

Original Article

Non-Native EFL Teacher Educators' Pedagogical Roles: Language Institute Managers' Perceptions

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Submission date: 2023-05-29

Acceptance date: 2023-07-01

Abstract

The pedagogical roles of teacher educators (TEs) in recruiting and educating future language teachers have recently gained attention among teacher education researchers. As there is scant research on the perspectives of stakeholders on these roles, this study sought to investigate the pedagogical roles of Iranian non-native TEs in educating preservice and in-service EFL teachers from the viewpoint of language institute managers. To this end, following a qualitative research design, a total of 30 institute managers were selected via the snowball sampling method and invited for semi-structured interviews. The participants' responses were audio recorded and subjected to thematic analysis to extract the main themes. The findings showed that institute managers assigned three key pedagogical roles to TEs: holding preservice/in-service teacher education courses, improving the assessment system, and designing effective language syllabuses. Language institute managers believed that effective TEs should not only be responsible for running teacher education courses but also engage in the evaluation process by designing and developing relevant instructional syllabuses in cooperation with educational managers of the institutes. The findings have implications for the professional development and practices of TEs.

Keywords: Teacher educators (TEs), Language institute managers, Pedagogical roles, Perceptions, Teacher education

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1. Introduction

One of the main factors in the quality of education in general and learners' achievements in particular is the presence of an effective and caring teacher (Moses et al., 2016). Teachers hence face the continuous challenges of planning lessons, assessing and evaluating learners' performance, and generating and keeping a fair and equitable classroom environment (Marpa, 2023). To help teachers enact these roles, teacher educators (TEs), who are responsible for educating and preparing future teachers in different teacher education courses, need to appreciate the quality of effective instruction in their curriculums. In line with the significant role of TEs and teacher education programs in general education, the concept of teacher education is also of immediate significance in the field of L2 learning as a rapidly developing course of education in the new millennium (Farrell, 2022; Smith et al., 2022). Language institutes have a leading part in preparing teachers for their teaching occupation. Such a role entails the recruitment of knowledgeable and effective TEs who should have adequate L2 proficiency as well as a profound understanding of appropriate L2 teaching methods and strategies, teacher knowledge base, and teacher education programs. A big challenge for L2 teachers, especially in the English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) context, is to improve their language proficiency levels and keep their teaching methodology updated based on their learners' needs (Wernicke, 2019). That is why the main role of TEs is to prepare preservice and in-service L2 teachers to act as professional and efficient language teachers in their respective educational organizations.

In the process of recruiting effective TEs in the private sector of L2 instruction, institute managers play an important part as they are in charge of employing efficacious TEs and running teacher education programs to facilitate the process of L2 learning for learners (Ironsi, 2021). Institute managers are responsible for designing the overall curriculum of the language institute and equipping their institute with the necessary educational technology. Thus, institute managers should be strongly aware of the main pedagogical roles of TEs in educating future teachers and increasing the quality of education and hence improving the reputation of their respective institutes. This highlights the role of both institute managers and TEs to select and educate the most effective language teachers who can act in line with the cognitive and affective needs of learners (Burke & Ceo-DiFrancesco, 2022).

Unlike many Asian countries in which public and private educational organizations and language institutes are interested in recruiting native TEs and teachers, reflecting the native-speaker fallacy (Phillipson, 1992), the Iranian EFL context has limited access to English native speakers and thus institute managers seek to employ the most effective non-native speaker TEs and teachers (Ostovar-Namaghi & Hosseini, 2019). In such a condition, professional development policies followed by stakeholders including managers and TEs to prepare future language teachers are consequential to the success of instructional curriculums and specify the correct path of action for the effectiveness of educational programs (Yuan et al., 2022). Accordingly, exploring the perceptions of Iranian language institute managers regarding the pedagogical roles non-native TEs play in the overall process of educating future EFL teachers is of crucial importance in the Iranian EFL context. This study aimed to investigate these perceptions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher Educators' Roles

Many scholars have attempted to study and understand the pedagogical roles of TEs in the process of teacher education and to develop effective teacher development programs, especially in the L2 context (e.g., Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). Studies over the past two decades have provided numerous definitions and conceptualizations of TE professional development as a precursor to teacher professional development and their effective preparation for language education. For instance, according to Guskey (2000), teacher professional development is an ongoing collaborative learning process that systematically leads to the growth and nourishment of teachers, which is itself a byproduct of recognizing the roles of teachers apart from the syllabus and facilities in educating students. In addition, Johnson and Golombek (2020) stated that teacher development is associated with educational practices, policies, and methods that provide teachers with the required content knowledge, attitude, behavior, instructional approaches, and methods as well as the necessary skills they need to teach efficiently in educational organizations.

