward research" and the independent variable "teachers' academic identity", we opted for a mixed methods approach design to our research. By collecting and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data via a questionnaire, administered to third year EFL students, and an interview conducted with teachers of their research methodology subject, it is hoped to thoroughly understand the correlation that exists between teachers' academic identity and students' attitudes toward research methodology course.

### **2.1. Population and Sample**

Issues related to the teaching and learning of the research methodology course at the departments of English, especially at Batna 2 University, are seldom investigated. Hence, this paper is meant to deal with some of them and some of the related literature. Investigating the influence of teachers' researcher identity on students' attitudes toward this course is better addressed to both teachers of research methodology and their students. Third year EFL undergraduate students are chosen purposefully because they have already been introduced to this course in their first and second years. At the same time, we have noticed the disengagement of students of this level compared to Master students. The teachers who are interviewed are currently teaching third year students. From the total number of five teachers, including ourselves, three teachers volunteered to be interviewed, two males and one female. Purposive sampling is used, that is choosing the participants by judging their typicality (Lowe, 2007). Thus, the students sample is chosen according to the teachers who accepted to be interviewed. Then, random sampling is also used to

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select one administrative group <sup>2</sup>of students for each teacher as teachers do not teach the same number of groups. As such, three groups were chosen randomly and the total number of students was 90.

### **2.2. Data Gathering Instruments**

Investigation of both the teachers' researcher identity and students' attitudes toward the research methodology course requires the descriptive method. Because classroom is a very complex space, a great deal needed to be understood within it by developing tools that help to describe what is going on inside. Thus, both the teachers' interview and the students' questionnaire are thought to thoroughly examine the problem under study and help to reach both reliable and valid results.

### **2.3. Description of the Questionnaire**

As a means of principally gathering attitudinal data (Lowe, 2007), the questionnaire is perfectly suitable to investigate the students' attitudes toward the course of the research methodology in their program of third year. Moreover, as Pettersen (2015) believes students play a critical role in HE quality improvements through their feedback that can be mainly gained through the means of a questionnaire. In addition to gender and age, the questionnaire is composed of a total number of ten questions which are divided into two sections. In the first section, students are asked about their attitudes toward research and research methodology course. The second section investigates their teachers' research identity and the research methodology course. The questions are varied between a Likert Scale, multiple choice and open ended questions. Out of ninety questionnaires, seventy eight are answered.

### **2.4. Description of the Interview**

Since the independent variable that has been studied in this study concerns teachers, that is teacher's researcher identity, it is of a paramount importance to carry on an in-depth interview with them. To the three teachers who accepted to be interviewed, eighteen questions were asked. The questions were divided into four sections to give the respondents a clear idea of how to organise their ideas. The first section was devoted to the teachers' personal information and it contains four questions. The teachers' potential for conducting research was the second element in the interview and contains five questions. In the third section, teachers were asked four questions about how they manage their teaching and research roles at the university. The last part of the interview, which consisted of five questions, was about the teachers' attitudes toward research methodology course.

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<sup>2</sup> An administrative Group includes approximately 30 students



### 3. Analysis of the Data

#### 3.1 Analysis of the Questionnaire

##### A. Students' Personal Information

**Table (1): Students' Gender and Age**

Gender	Male	Female		
N	19	59		
%	24.35	75.65		
Age	Between [20-23]	Between [23-26]	Between [26-29]	More than 30
N	59	15	3	1
%	75.65	19.23	3.84	1.28

<sup>3</sup>

For a clearer description of the target population of this study, the participants were also asked to mention their gender and age. As it is shown in the previous table, the majority are females, a typical feature of the department of English, university of Batna 2. As the table also shows, the age of third year students chosen for this sample ranges between twenty and thirty. However most of them (75.65%) are under twenty five with the exception of one participant whose age is fifty four.

##### B. Students' Attitudes toward Research and Research Methodology Course

<sup>3</sup>**N.B.** n = number , % = percentage

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**Table (2): Students' Attitudes toward Research**

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	08	10.25	20	25.64	20	25.64	08	10.25	22	28.20
2	09	11.53	10	12.82	19	24.35	18	23.07	24	30.76
3	07	08.97	12	15.38	16	20.51	20	25.64	23	29.48
4	09	11.53	12	15.38	13	16.66	18	23.07	26	33.33
5	08	10.25	14	17.94	15	19.23	13	16.66	28	35.89
6	14	17.94	26	33.33	14	17.94	10	12.82	14	17.94
7	18	23.07	19	24.35	18	23.07	11	14.10	12	15.38
8	19	24.35	20	25.64	16	20.51	10	12.82	13	16.66
9	18	23.07	13	16.66	15	19.23	15	19.23	17	21.79
10	20	25.64	18	23.07	12	15.38	06	07.69	22	28.20

