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## Exploring the Impact of Workshops and a Mini-Project in Student Teachers Becoming Qualitative Researchers

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## Exploring the Impact of Workshops and a Mini-Project in Student Teachers Becoming Qualitative Researchers

### Abstract

Drawing on Vygotsky's "space framework" (Harré, 1984; Mostofo & Zambo, 2015), this article reports the findings of our action research project that examined student teachers' beliefs and behavior changes while completing a qualitative research project. Our research question was, "to what extent do student teachers change their beliefs and behaviors about qualitative research (QR) after participating in a two-workshop series of qualitative designs in language classrooms and doing a mini-project?" The participants of this study were eight student teachers at an Indonesian university, and the research data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The study's findings show that student teachers changed their beliefs and practices about QR because they were shown how to do QR by an experienced professional qualitative researcher and conducted a mini-project. In addition, the workshops and the mini-project inspired and encouraged them to become qualitative researchers in TESOL and increased their research literacy such as how to find a research area and setting research goals.

### Keywords

action research, students' beliefs about qualitative research, Vygotsky space framework

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## Exploring the Impact of Workshops and a Mini-Project in Student Teachers Becoming Qualitative Researchers

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Drawing on Vygotsky's "space framework" (Harré, 1984; Mostofo & Zambo, 2015), this article reports the findings of our action research project that examined student teachers' beliefs and behavior changes while completing a qualitative research project. Our research question was, "to what extent do student teachers change their beliefs and behaviors about qualitative research (QR) after participating in a two-workshop series of qualitative designs in language classrooms and doing a mini-project?" The participants of this study were eight student teachers at an Indonesian university, and the research data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The study's findings show that student teachers changed their beliefs and practices about QR because they were shown how to do QR by an experienced professional qualitative researcher and conducted a mini-project. In addition, the workshops and the mini-project inspired and encouraged them to become qualitative researchers in TESOL and increased their research literacy such as how to find a research area and setting research goals.

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Research competence in teacher education is the critical component in constructing a student teacher's identity as a researcher. A student-teacher is considered a learner who actively constructs his or her views of research and brings to the teacher education program prior knowledge and beliefs about research. However, few studies explore how student teachers construct their identities as researchers in a way that will prepare them to be qualified educators (Widodo, 2016a). Recently, Ryan et al. (2017) indicated that teachers who do research would be innovative in their teaching practices. Additionally, teachers should change their practices from passive users of educational and scientific theories to teacher-researchers (e.g., action researchers and narrative inquirers) and reflective practitioners (e.g., making sense of their teaching practice). They also should be innovative teachers who might develop their professional identities by researching. Widodo et al. (2017, p. 11) wrote about how important it is for ELT teachers to be creative and innovative:

Teacher innovation and creativity in recent ELT practice are urgently needed. This means that the ideas of innovation and creativity have to do with putting theory into practice and trying out different theories to see which one works best in a certain ELT setting.

By doing teacher research or practitioner research, a form of investigation or study from the teacher's perspective in facilitating professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers, promoting change and reform in their classroom settings, and giving voice to teachers' personal and professional knowledge, teachers can examine what kinds of theories can and cannot be put into useful practice in their classrooms.

We base our research on the belief that teachers "make up their minds about how to change their practices in light of their informed, practical deliberations" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 219). Another way to look at teacher research is to look at the quality of life in classrooms and how teachers and students work together to learn about classroom practice (see Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Moos and David (1981) talked about studies of school life that examined task orientation, such as how important it is to complete activities and how much students compete, and classroom order, specifically how clear the rules are, how the teacher keeps control, and how punishment works.

With this in mind, "innovative instructors" are teachers who are constantly growing in their knowledge, experience, values, and skills to study for their classes. Xu (2013) further showed that academic proficiency, as evidenced by research interests and publications, institutional and peer support within the school, and professional development, may be linked to the formation of teachers' identities as researchers. Teachers begin as amateurs and work their way up to becoming specialists in a subject or field (Al-Ahdal, 2014).

To promote teachers becoming researchers requires joint efforts from university administrators, mentors, teacher educators, and teachers themselves. Thus, our study aimed to prepare student teachers to become practitioner-researchers. Preparing student teachers' research experiences can change language teachers' professional identities. In other words, the research experiences of the student teachers might influence the teacher identity formation process. This paper explores eight student teachers negotiating their identities as practitioner-researchers while engaging in different research tasks mentored by an experienced qualitative researcher.

During the last fifteen years, we observed that few student teachers preferred qualitative research as their final research project to complete their undergraduate program in the Department of English Education. This department is under the Faculty of Teacher Education, which prepares student teachers to become professional English teachers. Designing and conducting qualitative research for the first time can be challenging for student teachers. Firstly, student teachers might question the "complexity" of qualitative research – researchers act as the vital instruments to collect data by examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants. They must review all the data, understand it, and organize it into categories or themes relevant to the aims of the research. Secondly, student teachers need to practice a step-by-step procedure for analyzing qualitative data. The researchers prepare and organize their data - print out the transcript, gather notes, documents; and other materials; code the data; and label it by using critical words or highlighted phrases. They review and explore the data to create initial codes, then review those codes and revise or combine them into themes. They coherently present themes and findings. Third, a lack of disciplinary knowledge is another challenge that student teachers must overcome while starting their careers (Creswell, 2013; Hatch, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Wang, 2013). Inexperienced writers, for example, face problems when they do not know enough about a research topic (Hayes & Flower, 1987), hence learning what there is to know about a subject or issue of interest to a researcher is crucial before beginning their research.

Writing qualitative research is an interpretive process (Denzin, 1994) and student teachers who want to be teachers need to know that planning QR or doing research for a bachelor's thesis can be both rewarding and challenging. The value of doing a QR research project for bachelor's thesis writing is that student teachers will learn about the fundamental

competencies in QR (i.e., knowledge of qualitative research, its philosophy of knowledge, tools, and techniques, and traditions) (Polkinghorne, 2010).