Several lines of evidence acknowledge that teacher development quality plays a crucial role in the context of teaching and learning as well as students' learning outcomes; consequently, policymakers have highlighted the need to improve the quality of TEs to increase the quality of teaching (Ellis et al., 2020; MacPhail et al., 2018). In the history of

teacher development, teacher quality has been regarded as a key concept including factors such as how nations or educational institutes select, recruit, prepare, cultivate, support, evaluate, and retain effective TEs and what roles are assigned to them for maximum quality and performance.

As stated by Yuan et al. (2022), specifically in the last decade, extensive research has been carried out to scrutinize best policies and strategies to improve TEs' knowledge, skills, and qualifications to bring improvements in language learners' achievements as a result. Moreover, MacPhail et al. (2018) maintained that as far as there is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of teacher development for improving the quality of education, TEs' recruitment policies defined by educational leaders and managers can play an important role in addressing this issue. In other words, effective policies for TEs' recruitment can contribute to the supply of qualified TEs and teachers. Yet, the prerequisite for introducing and developing such strategies is to first have a clear understanding of the pedagogical roles of TEs in educating future teachers (Arnot & Vignola, 2018).

2.2. Teacher Educators' Professional Development

Recently, considerable literature has grown up around the theme of effective strategies for improving the quality of teacher professional development programs based on TEs' pedagogical roles (e.g., Cochran et al., 2019; Dafouz, 2018; Donitsa-Schmidt & Ramot, 2020). According to Griffith et al. (2014), TEs should be introduced to innovative teaching methods and contents in professional development courses to be equipped with 21st-century skills and overcome challenges. Additionally, recent developments in the field of teacher development have led to a renewed interest in the role of TEs as researchers and their research expertise (e.g., Cochran et al., 2019). As a result, in TEs' professional development, the ultimate goal can be to enable TEs to be critical readers of research and expect them to add to the knowledge of their field through their practices and research.

Cochran et al. (2019) gave further depth to this approach by stating that educational managers and curriculum developers should provide opportunities for TEs to research their practice to find practical and innovative methods leading to their student teachers' learning achievements. Thus, with the help of managers, TEs can educate a new generation of L2

teachers who themselves are researchers seeking to improve and develop the best instructional methodologies. In this regard, for example, Smith (2003) maintained that as TEs are extensively involved in the professional development of preservice and in-service teachers, their own professional development seems mostly taken for granted and thus ignored by curriculum developers and educational managers. He further introduced three main reasons why TEs' professional development needs to be regarded more seriously. First, it is a means for improving teacher education in general as more professionally developed TEs can prepare and educate more professionally developed teachers. Second, the smooth, ongoing process of professional development for TEs makes them interested in their career and motivated to continue to thrive in their line of work; hence, successful professional development is conducive to the affective and motivational profile of TEs. Third, similar to any other profession, TEs' professional development helps them progress in their career and receive timely promotions, which in turn results in more effective education.

Pointing out that TE identity has been mostly underresearched contrary to teacher identity, Izadnia (2014) drew some close links between TEs' identity and their professional development via a comprehensive literature review. In his research synthesis, he focused on challenges and issues TEs face in their induction, factors affecting their professional identity, and necessary characteristics of induction programs. The results of the study showed that new TEs generally have a negative self-view of their abilities and professional identities, which can seriously affect their progress as effective TEs. It was found that self-support and community support by more professional colleagues can alleviate such tensions and facilitate their progress. One important point that Izadnia (2014) underscored was the role of research and self-inquiry in helping new TEs develop robust identities in their careers. This requires that TEs not only try to do systematic research and action research but also make use of relevant published research to become familiar with the most updated theoretical and practical aspects of their profession.

