HUMANITAS HODIE

Teaching research competencies in undergraduate programs in foreign languages. Are professors prepared for it?

La enseñanza de competencias investigativas en los programas de pregrado en lenguas extranjeras: ¿Están preparados los profesores?

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Abstract

Research skills in the training of new foreign language teachers are a constant concern in higher education. The Ministry of Education has insisted on the comprehensive training of new teachers of foreign students, including training in research skills. To achieve this, teacher trainers are required not only to have an inevitable competence but also to have a research practice that can serve as a point of motivation and encouragement for their students. From a mixed approach, through focus groups, surveys and interviews, the investigator analyzed research skills and examined the research practice of forty teachers, belonging to bachelor's degree in foreign languages programs, in charge of guiding such training. Although most of them have experience and practice in research as part of their professional training, these skills are not implemented in their classrooms. The results show that the professors' lack of research skills directly affects research practice and therefore there are weaknesses in the ability to teach how to research to undergraduate students. It was found that there is no coherence between the profile of the teachers as trainers and the profile of the trainees in terms of the development of research skills. Universities must commit to the development of research skills in their teachers to make sure a quality and coherent learning process.

Keywords: research competencies, research practice, bachelor's degree programs, foreign languages

Resumen

Las competencias de investigación en la formación de nuevos profesores de lenguas extranjeras son una preocupación constante en la enseñanza superior. El Ministerio de Educación ha insistido en la formación integral de los nuevos profesores de estudiantes extranjeros, incluida la for-

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mación en competencias de investigación. Para lograrlo, se exige a los formadores de profesores no solo una competencia ineludible, sino también una práctica investigadora que sirva de punto de motivación y estímulo para sus alumnos. Desde un enfoque mixto, analizamos las enseñanzas específicas que las universidades colombianas dedican a las competencias investigadoras y examinamos la práctica investigadora de cuarenta profesores de licenciatura en lenguas extranjeras encargados de orientar dicha formación. Aunque la mayoría de ellos tiene experiencia y práctica en investigación como parte de su formación profesional, estas competencias no son implementadas en sus aulas. Los resultados muestran que la falta de competencias investigadoras de los profesores afecta directamente a la práctica de la investigación y, por tanto, existen deficiencias en la capacidad de enseñar a investigar a los estudiantes de pregrado. Las universidades deben comprometerse con el desarrollo de competencias investigadoras en sus profesores para asegurar un proceso de aprendizaje de calidad y coherente.

Palabras clave: competencias investigativas, práctica investigativa, programas de licenciatura, lenguas extranjeras

Introduction

In recent decades, the development of research competencies, especially in higher education, has gained great importance. In this sense, undergraduate programs have given considerable relevance to these skills in the training of new professionals. With foreign language degree programs, this development is valued, since it is a field of great interest for teachers and researchers to investigate topics such as origin of languages; development and processes of languages acquisition; language learning and teaching; bilingualism, multilingualism; culture, inter-culturalism, multiculturalism, among others.

Research in foreign languages not only provides conditions for understanding situations and phenomena related to language development and acquisition, but is also a way of finding solutions to improve and facilitate the teaching and learning process. Nimehchisalem (2018) states that research in foreign languages teaching provides valuable insights and data for decision-making. Gutman *et al.* (2014) mention that involving students in research work in a foreign language helps them get ready for further postgraduate training in science and better prepares them for the demands of the labor market for highly qualified professionals.

From this perspective, the development of research activities in the foreign languages field not only contributes to understand and improve language teaching and learning processes, but also to better prepare new professionals for the demands of the labor market

and their continuous professional growth. New English language teachers not only need to prove human and professional competences to perform their work; in addition to the traditional professional competencies, such as language proficiency, knowledge of the linguistic structures of the target language, and knowledge of pedagogy and didactics for teaching with the application of new technologies, new English language teachers also need to develop research competencies.

Consequently, foreign languages teachers need to carry out processes of permanent reflection based on observation, enquiring, questioning, arguing, counter-arguing and being immersed in constant professional development experiences. In the same way, they must be able to propose and carry out pedagogical implementations that allow the successful academic development of their students. Likewise, they must can systematize their proposals, based on reflection, and socialize them in academic networks and communities. As we can see, the demands on training of new foreign language teachers are much higher now than what have been decades before.