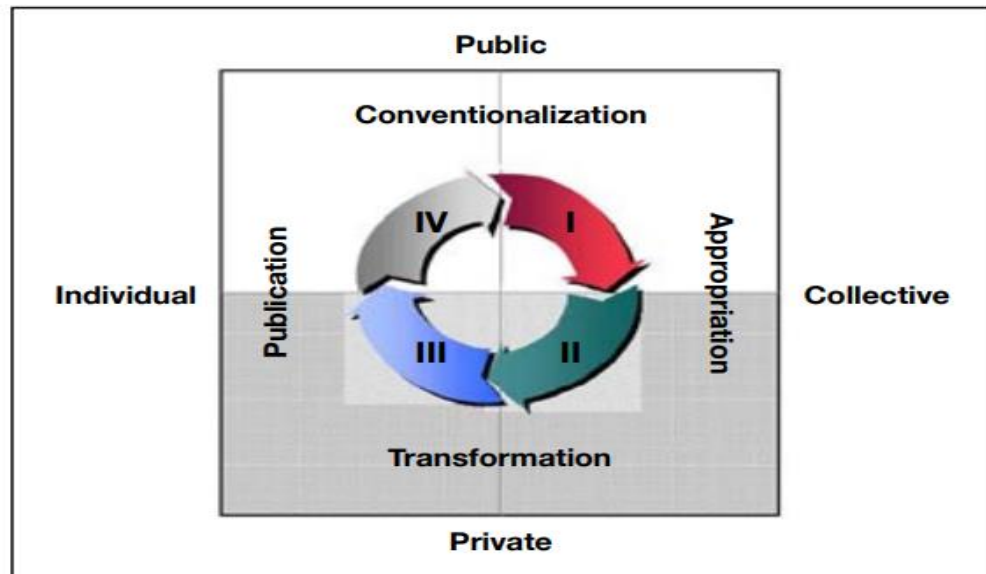
We examined student teachers' experiences when designing and conducting qualitative research (QR) and found that students struggle with the following issues: the first thing that student teachers had to do was figure out how to find patterns, codes, and themes in the data (Castellani & Castellani, 2003). Second, the student teachers need to do a systematic data analysis. Third, student teachers should gain an understanding of topical knowledge in their area, which refers to the resources that the student teacher will use to communicate effectively within a discourse community when presenting qualitative findings (cf. Uzun, 2017).

In our experience, when student teachers wrote out their research topics, titles, and research approaches, they all sounded very similar to one another. For example, the student teachers commonly used the title "The effect of..." "Teaching...by using..." or "The effectiveness of ...". They utilized a positivist quantitative research approach to design their research project. Nevertheless, a few had experience with educational qualitative research approaches, such as classroom action research and case study. Four main factors influenced the similarity of the student teachers' research projects. These include the predominance of a quantitative paradigm of educational research among lecturers, a lack of supervisors' knowledge dealing with qualitative approaches, lack of discussions about key issues in undertaking a qualitative research project for bachelor thesis writing between lecturers and students, and a scarcity of workshops or seminars that might allow them to improve their understanding of qualitative research designs in English language teaching research.

The study of teachers' identity construction when conducting qualitative research has been extensively examined in different contexts (e.g., Meherali et al., 2017; Stelma & Fay, 2014; Watt, 2007). However, only a few studies have used an action research study that highlights student teachers' experience in conducting QR, particularly in an Indonesian EFL context. To fill this gap, informed by Vygotsky's framework (see theoretical foundation), the present study examines the changes of student teachers' beliefs and behavior about qualitative research conducted at a university in West Java, Indonesia. Our purpose in this study was not to compare or assess whether quantitative and qualitative design were better, but to propose new designs (i.e., qualitative designs) that have never been introduced previously in this department and see how student teachers responded to them. The research question that guides this study is: to what extent do student teachers change their beliefs and behavior about Qualitative Research (QR) after participating in a two workshop series of qualitative research designs in language classrooms and doing a mini-project?

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Our research considers the Vygotsky space framework as a means to investigate how student teachers' beliefs about QR paradigms in English Language Teacher Education can change. Our recent mini-project research focuses on how student teachers' beliefs about QR paradigms in English language teacher education through individual internalization and individual transformation in a contextual practice occur (see Table 1). With this in mind, this framework helped us understand how students' beliefs and behavior changes were both individually and socially constructed (Gallucci et al., 2010; Mostofo & Zambo, 2015; Peck et al., 2009) in the sociocultural context (e.g., among student teachers, lecturers, and within the Department of English Education). The Vygotsky space framework symbolizes individual and collective learning in terms of changing relations between two contextual parameters of social interaction (see Figure 1 below based on Harré, 1984 and McVee et al., 2005). Gallucci (2007) sums up the following figure as follows:



**Figure 1**

*The Vygotsky space framework* (Gallucci et al., 2010, p. 926)

The first of these [phases] distinguishes between individual and collective learning activities; the second distinguishes public and private displays of learning. Interactions between these dimensions are conceptualized as four phases of a process through which cultural practices are internalized by individuals, transformed in the context of individual needs and uses, then externalized (shared) in ways that may be taken up by others. The process is viewed heuristically as cyclical, and evolutionary—in the sense that learning and change operate in a cumulative and transactional way at both individual and collective levels. (p. 7)

The framework in this study was characterized as a student-teacher changing their beliefs and practices about QR due to their social process engagement with an experienced professional qualitative researcher and conducting a mini-project. This is in line with what Gallucci et al. (2010, p. 925) assert: "learning and change is a process that occurs as a result of individuals' internalization and transformation of cultural instruments when they engage in social practice." According to Stetsenko (1999) and John-Steiner and Mahn (1996), cultural instruments include writing schemes, mnemonic technical aids, algebraic symbol systems, artworks, diagrams, maps, drawings, and all sorts of signs. Additionally, Rogoff et al. (1995) suggest that this framework begins with the assumption that learning is situated in daily social contexts and that learning involves changes in participation in activity settings or communities rather than the individual acquisition of abstract concepts separate from interaction and experience. This principle was translated into a conceptual framework by Rom Harré in 1984 and later called the Vygotsky space framework by Gavelek and Raphael in 1996. The framework was amalgamated by Gallucci et al. (2010; see Figure 1) and illustrates how individual development occurs through social practice engagement.