Guberman and Mcdossi (2019) studied the self-perceptions of teacher educators regarding their professional development direction in teacher preparation as their main role as well as research and institutional leadership. Indeed, they regarded these three paths as the building blocks of TEs' development and how educational organizations including managers and curriculum developers expect them to professionally grow in their career as

educators of educators. They used semi-structured interviews as their research instrument to take into account experienced TEs' perceptions. Their findings suggest that although being a researcher as a subsidiary role can promote TEs' leadership characteristics and teaching effectiveness as their key roles, they find it difficult to strike a balance among the three with some being strong in one direction but weak in others. This can, in turn, demotivate TEs in the long run and act as a type of hindrance in the course of their professional development. In conclusion, their findings indicate that TEs face an intertwined web of roles and expectations which heavily affect their efficiency and their motivation levels in general and their professional development in particular. It is the significant role of motivation in TEs' professional development that is also emphasized by some other researchers. For instance, Donitsa-Schmidt and Ramot (2020) noted that high levels of motivation, engagement, cooperation, support, and peer interaction lie at the heart of our understanding of professional learning communities, and this approach creates a positive and supportive learning environment for all educational stakeholders including teacher educators. However, there is no best strategy for professional development that is effective for all educational contexts; rather, professional development programs should be tailored based on the specific institution, content, and context. The role of identity and agency in the professional development of language TEs was also highlighted by Banegas and Gerlach (2021) who, in a critical case study, observed that TEs' sense of social justice and responsibility plays a significant part in their agency and identity as critical language TEs who are on the course of their professional identity.

2.3. TEs' Pedagogical Roles

In light of recent studies on TEs' professional development and identity development, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the complexity of TEs' roles due to their ever-changing nature from being the main source of knowledge to being a role model and mentor for future teachers (Tack & Vanderlinde, 2014). Harrison and McKeon (2008) pointed out that despite the importance of TEs' multiple and complex roles, there remains a paucity of evidence on sufficient preparations and professional development programs to fulfill these roles. However, literature has seen a growing trend toward TEs' skills and roles, and there is a consensus among several researchers (e.g., Richter et al., 2021) arguing that TEs should

be aware of their instructional roles and need to master relevant knowledge and skills after taking on the position of teacher educator.

Harrison and McKeon (2008) argued that there are three main roles for TEs, namely teaching, research, and leadership, and in many cases, these three roles interfere with each other and result in work overload and lack of time for participation in professional development activities. In addition, there is a large number of published studies (e.g., Chuang et al., 2020; Ellis et al., 2020; Lunenberg et al., 2017; Philipsen et al., 2019) that recognize two simultaneous roles for TEs as are researchers and practitioners and argue that TEs can bridge the gap between these two roles and connect them through researching their practice. Ellis et al. (2020) provided further insights into the instructional roles of TEs by stating that there needs to be a distinction between the pedagogical roles of teachers and TEs because the latter group is not considered as teachers of teachers; rather, they serve other roles, such as curriculum developers, role models, mentors, researchers, and gatekeepers. Hence, each of these roles requires specific knowledge and professional learning and development (Ellis et al., 2020; Lunenberg et al., 2017). Lunenberg et al. (2017) also note that considering the diversity of contexts and educational environment in which TEs work, different roles and tasks are expected from them; therefore, tailored paths for TEs' professional development are required.

Richter et al. (2021) asserted that professional identity development is indispensable for teacher professional development and is considered a major factor influencing teacher educators' roles. In the same vein, Makovec (2018) pointed out that professional identity is composed of internal and external factors in which internal factors include a set of expectations developed by the individual regarding themselves and their abilities as well as individuals' perceptions of their role. External factors include other educational stakeholders' expectations of individuals.

Overall, despite the significance of the role of TEs in the process and effectiveness of language instruction, scant research has been carried out to shed light on the main pedagogical roles of TEs from various perspectives of L2 stakeholders. In general, research in this regard has mostly focused on factors related to general pedagogical principles. For example, few studies have examined how TEs can improve teaching methodologies and

strategies (e.g., Ping et al., 2018), national policy measurements for TEs and teachers (e.g., Lunenberg et al., 2017), and identity as well as social justice advancement in language teacher education programs (e.g., Markowitz & Bouffard, 2020). Hence, given the importance of L2 teacher education programs in educating future language teachers on the one hand and the lack of sufficient research on the pedagogical roles of TEs from the perspective of language institute managers as the main recruiters of TEs on the other, this study aimed to investigate Iranian language institute managers' perceptions regarding the pedagogical roles of Iranian non-native TEs. Hence, the following research question was formulated in this study:

RQ. What are language institute managers' beliefs regarding the pedagogical roles of non-native English TEs?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and Context of the Study

The design of the study was qualitative and descriptive in which semi-structured interviews were conducted tapping into institute managers' perceptions. The context of the study was some of the cities in Iran including Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Karaj. These major cities were selected as they could be a good representative of the main population of language teachers and learners in Iran. The research data were gathered in the fall of 2022.