Statements from one to five indicate positive attitudes toward research and as the above table shows students do agree and even strongly agree that research is interesting, valuable, and useful for their field of study. However, students do believe that research has nothing to do with daily life activities (33.33% disagree with the fact that research is useful in daily life). Statements from seven to ten indicate negative attitudes toward research and the results show that the students do not think that research as such is stressful, complicated, or difficult. But they do believe that the research methodology course will not contribute to their personal life (28.20% strongly agree that the research methodology course does not apply to personal life).

**Table (3): Students' Satisfaction with Time Allotted for RM Course**

Answers	Yes	No
N	33	45
%	42.30	57.70

As the above table shows, students are not really satisfied with the time allotted for the research methodology course, that is one hour and a half per week.

**Table 4: Research Methodology Teachers' Way of Teaching According to Students**

Answers	Teacher Centred	Learner Centred
N	51	27
%	65.38	34.62

**Table 5 Nature of the RM Lectures**

Answers	Theoretical (based on lecturing)	Practical (based on activities)	Both theoretical and practical
N	42	08	28
%	53.86	10.25	35.89

Tables 4 and 5 reveal that research methodology teaching at the department of English is mainly teacher based (65.38%) and the content of this course is mainly theoretical and based on lecturing (53.86). Students' answers of the fifth open ended question suggest the following points to ameliorate the teaching of this course. According to most of the students (90%), lectures should be based on practice and interactive activities; the time of the course should be extended; technology devices like data show should be used; group work should be adopted as a method of interactive teaching; authentic research projects should be introduced to students and analysed according to what has been explained during the theoretical lectures and the teachers' way of teaching should be motivating.

### **C. Teachers' Research Identity and the Research Methodology Course**

Analysis of the open ended questions 2 and 3 of this section revealed the following results. Students have almost no idea of the research area of their teachers with the exception of two students who mentioned that their teachers are searching the psychological variable of the teacher-learner relationship and communication and the four language skills. Moreover, students almost have never been given any examples from the field of the study of their teachers to illustrate for example how to write a research problem, develop a hypothesis or design a questionnaire etc.

**Table (6): Students' Research Activity**

Answers	Yes	No
N	65	13
%	83.33	16.67

**Table (7): Students' Views on their Teachers' Contribution in their Research Projects**

Answers	Yes	No
N	30	48
%	38.47	61.53

**Table (8): Teachers' Role in Conducting Research**

Answers	Classroom Workshops	Email	Office Meetings	None
N	21	15	02	40
%	26.92	19.23	02.57	51.28

According to the above tables (6, 7, and 8), the majority of teachers (83.33%) make research activity a requirement for their students. However, students reported that their teachers do not help in the process of conducting their projects and even though they do assist their students in realizing their projects, the only means they use is the classroom workshops that we believe do not really yield good results as the number of students is really big and the time of the pedagogic session is just one hour and a half. Using Emails or office meetings to further help the students get better research knowledge and skills is not among their academic conduct.

### **3.2 Analysis of the Teachers' Interview**

#### **A. Personal Information**

The teachers who were interviewed are in charge of teaching research methodology to undergraduate third year EFL students at the department of English at Batna 2 University. They were two males and one female. One male teacher [A] has got his PhD degree after 20 years of teaching at the university and the other male teacher [B] has 6 years of teaching and he is still preparing for his PhD degree. The female teacher [C] has 10 years of teaching experience and she has submitted her PhD thesis and waiting for her viva voce. The teacher with the longest teaching experience has the same number of years teaching research methodology. The other male teacher has only 2 years of research methodology teaching experience. From 2011 till 2019, the female teacher has not taught research methodology regularly; that is, one year she teaches and the next year she does not. Hence we can say that she has 5 years of RM teaching.

#### **B. Teachers' Potential for Conducting Research**

Teachers view themselves as academics differently. Teacher [A] believes that he is very motivated to develop his professional identity in spite of all restrictions. He strived to get his PhD degree and he is also a member of the URNOP research laboratory (L'Unité de Recherche en Neurosciences Cognitives- Orthophonie -

Phoniatric). Moreover, he is very active in organizing many scientific events as conferences and study days. Teacher [C] has also emphasized that she is active as an academic and willing to reach higher degrees for her self-esteem and academic identity formation. Restricted by completing her PhD thesis she has just participated three times in national and international conferences but she still has not organized any scientific activity. On the contrary, teacher [B] admitted that he is doing his best just to keep himself linked to the academic community. For him completing a PhD degree has to do with raising the salary, being recognized by people and has nothing to do with developing himself academically.