Gallucci (2007) and Gallucci et al. (2010) describe the space framework that has four iterative stages.

1. Individual *appropriation* of particular ways of thinking through interaction with others (Quadrant I-QII)
2. Individual change and taking responsibility for way of thinking in one's own work (QII-QIII)
3. *Publication* of new learning through talk or action (QIII-QIV)
4. Process whereby those public acts become *conventionalized* in the practice of that individual and/or in the work of others (QIV-QI).

In the learning process, the Vygotsky space framework shows four nonlinear learning stages, including appropriation, transformation, publication, and conventionalization (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
*Stages of Learning*

Stage	Description
Appropriation (QI-QII)	Developing new ideas and concepts through social interactions
Transformation (QII-QIII)	Exploring new ideas and concepts through practice
Publication (QIII-QIV)	Making these practices public/being able to demonstrate the practice
Conventionalization (QIV-QI)	Internalization of demonstrated practice that leads to a normalized practice

(McVee et al., 2005)

With this in mind, the framework suggests that changing student teachers' beliefs about QR paradigms might occur through agreed interaction between the student teachers and more experienced members of the university, including faculty members (supervisors) and the head of the English Education Department (see QI-QII). Several studies (Danielson, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Marshall, 2013) have shown how important it is for experienced and expert researchers, such as faculty members or supervisors, to talk with less experienced (novice) researchers.

## Methods

### Research Design

The research question that guided our study was: to what extent do student teachers change their beliefs and behaviors about qualitative research (QR) after participating in a two-workshop series of qualitative designs in language classrooms and doing a mini-project? Action research (AR) was adopted in this study to address this question. Burns (2010) contends that the purpose of AR is "to intervene deliberately in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice" (p. 2). In other words, the adoption of AR was to cope with particular problems (student teachers' beliefs in doing qualitative educational research) faced by student teachers by engaging them in a workshop

series of qualitative research in TESOL and doing a mini-project (Burns, 2005; Cirocki & Widodo, 2019).

All of the research participants were invited to be involved in seven phases of interventions (a, b, c, d, e, f and g), as seen in the Stage 2 in Table 2. These phases aimed to provide student teachers with important components related to QR:

- introducing and demonstrating different QR designs
- engaging them in designing and conducting QR in TESOL
- facilitating them to finish their BA research project.

"Though AR is conceived as operating in cycles by Burns (2010), in order to create a practical procedure for teachers, we have designed AR in stages" (Dikilitaş & Griffiths, 2017, p. 19). We adopted this stage approach in our AR study because it provided us with practical ways of conducting AR. It helped us to systematize activities in planning, action (interventions), observation, and interpretation phases. More importantly, it has the interpretation stage (Stage 4) which became significant in our study because the result of this study would be proposed for a policy recommendation in our department. Following the AR framework by Dikilitaş and Griffiths (2017), the stages of AR in the present study are drawn in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
*Stages of AR*

Stages		Activities
<b>Stage 1:</b> <b>Develop a Plan of Action</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discussing and identifying research problems with all of the researchers;</li> <li>• deciding research questions;</li> <li>• discussing and inviting an expert in the field of qualitative research in language education;</li> <li>• discussing and planning the workshop and mini-research project for student teachers;</li> <li>• determining the research paradigms;</li> <li>• reviewing the relevant literature;</li> <li>• discussing and choosing data collection procedures;</li> <li>• discussing and preparing tools for data collection;</li> <li>• obtaining consent and dealing with other ethical procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2:</b>	<b>a. Workshop for both lecturers and student teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introducing the policymaker (Head of English Education Department), lecturers (supervisors) and student</li> </ul>



<p><b>Act to Implement the Plan</b></p>		<p>teachers to the nature of QR in TESOL;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• showcasing six diverse QR designs in TESOL (e.g., critical discourse analysis, case study, narrative inquiry, classroom research, action research, and reflective practice);</li> <li>• engaging student teachers in designing a research topic and writing an abstract in the context of English language education.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>b. Individual idea exploration &amp; Supervising</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitating student teachers in deciding research tentative titles and proposals;</li> <li>• showing and guiding them how to navigate relevant and reputable journal articles through relevant research journal websites;</li> <li>• guiding them in drafting their research rationale, research questions, literature review, and research methodology.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>c. Writing research proposal</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• asking student teachers to write the research proposal based on their interests;</li> <li>• facilitating them in submitting the research proposal to the assigned supervisors;</li> <li>• facilitating them in conducting a research proposal seminar.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>d. Reflection and conducting research</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helping student teachers reflect on and revise their research proposal which had been presented;</li> <li>• asking them to rework the revised research proposal;</li> <li>• engaging them in conducting the research (e.g., collecting data).</li> </ul>
	<p><b>e. Research report</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guiding student teachers in analyzing and interpreting data;</li> <li>• facilitating them how to present research findings;</li> <li>• asking them to write up the whole BA thesis.</li> </ul>

	<b>f. Collecting data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inviting student teachers to complete a questionnaire;</li> <li>• asking them to participate in an unstructured interview.</li> </ul>
	<b>g. Sorting the data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sorting the data from the questionnaire and interview that were relevant to the focus of research.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3:</b> <b>Observe the effects of action in the context</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• carrying out analysis procedures by coding all collected data and identifying themes qualitatively.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4:</b> <b>Interpret the results</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• answering the research questions with the evidence from the data;</li> <li>• drawing out implications;</li> <li>• considering the limitations of the study;</li> <li>• looking into the future by providing a future research agenda that has not been investigated yet in this study.</li> </ul>