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study included 30 Iranian male and female language institute managers (aged 28-70) who owned language institutes in different cities in Iran. The snowball sampling method was utilized to select 52 language institute managers who were initially asked to participate in the study; however, 30 accepted to participate in this study. This method was used because it could present the researchers with more participants who were available as the data collection procedure was moving forward. By so doing, the researchers could have the maximum number of participants possible within their defined time span. The target language institutes were selected based on their national popularity as

successful, effective educational centers among both students and teachers. Table 1 demonstrates the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1.

Demographic Background of the Participants

No. of Participants	30 (9 undergraduate and 21 graduate)
Gender	21 males and 9 females
Age	28 to 70 years old
Native Language	Persian, Turkish, and Kurdish
Major	TEFL, English Literature, English Translation, Management, and others
Experience of Management	4 to 25 years

3.3. Instrument

To collect the data, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were employed to investigate the pedagogical roles of TEs from the perspective of Iranian language institute managers. After reviewing the relevant literature thoroughly, the researchers developed an interview guide with two core questions. Afterward, an interview guide was developed and piloted with five EFL institute managers. Then, some modifications were made based on the feedback from the institute managers. One question was omitted because it was repetitious, and one question remained as the main interview question: *What are the main pedagogical roles of TEs in your language institute?* In tandem with Creswell's (2018) guideline, the content validity of the interview question was also verified through expert judgment with the help of two Ph.D. holders in Applied Linguistics.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

After the interview question was ready to be used for data collection, the interview process started. Each interview lasted around 30 minutes, conducted either online or in person. In the interviews, the issues regarding the institute managers' perceptions of TEs' pedagogical roles as well as other related factors were discussed. The interviewees were allowed to use their native language Persian or English and were informed of the objectives of the study.

As for the dependability of the interview instrument, the interviewer (the first author) tried to minimize biases and limitations that were likely to impact their decision-making process. In this respect, she welcomed all the answers and views presented, did not push the participants toward her own beliefs and intentions, and instead, provided them with a sense of freedom, as suggested by Creswell (2018). Signaling the end of the interview was done by asking the interviewees if they had any other points to add and then thanking them for their cooperation. As argued by Cutcliffe and McKenna (1999), authenticity increases by the accuracy of the results. So, the researchers employed some techniques to improve the trustworthiness of the findings. For instance, the interviewees were given the final summary of their own answers to the research question to check the extracted themes and subthemes and to see if the information was based on their beliefs.

3.5 Data Analysis

To analyze the qualitative data gleaned from the interviews with 30 Iranian language institute managers, the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was done by the researchers using the MAXQDA software. This software helped the researchers to codify participants' answers and to extract the themes from their answers. To this aim, the recorded interviews were transcribed, and 30 datasets were inserted and sorted out in the software. Next, the three steps of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding were performed. The researchers came up with several codes and their frequency of occurrence as the final product of this phase (20 open codes). After the initial coding, the researchers developed and ended up with 10 workable categories/subthemes (axial codes). In the last stage, the researchers conducted selective coding as the final integration of the data. Finally, the data were categorized into three main themes: holding preservice/in-service teacher education courses, improving the assessment system, and designing effective language syllabuses.

4. Results

As for the perceptions of language institute managers about the pedagogical roles of Iranian non-native TEs in facilitating the process of TEs' professional development, holding preservice/in-service teacher education courses, improving the assessment system, and

designing effective language syllabuses were the most highlighted roles by the participants in the interviews.

4.1 Holding Preservice/In-Service Teacher Education Courses

Based on the perceptions of Iranian language institute managers, one of the most important roles of TEs is to develop and hold teacher education courses for both preservice and in-service language teachers. Table 2 shows the theme and its relevant extracted subthemes.

Table 2.

Holding Pre-service/In-service Teacher Education Courses

Theme	Subthemes
Holding teacher education courses	Running preservice courses
	Running in-service courses
	Updated with the latest educational theories/methods
	Doing needs analysis

The majority of institute managers believed that developing and holding teacher education courses, especially preservice courses, is the main role of TEs in their institutes. For instance, M3 (a 48-year-old female manager) emphasized the role of TEs in running preservice courses:

I think the main role of TEs is to run teacher education courses for preservice language teachers. Student teachers who are attending teacher education courses need to be educated on the latest theories and methodologies of English instruction which is the job of professional TEs. [M3]

Likewise, developing and running in-service teacher education courses was also highlighted as the main role of TEs. For example, M22 (a 56-year-old male manager) stated that TEs should not only educate preservice teachers but also run educational workshops and updating courses for less experienced language teachers:

Teacher education courses are not necessarily limited to preservice educational programs. Therefore, TEs should bear in mind this role that holding teacher education courses for in-service language teachers is also a must. Especially new teachers who are less experienced need to be updated via short courses and workshops. [M22]

Moreover, managers believed that TEs should keep themselves updated with the latest educational methods and theories in terms of not only teacher education but also L2 instruction in general. For example, M28 (a 40-year-old female manager) emphasized this point by stating that TEs should keep themselves updated with the latest teaching methods:

Well, how can a TE be effective and prepare effective, updated English teachers without being updated and knowledgeable herself in the first place?! TEs must know the most recent methodological issues in language teaching and try to transfer such knowledge to their student teachers. [M28]

Finally, managers mostly believed that an effective TE should be also a professional needs analyzer who can tailor her method of instruction based on student teachers' needs and goals. M5 (a 36-year-old female manager) made it clear that she expects her TEs to run needs analysis and report to her what updates and rectifications should be done to improve the quality of education:

TEs should do needs analysis to prepare the most effective teacher education courses for student teachers. Because they are in close contact with their students, they can understand their learning and practical needs and try to incorporate them in the syllabus and their teaching method. [M5]

4.2. Improving the Assessment System

Another important role of TEs based on managers' comments is to monitor the assessment and evaluation process of teacher education courses and to try to improve it for the best possible outcomes. Table 3 depicts the theme and its relevant subthemes.

Table 3.

Improving the Assessment System

Theme	Subthemes
improving the assessment system	improving the current testing procedure
	Generating new assessment packages

In addition to holding teacher training courses, many institute managers stated that an effective TE should be actively involved in evaluation and assessment. M9 (a 42-year-old male manager) argued that in his language institute, the whole evaluation and assessment procedures are on TEs' and supervisors' shoulders as they are involved in checking these procedures and creating new packages based on students' needs:

TEs should cooperate in designing and developing tests for assessing preservice teachers' performance. They can generate appropriate tests based on the purpose of courses. This role is as important as running and holding courses as educators. [M9]

Nevertheless, TEs can also improve the content and form of language tests in line with the latest changes in course books and cooperate in generating updated tests. M29 pointed to this issue as follows:

TEs should be involved actively in the testing and assessment process of teacher education courses. They can improve the assessment procedure because they are directly involved with coursebooks and students. [M29]

4.3. Designing Effective Syllabuses

Another important pedagogical role for TEs from the viewpoint of institute managers is for TEs to get involved in designing effective syllabuses. Table 4 shows the themes and its constituent subthemes.

Table 4.

Designing Effective Language Syllabuses

Theme	Subthemes
Designing effective syllabuses	Designing effective teacher education syllabuses
	Designing effective language instruction syllabuses

Iranian institute managers believed that creating and developing specific teacher education courses and the overall syllabus of instruction is an important role for TEs. As the teachers of such courses and with years of experience, there is no better person to develop the instructional syllabus of the teacher education courses than TEs themselves. For example, M19 (a 35-year-old female manager) explained that the main job of TEs in tandem with running courses is to help design, develop, and assess the instructional syllabus:

TEs should not only be involved in holding teacher education courses but also engage in the process of designing efficacious syllabuses for educating preservice and in-service teachers. I believe this is as important as holding courses because TEs know the ups and downs of teaching such courses and the real needs of student teachers. [M19]

In addition to designing syllabuses for teacher education courses, TEs can also cooperate with supervisors and educational managers to develop language syllabuses for general courses for language learners. Indeed, they can help develop or improve ordinary language syllabuses that teachers teach in their classes. For instance, M23 (a 58-year-old male manager) noticed this in his comments by differentiating between TEs and supervisors in his institute while stating that both are involved in evaluating and developing language content for English classes across different proficiency levels:

In my idea, and actually what happens in my language school, TEs can cooperate with institute supervisors and educational managers to improve the syllabus of general language courses because they know what preservice and in-service teachers ought to do in their classes and what language components should be taught.

5. Discussion

This study sought to investigate the perceptions of Iranian language institute managers regarding TEs' pedagogical roles as the main actors in educating future EFL teachers. As a qualitative study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 institute managers. Thematic analysis was then used to analyze and categorize the main themes and subthemes raised by the participants. The data analysis resulted in three main themes: holding preservice/in-service teacher education courses, improving the assessment system, and designing effective language syllabuses.