### **C. Teaching and Research Roles**

The tasks of teaching and researching are viewed by the three teachers as difficult to manage. Hence, all of them consider teaching as primary for it is at the end of the day an administrative obligation. This also explains the delay in submitting their PhD theses (teacher [A] after 20 years, teacher [B] is in his fourth year and he has not submitted yet, and teacher [C] has submitted after 6 years). Of the three teachers, only teacher [C] sees a strong link between teaching and researching and she says that they complete each other. The evidence that she is working on developing her teaching through her research is that she undertook her PhD research project on developing the teaching of a creative writing course that she herself used to teach. For the other teachers, their PhD project topics have nothing to do with their teaching subjects.

### **D. Teachers' Attitudes toward the Research Methodology Course**

For all interviewed teachers, the research methodology course was their own choice to teach. However, they find it difficult to teach for the following reasons. Teacher [A] believes that the crowded classes hinder better teaching of this course. For teacher [B] the scientific nature of the course makes it hard to explain and understand. The lack of audiovisual materials, such as data shows, was another obstacle teacher [C] faces while teaching this course. She also believes that one hour and a half can never be sufficient to teach the theoretical content and do the practical activities. Successful teaching of this course also depends to a great extent on students' readiness to learn. For both teachers [A] and [C], students are curious to learn and eager to develop their research skills. However, teacher [B] holds another view. That is; students are reluctant to learn this module. Though all the three teachers approve that they share with their students their research experiences by, for example, giving examples from their current research projects, a majority of the students answer that they know nothing about their teachers' project topics. Nonetheless, by assigning the research projects to their students by the end of the second semester of the academic year, teachers could find other ways to share with them some of the aspects of their research identity. Through emails, by inviting

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delegates of each group to the teacher's office, and through classroom workshops, all teachers tried their best to help students conduct their projects and at the same time transfer other research skills that classroom time and course content do not allow sharing.

### **5. Results, Suggestions for Development, and Conclusion**

Investigating teachers' researcher-identity and students' attitudes toward the research methodology subject in this study reveals many results. As far as students are concerned, research and research methodology subjects are interesting, valuable and useful; and they do believe that more time should be devoted to this subject. However, students do regret the way this course is taught; it is based on teacher lecturing. They also criticised the fact that their research methodology teachers do not share with them their research experiences and focus only on presenting the content of this course. Moreover, the students complained about their end term projects which are considered the last assessment on the basis of which they are graded in this subject. For most of them, applying all the theoretical knowledge in conducting their projects is really difficult to achieve especially that they have had no practice before this activity, and they find almost no assistance from the part of their teachers who rarely get in touch with them via few classroom workshops or emails.

As far as teachers are concerned, though all of them are aware of the critical importance of developing a researcher-identity at higher education, research per se is not the priority of all. Teaching occupies most of their time and only teacher A manages time to sharpen his research skills by being active in a research laboratory and organising and participating in scientific events. Even teacher C shows motivation to go through the journey of developing her researcher- identity after she defends her PhD thesis and she strongly believes that only through research she can develop and ameliorate her teaching. Considering teachers' attitudes toward research and research methodology subject, the context (including class size, subject timing, students inner-motivation, the scientific nature of the subject, etc.) of teaching this course is in itself a big hindrance to its successful teaching; and it is a hindrance to its assessment that, as it is mentioned above, done through assigning students project works. The second term is stressful to all teachers including research methodology teachers because of the many pedagogical activities they have to fulfil by this time, such as supervising and being a member of many master degree dissertation defence sessions and at the same time invigilating exams and correcting exam papers etc. Indeed, the academic identity seems often problematic for lecturers as they juggle between expectations, roles and employment conditions (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004).

The findings of this research provide insights for areas of possible development. We recommend the following points:

1. The content of research methodology subject should not be presented only theoretically and a lot of practice and engaging activities are required;
2. The time of the course should be extended to at least two sessions per week;

3. Audio-visual aids such as data shows should be used to facilitate students' learning;
4. Authentic research projects like research proposals, research papers, and dissertations should be introduced and analysed by students according to their theoretical knowledge of research;
5. Teachers of the research methodology subject should share with their students their own research experiences to raise their motivation and interest for this subject;
6. Inviting students to attend scientific events of the university with their teachers and hold discussions on the topics tackled would further engage students in the field of research and show to them how research is important for their teachers and hence for them;
7. Teachers are also recommended to assist their students through the steps of the research process through workshops, office meetings, emails and other possible means to maximize the students' ability to feel connected with the course and to guarantee better results and high quality projects;
8. Teachers should go through specialised professional training on research methodology teaching to keep track with innovative teaching and learning developments.