The adoption of AR in this study is also in line with Kemmis et al.'s (2014, p. 2) argument that AR was aimed at "changing people's practice, their understanding of their practices, and the conditions under which their practices are carried out" (p. 51). In line with this, the AR procedures used in this study were designed to change the student teachers' beliefs about QR after having workshops for both lecturers and student teachers and completing the mini-project, exploring individual ideas on QR and supervising, writing a research proposal, reflecting and conducting research, and reporting the findings (as illustrated in Table 2). In AR, evaluating the outcome (progress) of the research can be carried out and measured in different ways (e.g., improved test scores, positive attitudes obtained from qualitative data, such as questionnaires or interviews) (Burns, 2005). The progress of our action research was evaluated using qualitative data (interviews and questionnaires) to examine student teachers' changes in their beliefs and behavior in QR in ELT.

**Roles of Researchers**

Two main reasons motivated all of the authors to conduct this study. First of all, the outcome of this study could provide a policy recommendation that QR be incorporated into this department as an independent course. Most student teachers did their final research project ten years ago with a quantitative focus. We (the first, third, and fourth authors) want to change this and help other student teachers (not just the people who took part in the study) learn how to do qualitative research. Our goal was to help students learn how to use QR in research, use QR in their bachelor's theses, and become practitioner-researchers focusing on QR in ELT. For example, they may not merely design and conduct intervention studies in school contexts but also examine particular English-language learners' cases, narratives, or teachers' biographies.

Secondly, there were very few studies examining an action research study that aimed to change student teachers' beliefs and behavior about QR in the context of TESOL, particularly

in Indonesia. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to fill that gap in the literature. In this study, the first author acted as the participants' supervisor. The fourth author was a policymaker who would like to see innovation and creativity improved in QR research in ELT. Our goal was not to find a better research design for ELT, but rather, to introduce new designs to our department because the previous research course, namely "Research on ELT," only introduced quantitative designs (e.g., experimental studies) to student teachers who were restricted to classroom settings.

All the participants were engaged with seven main activities: (1) engaging the participants in the workshop on six diverse QR designs in TESOL (e.g., critical discourse analysis, case study, narrative inquiry, classroom research, action research, and reflective practice); (2) engaging them in individual idea exploration and supervising; (3) facilitating them in writing research proposal; (4) engaging them in reflection and conducting research; (5) asking them to report research; (6) inviting them to complete questionnaire and participate in interview; and (7) sorting the collected data from questionnaire and interviews. Having finished the mini-project, the second and third authors collected the data from the participants. The first author designed the instruments used for collecting the data (questionnaires and interview questions). All of the authors collaboratively analyzed the data and wrote the research report. The data given in the findings was member-checked by the participants to ensure the data's reliability (Cohen et al., 2017). Prior to finalizing and presenting the findings, all participants received an email summarizing all the collected data. This procedure was designed to allow them to double-check the accuracy of the contents (findings). In other words, this technique assisted authors in accurately portraying and reporting the findings.

### **Participants and Research Context**

Our current study included all members of the English Education Department at the university for two reasons: (1) easy access, in which the first author served as the participants' supervisor, and (2) the fourth author is a policymaker (Head of the Department of English Education) who wishes to change the innovation and creativity in conducting QR research on ELT. This study was conducted for seven months, from October 2015 until May 2016. Out of twenty-six undergraduate students writing a BA thesis in English language education, eight of them voluntarily agreed to participate in this study. The participants' ages ranged from 19 to 21 and their English language level was intermediate. For ethical purposes, pseudonyms were used in this article.

There is no relevant in-country ethics review that can review the research within Indonesia. "Indonesian research context does not require ethical clearance for research to protect human subjects involved in the conduct of research" (Adhariani et al., 2019, p. 1155). However, we used the following procedures to protect our participants' rights: before the study commenced, the authors convened a meeting with all research participants detailing an informed consent form and distributed informed consent form sheets. We asked them to read through and sign off the form to ensure that all of the data would be kept confidential and be used for publication purposes. They agreed to sign the consent form as a legal document of their participation in the study. They also reserved the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were informed how both their confidentiality and privacy were protected within the consent form. There were no negative consequences for those who did not volunteer, and fortunately, none of them withdrew from the study.

## Procedures

We examined the changes in student teachers' beliefs and behavior in conducting QR in TESOL contexts. In this action research study, all student teachers and lecturers (supervisors) were invited to attend a two-day workshop (see Table 5 in the Appendix), lasting eight hours per day, which was mentored by an experienced and renowned qualitative research scholar. The workshop covered many qualitative research designs in language classrooms, particularly in English classrooms. All participants in this program, including lecturers (supervisors) in the Department of English Language Education, were trained on how to be innovative and creative researchers, focusing on six designs of qualitative research (critical discourse analysis, case study, narrative inquiry, classroom research, action research, and reflective practice), and were encouraged to go beyond their comfort zone, recognizing that research is not limited to the classroom context.

Action research (AR) refers to "taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring your teaching contexts" for making enhancements in practice (Burns, 2010, p. 2). Farrell (2012, 2013) contends that reflective practice is a methodical process that teachers use to look at what they've done in their classrooms (e.g., reflective journals, video-based reflection) and make changes to their instruction. The research could be conducted in broader, more varied contexts, such as at home, in a virtual environment, etc.

Examining self-experience relates to one type of QR, narrative inquiry, which aims to facilitate the researchers' telling their stories by writing personal narratives, then analyzing these written texts and publishing the findings (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). After each workshop, they were allowed to choose their research topic. The most prominent part of the program was that they were supervised directly by a mentor through a mini-project. It was the goal of this activity to make people think outside the box, be creative with their research projects, and link QR theory or conceptual ideas to ELT research practices. The workshop also aimed to provide a dialogue for student teachers; for example, there were negotiated activities in the workshop between the invited speaker and the student teachers, so that the participants could make their own choices as to what research they wanted to pursue for their final BA project – the student teachers decided "what to explore" and "what to change" in conducting their qualitative research project.

## Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected using questionnaires and unstructured interviews to examine student teachers' changes in beliefs and behavior regarding QR in ELT. The questionnaires were distributed online in order to ease access to comprehensive data. Both questionnaires and interviews were carried out to gather data on the student responses to the workshop and mini-project (seen in Table 2). The questionnaires consisted of open-ended questions to obtain student teachers' experiences when deciding their research topic in the workshop and how they were engaged in conducting QR for their final BA project. They were given a day to complete the questionnaires so that they were able to explore and elaborate on their experiences during and after the mentoring program.

To give detailed and in-depth data, an unstructured interview was conducted, which lasted about forty-five minutes to one hour. This interview was conducted in *Bahasa* (Indonesian) and aimed to obtain rich data and lessen language barriers (Tao & Gao, 2017). All interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. All of the data gathered in this study were qualitatively analyzed. There were different phases of data analysis, transcribing spoken data (i.e., interview) and translating the interview from *Bahasa* into

English. The translated version of the data was initially checked by the participants, which aimed to warrant the trustworthiness of the data (Cohen et al., 2017).

Qualitative data garnered from the questionnaires and interviews were then analyzed using thematic content analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify, analyze, and report patterns in this present study. The authors reviewed the collected data, took notes, and began to group the data into classifications. Thematic analysis can be carried out in different ways, such as deductive (theory-driven analysis), inductive ("a bottom-up approach that is driven by what is in the data,") or combining both approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 58). In this study, all the collected data was coded by combining bottom-up (inductive) and top-down (deductive) approaches. Using both approaches, six steps in thematic analysis went back and forth between these phases: familiarizing ourselves with the data, generating initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the first phase, we conducted multiple readings of all the collected data in order to familiarize ourselves with it. In the second phase (generating initial codes), we went through the transcript and marked down phrases (coding) that appeared to be able to answer our research question. Table 3 displays how codes were highlighted. In the phase of searching for themes, all coded data was reviewed in order to see the similarities between codes. At this phase, themes emerged through two approaches: deductive and inductive. The coded data were categorized and interpreted using the Vygotsky space framework that we used (see Table 3) using a deductive or top-down approach. We also applied an inductive approach (bottom-up) by exploring, constructing, and clustering the coded data. The aim of using an inductive approach was to support the richness of the data that could not be covered by the conceptual framework that we adopted. Before we finalized the themes of the research findings, we made a comparison between the bottom-up approach and the top-down approaches that we adopted. At this stage, we compared similarities and differences between the results of data-driven analysis (bottom-up approach) and theory-driven analysis (top-down approach) and related them to the research question, as presented in Table 3. Through this process, the recurring themes (final themes) captured how student teachers' beliefs and behavior changes in QR were both individually and socially constructed through AR.

**Table 3**  
*Sample of Data Analysis*

<b>Deductive approach of thematic analysis (theory-driven analysis result)</b>				
Data source	Example of the data	Initial codes	Classification and theorization	Emergent themes
Unstructured interview (Lula)	<i>The plenary speaker changed and opened audiences' thoughts about QR. He just brought us to think globally but act locally, ...</i>	Developing new ideas	The codes seem to demonstrate "appropriation" in the Vygotsky space framework related to participants' beliefs and behavior regarding QR	Individual Internalization and Transformation

Unstructured interview (Lula)	<i>so that we could look for a phenomenon close to our life which could fill the gaps of research topics in Indonesia</i>	Exploring new ideas	The codes seem to demonstrate “transformation” in the Vygotsky space framework related to beliefs and behavior regarding QR	
Unstructured interview (Sarah)	<i>...I changed my design to take lesson planning as my focus because of the primary influence of the workshop.</i>	Exploring new ideas	The codes seem to demonstrate “appropriation” in the Vygotsky space framework related to beliefs and behavior regarding QR	
Unstructured interview (Sarah)	<i>We not only get enlightenment about QR designs,...</i>	Developing new ideas	The codes seem to demonstrate “appropriation” in the Vygotsky space framework related to beliefs and behavior regarding QR	
Unstructured interview (Sarah)	<i>but also practice how to start from title to the research rationale through a mini-project and small group mentoring. Its design is much simpler than a quantitative one. Besides, the previous design (see Table 4) is not rational.</i>	Exploring new ideas	The codes seem to demonstrate “transformation” in the Vygotsky space framework related to beliefs and behavior regarding QR	

Inductive approach of thematic analysis (data-driven analysis result)				
Data source	Example of the data	Initial codes	Classification and theorization	Emergent themes
Unstructured interview (Susan)	<i>After I consulted with my second supervisor, ...</i>	Participant-supervisor discussion	The codes appear to demonstrate an external factor (a supervisor) that affects participants' beliefs and behavior about QR	Roles of Supervisors' Supports
Unstructured interview (Susan)	<i>, he suggested to me that QR is not isolated to school contexts.  He said that I could conduct an action research at home involving my brother in learning English.</i>	Supervisor input		
Unstructured interview (Susan)	<i>Hence, I took this way although previously I felt doubtful that researching at home would be acceptable.</i>	Impact of supervision		

### Beliefs and Behavior Changes Towards QR: Individual Internalization and Transformation

Qualitative data collected from the open-ended questionnaires and interviews indicate individual internalization from the training program. The participants learned the process of thinking about and discussing the new conceptual ideas of QR in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) (QI-QII). Participants developed literacy skills (QII-QIII) through scaffolding offered by an experienced researcher (QII) (e.g., browsing research themes, developing research questions), particularly in QR, which familiarized them with the QR conceptualization and its implementation in TESOL research. This phase brought them to an individual transformation whereby the eight student teachers changed their beliefs and behaviors about QR in English language education and how these beliefs influenced their practices in conducting TESOL research.