First, it was found that Iranian language institute managers mostly believed that the main role of TEs is to hold teacher education courses for both preservice and in-service teachers so that they can be prepared and develop/adopt methods to teach language classes. According to Bax (1997), this preparation and development should be in line with the socio-cultural and educational contexts in which language teachers work. There is little doubt that the context and purpose of language teaching and learning for the learners directly affect the syllabus of educational programs, and TEs need to be aware of this context and the instructional needs of language learners for whom future teachers are being educated (Lunenberg et al., 2007). This point was also raised by some participants of the study as they maintained that TEs can cooperate in the process of preparation and designing effective and contextually sensitive syllabuses. This is the point also emphasized by Johnson and Golombek (2020) as they highlighted a thorough needs analysis with the help of TEs to develop syllabuses that meet the needs of current and future language teachers. This also requires that TEs be familiar and updated with the latest technological and methodological advancements. As maintained by Banegas and Gerlach (2021), language TEs' sense of social agency in their educational organization and the formation of their identity can affect the way they perform their roles efficiently as effective TEs.

Another important role underlined by several institute managers was the involvement of efficient TEs in the process of assessment and evaluation of future language teachers attending teacher education courses and programs. This main theme was labeled as 'improving the assessment system of language courses' in this study. As argued by Andrews et al. (2002), a simple enhancement of assessment packages or introduction of new ones cannot guarantee that the testing system reflects the content of the courses and tests what it

should test. Educators need to conduct a needs analysis of students' target needs and tailor the evaluation and testing procedures based on such needs. As emphasized by Smith (2003), monitoring the assessment procedure of educational programs and developing tests occupy a significant portion of TEs' schedules. Likewise, MacPhail et al. (2018) observed that TEs value professional development and are responsible for participating in professional development activities. Such an improvement requires them to stick to their pedagogical roles as professional educators who need to increase their research skills and assessment skills. This happens through constant familiarity with the latest developments in teacher education methods and evaluation processes.

Finally, it was observed that language institute managers believed that another major role of effective TEs is to be involved not only in the process of designing and developing syllabuses for their educational courses but also in developing teaching syllabuses for in-service teachers. This is the point also raised by Harrison and McKeon (2008), who maintained that as educational leaders, TEs should be directly responsible for developing course syllabuses as they are familiar with the purposes of instruction and the needs of their student teachers. It is usually the case that TEs are also supervisors and/or educational managers at language institutes. So, they can be actively involved in syllabus design and try to update the educational syllabuses based on the latest instructional methods.

6. Conclusion

The current qualitative study examined the pedagogical roles of TEs in teacher education courses and programs from the perspective of Iranian language institute managers. The thematic analysis of the managers' responses revealed that three major roles are assigned to effective TEs by the institute managers: holding preservice/in-service teacher education courses, enhancing the assessment system, and designing effective language syllabuses. These are the main roles that have been also highlighted in other studies in both ESL and EFL contexts. Hence, overall, Iranian language institute managers believe that apart from holding and running teacher education courses, TEs should be involved in the assessment procedures by familiarizing themselves with testing and evaluation methods and enhancing the assessment packages based on student teachers' needs; besides, they need to be involved in the process of syllabus design based on student teachers' needs for maximum instructional

effectiveness. To conclude, from the viewpoint of language institute managers, TEs occupy a prominent position in the overall educational quality of their language institutes by educating the most qualified future teachers, which in turn would result in more effective instruction to the language learners.

A few pedagogical implications can be drawn from the study. First, TEs should be aware of their pedagogical roles so that they can function effectively as the main stakeholders in the process of educating future language teachers. If they are aware of their roles and what is expected of them pedagogically, they can tune in more effectively with the educational aims of language institutes and run more efficient teacher education courses. On the other hand, institute managers can recruit and hire more effective TEs if they are aware of such roles and consider criteria and standards that should inform the recruitment of TEs to ensure that they can play their professional roles.

This qualitative study had some limitations that should be taken into account in generalizing the findings. First, the number of participants was limited to 30 institute managers. A larger number of participants from different cities with various sociocultural backgrounds and language learning concerns could present a more comprehensive picture. Second, only qualitative data gleaned via interviews were collected in this study. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data would increase the validity of the data. Hence, in light of the limitation mentioned above, it is suggested that future research takes into account the perceptions of other EFL stakeholders regarding TEs' roles, such as TEs themselves as well as pre-service and/or in-service teachers, and also makes use of questionnaires and observations to triangulate the collected data for more a comprehensive picture of TEs' pedagogical roles.

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