The importance of the role of the teacher in the classroom cannot be denied but at higher education since the focus is shifted to students and most of the curricula developers call for students centred learning and autonomous learning, it is thought that teachers play a small role in the process of learning that is being just a guide. Hence, through this study in which the teachers' researcher identity and its impact on EFL students' attitudes toward the research methodology course is critically examined, it is aimed at finding about who the teachers of this course are, what they do to develop their researcher-identity for it is of a paramount importance in developing their students' positive attitudes toward the course and research in general. As it has been highlighted through this study, the more the teachers are engaged with research, discuss research inside the classroom, and assist their students in the process of conducting research, the more the students are motivated to learn about research; the better research skills they acquire, and the more they are willing to present competitive and high quality research projects.

**Appendices**

**Students' Questionnaire**

**EFL Students' Attitudes toward Research Methodology Course**

Dear student,

This questionnaire is designed to investigate your attitudes toward research, in general, and the research methodology course learned during your degree program in particular. It also aims to find out how much your teachers' research experience and research skills influence and form these attitudes. The answers provided by you are going to be treated confidentially. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

***Personal Information***

**Gender:**        Male                   Female

**Age:**

***Section One: Students' attitudes toward Research and research methodology course***

Q1. The following statements refer to some aspects of educational research. Please answer all the questions sincerely.

**Circle one of the numbers opposite each of the statements that follow.**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I enjoy research	1	2	5	6	7
2. Research is interesting	1	2	5	6	7
3. Research is very valuable	1	2	5	6	7
4. The skills I have acquired in research will be helpful to my field of study	1	2	5	6	7
5. Research should be taught to all students	1	2	5	6	7
6. I use research in my daily life	1	2	5	6	7
7. Research makes me anxious	1	2	5	6	7
8. I find it difficult to understand the concepts of research	1	2	5	6	7
9. Research is a complicated subject	1	2	5	6	7
10. The research methodology course does not apply to my personal life	1	2	5	6	7

**Q2:** Are you satisfied with the time allotted for the research methodology course?    Yes  no

**Q 3:** How do you see your teacher way of teaching?

Teacher centered

Learner centered

**Q 4:** Are the lectures



- Theoretical (based on lecturing)
- Practical (based on activities)
- Both Theoretical and Practical

**Q 5:** What do you suggest to develop the teaching and learning of this course?

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**Section Tow: Teachers' Research Identity and the Research Methodology Course**

**Q1.** Do you know what research area your teacher of research methodology is interested in?

.....

.....

**Q2.** Does he/ she give you examples from one of his/ her research projects to explain difficult points in a lecture?

.....

.....

**Q3.** Are you asked to conduct any research? Yes  No

**Q4.** If yes, does the teacher help you in your project? Yes  No

**Q5.** How does the teacher help you?

Classroom Workshops  Emails  Informal meetings  None of these

**Teachers' Interview**

Dear Teacher,

This interview is conducted to investigate the influence of the research methodology teachers' academic identity on students' attitudes toward research, in general, and research methodology course, in particular. It also aims to find out how much your research experience and research skills influence and shape these attitudes. The answers provided by you are going to be treated confidentially. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

**I. Personal Information**

1. **Gender** male  female
2. **Degree:** Magistère  PhD
3. **Years of teaching experience (...)**
4. **Years of teaching R M experience (...)**

**II. Teachers' Potential For Conducting Research**

1. How do you view yourself as an academic?
2. Do you belong to any research community/ laboratory? What is it?
3. What made you decide to start the doctoral study?
4. How often do you participate in conferences/study days, attend PhD viva voce?

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5. Have you organized any scientific event?

### III. Teaching and Research Roles

1. Which do you consider as primary activity, teaching or researching?
2. How do you see research and teaching fit into your academic career?
3. Does your doctoral research project have anything to do with developing your teaching?
4. Do you share with your students your research experiences?

### IV. Teachers' Attitudes toward the Research Methodology Course

1. Is teaching research methodology your own choice or is it imposed on you?
2. What makes the course difficult to teach?
3. Have you ever tried to change the method of your teaching?
4. Do the students seem curious to learn the content of this course?
5. In which way do you help your students carry on their research projects?

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