To begin with, the eight student teachers shared their beliefs about conducting research before participating in this program. They acknowledged that conducting research should be restricted to the school area. They also thought their research project had to examine the effectiveness of particular teaching methods or instructional media on language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Vignettes 1 displayed student teachers' prior knowledge in accordance with research on ELT.

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### Vignettes 1

*“Before joining this program, what I knew about doing a research was that we had to go to a school, do an experiment related to students’ progress whom we taught. We had to do both pre and post tests to see the progress, just like what our previously seniors did. That’s why what I wanted to investigate before this mentoring program was improving students’ speaking ability through video...” (Lula).*

*“From the [previous] research course, I only understood two things dealing with research – quantitative and qualitative research. And the most common research conducted by English Department students were experimental, action research and correlational research, which more related to quantitative data. My passion was not in quantitative research because it’s too risky to be manipulated with data presented. What I wanted to do was a discourse study to investigate the ideology from international politics, but then I did not know the contribution to English education...” (Norry).*

*“I knew less about research, and what was familiar with was related to the intervention study—like giving treatment using particular teaching methods to improve students’ language skills, then at the end we make statistical analysis. In dealing with qualitative research I did not know a lot about case study, narrative inquiry—I even felt confused between action research and classroom action research regarding their differences and similarities...” (Susan).*

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However, the student teachers’ changes were identified after they participated in this program. All participants gained their understanding of QR from diverse theories (e.g., critical discourse analysis, case study, narrative inquiry, classroom research, action research, and reflective practice). Their engagement in this program urged them to design qualitative studies in English language education for their final project (QII-QIII). Commenting on the training program, two other students commented:

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### Vignettes 2

*“Dr Handoyo’s presentation really enlightened and changed the research paradigm of all participants coming to the training program. Research does not need to be isolated in a classroom context – rather, it can be focused on particular phenomena around us. Attending this program led me to find my passion for my research project” (Norry).*

*“The plenary speaker changed and opened audiences’ thoughts. He brought us to think globally but act locally, so that we could look for a phenomenon close to our life...” (Lula).*

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This finding reflected a positive belief in this program because there was a wide range of research topics, providing student teachers with opportunities to explore their research projects that could support and strengthen their research competencies and horizons. More importantly, the training program engaged them to go beyond their comfort zone, which met their needs. This training program facilitated and led students to reconstruct their knowledge of QR in language learning, and the changes in the eight student teachers’ beliefs and behavior toward QR can be seen in Table 4. The process of how the student teachers transformed their designs is summarized in the following vignettes.



**Table 4. Student Teachers' Changes in Practice about their Research Project**

Participant (Pseudonym)	Research topic/ title before workshop	Research design before workshop	Changes of research topic/ title after workshop	Research Context/ Setting	Changes of research design after workshop
Susan	The Influence of English Songs on Students' Vocabulary Mastery	Experimental study	Learning Vocabulary through Cartoon Movies	Home	Action Research
Sarah	The Impact of Using Total Physical Response on Young Learner's Listening Ability	Experimental study	Investigating How English Pre-Service Teacher Prepares the Lesson Plan	school	Narrative Case Study
Sri	Investigating the Influence of Teaching Methodology in TESOL	Experimental study	Students' Perceptions of the Ways Teachers Motivate Students in an English Classroom	school	Classroom Research
Nadia	The Effectiveness of Peer Editing in Teaching Writing		The Roles of Peer Feedback in Writing the Research Proposal		
Norry	Mood and Modality Analysis in High School Debating Competition	Experimental study	Interpersonal Relation Analysis among Debaters in World Schools Debating Championships (WSDC)	school virtual setting/ You Tube	Case Study
Linda	Investigating the Influence of Teaching Methodology in ELT	Content analysis	Parental Involvement in Encouraging a Learner to Learn English		Discourse Study
Lula	The Use of Video to Enhance Students' Speaking Ability		Investigating Learning Style by Recalling Self Experience Seen from Video Clips	home	Case Study
Lorry	Solving a Problem within a School Context	Experimental study	Beyond Chatting: Self-Regulation on an Undergraduate Student in Learning English through KIK Messenger	self-investigation/ research	Narrative Inquiry

Participant (Pseudonym)	Research topic/ title before workshop	Research design before workshop	Changes of research topic/ title after workshop	Research Context/ Setting	Changes of research design after workshop
		Experimental study		autobiography	Narrative Inquiry
		Not yet decided			

**Vignettes 3**

*“After attending the program by Dr. Handoyo, I see doing research as not rigid, in which we need to always do it in school and give students “treatments” to measure. Actually I do not like teaching at school because of the complexities of the school policies. I am extremely inspired that only one participant may be necessary in some qualitative designs. So I decided to choose AR with my brother as my participant. Why? Because it is accessible, and both of us like watching [television]. This becomes the starting point for me to conduct AR out of the school context. More importantly, I believe this can help make a change to my brother’s vocabulary size” (Susan).*

*“...I changed my design to take lesson planning as my focus because of the primary influence of the workshop. We not only received enlightenment about QR designs, but also practice in how to start from title and the research rationale through a mini-project and small group mentoring. Its design is much simpler than quantitative ones. Besides, my previous design (see Table 4) was not rational” (Sarah).*

*“My first plan to conduct my research project was conducting the intervention study. This study aimed to integrate video as a tool to enhance students’ speaking skill. But then, participating in this workshop helped me to become more open-minded. The workshop demonstrated how to look for current issues in ELT through different journal websites, and the workshop totally changed my mind. I decided narrative inquiry was my choice because I can use stories of my learning experience, such as when I started learning English from elementary through higher education” (Lula).*

When asked about the main advantages of doing educational QR in TESOL (as illustrated in Vignettes 3), our study demonstrated the important role of the mentoring program involving the expert in the field. The mentoring process provided by the expert enabled both faculty members (supervisors) and the policymaker (Head of English Education Department) to discuss together (QI-QII) the different perspectives and practices of QR in TESOL. This negotiated process helped them to think and decide that doing QR is based on what the student teachers would like to investigate (student teachers’ research agenda), rather than a lecturer-directed process (see Table 4).