When reflecting on the demands of education for the 21st century, we, as teachers, cope with the challenge of responding to a society immersed in globalization and driven by the rapid advances in technology. Nowadays, education is rethinking its processes, and invites us to re-evaluate the teaching profession. The traditional idea that teachers teach, and students learn, is being reevaluated to move on to more participatory practices of knowledge construction and reconstruction. Nowadays, education promotes active learning, learning to live together, and learning from innovation. Dzyatkovskaya (2023) mentions that, to address the issues of radicalization, resocialization, and youth identification, it is essential to create educational spaces oriented to be regenerative, anticipatory, and synchronous, aligned with the demands of the 21st century. Traditional notions regarding the purpose of educational environments in preparing youth for life necessitate revision and augmentation. According to Jia & Zhao (2019):

> Traditionally, EFL teachers were required to own knowledge about the language and its culture. When almost everyone can use an app to communicate with foreigners, to translate formal documents, the current EFL teachers have to acquire more to teach students. They should have a broader sense of knowledge, including language ac-

quisition theories, information technology, pedagogies and so forth, besides the basic knowledge structure. (p. 1130)

Alongside this background, professors of undergraduate programs in foreign language face great challenges in the training of new teachers. They have an important mission in their teaching role, which is to prepare their students for the 21st century requirements: one of these is innovation, to guide students in research knowledge and to develop their motivation for research.

While it is true that foreign language teachers must achieve an optimal development of communicative competences in the language they teach, since they are the linguistic model for their students, this is not enough. They are also called upon to implement activities of research in their teaching. The development of research competences enables them to identify issues in the context, to reflect and make proposals to solve potential problems, etc. Higher education professors' role goes beyond being a simple transmitter of knowledge or a simple linguistic model that their students can imitate. In that sense, Cortés *et al.* (2008) state that the foreign language teacher, besides being a user with high communicative skills in the language they teach, must also be a scholar and researcher of the foreign language and have an in-depth knowledge of his or her mother tongue.

Ramírez *et al.* (2019) assert that the future English teacher is called upon to move from theory to practice through the production of his or her own methodologies and the creation of new knowledge. The practice should not be limited to reproducing and implementing techniques or strategies, but it must transcend to a process of constant observation, evaluation, and adaptation, taking as a basis theoretical references articulated to practice to produce new theories that arise from reflection and permanent questioning.

Foreign language teacher trainers must exemplify effective teaching practices for their students. Key skills required include proficiency in foreign languages, research abilities, teaching expertise, and interpersonal skills. Besides subject knowledge, trainers should possess strong pedagogical knowledge, proficiency in communication technologies, and a global perspective on teaching that integrates international trends into local contexts.

This article presents the partial progress of a research carried out on the profile of the co-teacher trainers of foreign language students regarding their research skills. The policies and guidelines of the Ministry of National Education have established that the tra-

ining of new foreign language teachers must include research skills linked to pedagogical practice, a requirement stated in Resolution 18583, issued in 2017.

The investigator collected survey data, conducted interviews, and facilitated focus groups with 160 teachers of foreign language education programs as part of this mixed exploratory descriptive study. Besides teachers, programs coordinators and directors of twenty foreign-language bachelor's degree programs with high-quality accreditation from the Colombian Ministry of Education were involved.

The results show that many professors who teach in foreign language degree programs do not have the necessary preparation to carry out research activities with their students. The causes are related to previous negative experiences in their training process that left them demotivated and uninterested in research. Another factor is the lack of opportunity and support offered by the university institutions in the continuing education of their teachers. Many of them feel the desire to do research, but become frustrated when they realize they lack the necessary knowledge to pursue it. On the other hand, the programs still consider research as separate from teaching and mostly concentrate on this one, allocating little time for research.