Although conducting research outside of the school context can be framed under quantitative designs, student teachers seemed to avoid statistical analysis because there were not sufficient courses to support their learning. Additionally, before engaging the student

teachers in this workshop and mini-research project, student teachers were not allowed to conduct research outside of the school context. Thus, participants responded enthusiastically because doing research would be more accessible (e.g., examining discourse studies on an online platform, doing AR with a family member, or narrating self-experiences).

### **Roles of Supervisors' Supports**

Changes in student teachers' beliefs and behavior about QR would not occur without supervisors' support (QI-QII) toward what the student teachers proposed in their final BA project. In other words, this program also brought a great change among supervisors to approve and support students' new topics in QR (see Table 4). The impact of the program encouraged the supervisors to facilitate the student teachers' conducting of their BA research projects based on their interests. All of the participants also felt that their voices were not only heard but also facilitated by their supervisors. Both policymakers (the Head of the English Department) and supervisors were also trained and provided with thorough explanations and practice about various designs of QR on TESOL in the program (see Table 2). This helped to avoid conflicting ideas among supervisors and student teachers in selecting research projects and designs. See the student comments below:

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#### **Vignettes 4**

*"After I have consulted with my second supervisor, he suggested to me that QR is not isolated in school contexts. He even said that I could conduct an action research at home involving my brother in learning English. Hence, I went this way although previously I felt doubtful that researching at home would be acceptable" (Susan).*

*"My supervisor is influential towards my comprehension of QR because his guidance navigates me where to go in dealing with my research project" (Sarah).*

*"I think the mentoring program and the supervision helped me. It made me open minded that issues to investigate in QR can be taken from a phenomenon around us, not just problems at schools. Therefore, it helped me develop the research I conducted" (Linda).*

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These findings also showed that the role of supervisors influenced student teachers' final BA projects. As stated earlier in the methodology section, the purpose of this study was to promote policy recommendations through which QR could be offered as a standalone course in this department. Thus, supervisors (e.g., first, third, and fourth authors) felt enthusiastic about guiding student teachers in designing the research, analyzing the data, and encouraging student teachers' milestones (BA thesis). For instance, all of the student teachers in this study were under the first author's supervision, and four of them (Susan, Sarah, Norry, and Lula) have just completed their BA theses after participating in this program. They were the fastest graduating class in their period. The other two participants, Linda and Lorry, were waiting for the final examination to disseminate their research, launched by the university. The rest of them were still revising their research reports. In other words, the successful implementation of this study was evident and served as the foundation for this department's policy recommendation.

This section has shown that lecturers or supervisors play a vital role in assisting student teachers' final BA project completion. They may encourage student teachers to read and write by guiding them through relevant research journal websites (e.g., <https://www.sciencedirect.com> and <https://www.tandfonline.com>) that helped them construct their BA theses. Supervisors have to also be open-minded toward the development of current

issues and research designs in QR, specifically on English language learning and teaching, because they grow rapidly and dynamically. Both supervisors and policymakers at the institution must consider student teachers' needs, what they want to research, and how to create student teacher-centeredness. Facilitating them in conducting the research could encourage them to carry out research projects based on their interests and passions.

### **Discussion**

Our present study investigated student teachers' beliefs and behavior changes about QR through action research involving eight student teachers in English education at a university in Indonesia. While other intervention studies (e.g., experimental designs) may aim to examine "the relationship between phenomena and test theory," action research aims to solve identified problems in a micro-contextual level (e.g., English language classrooms) or in mezzo-contextual level (e.g., institutional context) (Burns, 2005, p. 61). Dikilitaş and Griffiths (2017) highlight that action research "aims to develop effective ways of teaching, while academic research aims to prove what works well and looks for generalizable results to wider contexts" (p. 6). Additionally, other intervention studies are measured using statistical analysis. In our study, action research aimed to solve the problems faced by student teachers when conducting qualitative research. It showed how both researchers and student teachers could use more conversational spaces when they were talking about and deciding on student teachers' QR projects. In other words, this was not just an evaluative study of the workshops and the mini-research project; it was about how the workshops and projects influenced the student teachers in their projects.

We examined how student teachers were engaged and facilitated in improving their practices when conducting qualitative research in TESOL. Findings of this study indicate that the training program expanded student teachers' conceptions of diverse QR theories. It also helped the students learn more about QR and how it can be used in language learning and teaching. It also made them want to look more closely at certain things in light of the current issues in education, especially in TESOL.

First, the program deepened their views of their research projects and led them to conduct research that was not limited to the school context but could also be conducted in different settings more easily accessed. This practical component can attract interest from novice researchers (Barkhuizen, 2019). Although some projects were in out-of-school contexts, they provided pedagogical implications for the English classroom (see Table 4). It means the program encouraged student teachers to use their imagination as a starting point to conduct research. This evidence concurs with Hayes et al.'s (2017) idea that "imagination is not just a cognitive process that exists within the mind, but the creative energy that links consciousness and its concrete manifestation in the world" (p. 39). For instance, action research can be carried out anywhere: in institutional settings, at homes, and on safaris. Furthermore, we, as researchers, do not need any specific equipment or knowledge because all that is needed is curiosity, creativity, and a willingness to engage (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006). With this in mind, building student teachers' identities as researchers plays a pivotal role because research can be a means for them to understand better how they learn and make sense of teaching practices, which engages them in self-reflection and evaluation in various ways (Widodo, 2016a).

Second, another attraction of this program was how it highlighted that self-experiences can be a research topic to be investigated by student teachers within the frame of narrative inquiry. The main claim of narrative inquiry design in educational research is that humans are natural storytellers (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Because stories contain accumulated experiences, they can serve as one platform for humans to make sense of the world around

them (Widodo, 2016b). This program also empowered students' creativity as they explored their journey as researchers. Good research is fundamentally strengthened and characterized by creativity (Burns, 2016).

This training program was also proven effective when it involved an outside expert in the field (workshop) and provided opportunities for student teachers to apply what they learned (mini-project) (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). Recently, a case study in China revealed how teacher training programs changed teachers' beliefs in teaching writing, from product-focused to process- and student-centered instruction (Teng, 2016). Conducting workshops and mini-research projects could be the simultaneous agenda for our institution to generate sustainable education because it can create "a shared learning culture" (Wang & Zang, 2014, p. 235). The presence of an expert makes it possible to change the dynamic issues of research in English language education in Indonesian contexts or in other parts of Southeast Asia or Asia. The study by Yuan and Lee (2015) revealed that external mentors helped teachers with multiple encounters while conducting the research. This study also changed their beliefs about AR, "leading to professional learning and development" (p. 1). Further, a recent study in Vietnam on the models of mentoring in language teacher education (Nguyen, 2017) showed that the need for mentoring is fundamental to helping EFL pre-service teachers cope with their difficulties concerned with their professional growth. It was also important to them that they improve their beliefs as pre-service teachers, so they used the learning experiences as a way to improve how the teaching-learning process can be done well.

The other findings indicated that supervisors as policymakers play a vital role in the social condition of English education in dealing with QR in language learning. Individual changes in beliefs about QR can lead to changes in the way people do things (Kemmis, 2007). In this case, student teachers are those getting the impact of the supervisor's transformation in understanding QR research. It means the results of this study are strongly associated with Vygotsky's space framework, as portrayed by Gallucci et al. (2010). The training program demonstrated how the participants of this study moved from phase one of Vygotsky's space (individual internalization) to the next phase (transformation of their beliefs into their practices). They were able to conceptualize their idea and spell it out in their TESOL research practices variously (see Table 4). This phase brought them to the next phase of Vygotsky's space framework (publication). After revising their work as personal reflection, they reported and published their work in a research seminar and BA Thesis dissemination. More crucially, it showed how participants negotiated their identity construction as researchers through this training program. Becoming researchers plays a pivotal role in becoming "change agents," which encourages them to bring classroom innovation into practice (Ai & Wang, 2017; Taylor, 2017).

The training program also democratized choices for students in higher education for their research projects. Having choices is a key component of learner autonomy (Benson, 2013, as cited in Jacobs et al., 2016). It explains how teachers or supervisors can transform into facilitators or guides, resulting in more student-centered learning. The study in Thailand revealed that student-centered teaching was influential in enhancing students' learning processes and extending their learning, skills capacity, and knowledge. They found it joyful and had a better learning atmosphere (Treesuwan & Tanitteerapan, 2016). Further, it meets students' needs because its positioning as a guide creates diversity among them rather than homogeneity, which can motivate them to conduct their research based on their passions. Viewed from the perspective of "task motivation," providing motivating tasks can enhance students' learning engagement (Dörnyei, 2001). Finally, our findings present teachers as motivators, encouraging students to motivate themselves, peers, and teachers to learn and to enjoy learning, which then promotes a good learning climate (Jacobs et al., 2016).

To conclude, we demonstrated how the training program facilitated student teachers in conducting QR based on their interests. After participating in this program, they gained their literacy skills (navigating research areas and formulating research aims) and experience in doing QR in TESOL (critical discourse analysis, case study, narrative inquiry, classroom research, action research, and reflective practice). Engaging them in this program helped them shape their identities as qualitative researchers. This study was the stepping-stone for the Department of English Education to make policy recommendations. It gave a significant contribution to the Department of English Education because, currently, qualitative research has become an independent course to facilitate student teachers whose interests are in the area of qualitative studies in TESOL.

However, we also acknowledge that the study has limitations. As a first step, this study only included eight student teachers who came from a university in West Java, Indonesia. Future research plans may use multiple case study research designs that involve more people from different institutions. Involving participants from different institutions may generate different findings because of the context of the situation.

In addition, using the interview as data collection in this study was carried out after the project had been completed (after the workshop and a mini-project). It could not see student teachers' prior experiences with research before participating in this program. Future studies may conduct interviews before and after the project, which can identify and compare participants' prior knowledge and experience in conducting research in educational contexts before and after project completion.

The third limitation was related to limited data collection (questionnaire and interview in this study) that could not capture a more detailed description of participants' experiences during conducting QR. Therefore, an ethnographic study can also be an alternative because it can capture day-to-day participants' practices in doing QR (Dufon, 2002). Fourth, future research could collect data by interviewing not only student teachers but also their supervisors about their experiences and the impact of the workshops on their professional growth.

For future research agendas, we would also suggest working with teacher educators and student teachers to create teachers' research that focuses on three levels of stakeholders or ecology: micro (individual), mezzo (school), and macro (wider educational sector) levels. This action research can also be used as a way to help teachers in higher education levels do more research on their own.

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**Appendix****Table 5***Workshop outline*

<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Focus</b>
1	08.00 – 12.00	Session 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The differences between quantitative and qualitative research in TESOL</li> <li>• Navigating current issues in TESOL through various journal websites</li> <li>• Understanding research questions of QR in TESOL</li> </ul>
	12.30 – 16.30	Session 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing critical discourse analysis</li> <li>• Introducing case study and data collection</li> </ul>
2	08.00 – 12.00	Session 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing narrative inquiry Introducing classroom research</li> <li>• Introducing action research and data collection</li> </ul>
	12.30 – 16.30	Session 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing reflective practice</li> <li>• Data analysis</li> </ul>

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