Research competencies and research practice

Researchers in the field indicate that research practice and research competence are both related but have slightly different approaches. Research practice refers to the act of conducting specific research, while research competence focuses on the general skill and ability to carry out research effectively in different situations. European Commission (2018) defines competence as a mixture of knowledge, skills and attitudes, where:

> knowledge consists of the facts and figures, ideas and theories which are already established and support the understanding of a certain area or subject; […] skills are defined as the ability and capacity to carry out processes and use existing knowledge to achieve results; […] attitudes describe the disposition and mind-sets to act or react to ideas, people or situations. (C189/7)

Both concepts are essential for the advancement of knowledge and problem solving in various disciplines. Murillo (2008) defines research practice as the application or use of acquired knowledge, whi-

le new knowledge is acquired. It involves the use of information of research that results of a rigorous, organized and systematic process of knowing reality. Research competencies refer to the integration of motivational, gnoseological, operational, and personal elements that effectively enable the application of research skills in practical tasks (Prosekov *et al.*, 2020).

Foreign language research practice refers to the conduction of academic and applied research in foreign language teaching and learning, involving the application of research methods to better understand foreign language acquisition processes, improve teaching methodologies, evaluate curricula, and explore linguistic and cultural aspects of language learning. Foreign language research practice is crucial for improving the quality of language teaching, adapting approaches to the specific needs of learners, and fostering intercultural communication. Such research contributes to the development of better pedagogical practices and the advancement of the field of foreign language education.

Foreign language research competences refer to the skills and abilities that students and professionals in foreign languages need to develop to carry out effective research in this field. These competences go beyond linguistic and cultural proficiency to include the ability to address research questions, critically analyze scholarly literature, design and execute research, and effectively communicate results.

There are a variety of interesting topics in which foreign language teachers usually do research, for example: 1) analysis into how people acquire foreign language skills, whether in formal contexts such as language classrooms or in natural settings; 2) study of the different strategies and approaches used to teach foreign languages; 3) research into tools and methods for assessing progress in foreign language acquisition, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of syllabuses and teaching materials; 4) language and culture, and how to integrate cultural elements effectively into the foreign language teaching-learning process; 5) research into the design and effectiveness of educational materials used in foreign language teaching, including textbooks, online resources, and interactive activities; 6) educational policies in bilingual education, which include bilingualism and multilingualism as social phenomena.

The role of the English language teacher in research

Professors in charge of mastering students' research skills in bachelor's degree programs in foreign languages have a major challenge, since their pedagogical performance must be a model for their students. Professors' performance includes the development of foreign language skills, research skills, didactic skills, and human and social skills. Besides the knowledge of their discipline, which in this case would be the competences in the foreign language they teach, professors in degree programs must have teaching skills, pedagogical knowledge, a command of communication technologies and a global vision of teaching from global contexts, i.e., global trends brought to the local context. "Mastering students' research skills when learning foreign language is directly connected with their teacher's own research skill level" (Lopatina *et al.*, 2015, p. 138).

Sometimes teaching foreign languages is demanding and time-consuming, and some teachers attribute to these circumstances the reasons why they do not do research. They give almost no importance to teaching students to research when they are learning foreign languages and attribute this to the demands of the discipline, mentioning that language teaching leaves no room for the analysis of other knowledge. They probably are not always aware of the importance of the acquisition of research skills for students learning foreign languages, since the development of communicative skills in English classrooms could be sited in a more important place.

Professors could usually ask themselves why to do research, as it allows them to question, reflect and act on historical and social reality when research favors their own scientifically based criteria, to benefit the populations teachers serve with the creation of new strategies and methods of intervention (Saunders & Jamieson, 2020). This means that through research and questioning, based on permanent reflection, teachers can improve their pedagogical performance. In education, processes are dynamic, much more in the teaching of foreign languages, as new methodological trends emerge from research activities, which is why teachers must maintain an active attitude and be expectant of the needs, demands and challenges in education brought in by new generations.

However, teaching foreign languages in higher education, and especially in degree programs, requires teachers to undergo constant professional training, which help them to be in constant updating of theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and of the development of

skills that enables them to identify problems inside and outside the classroom and propose solutions. In consequence, one task of higher education professors, and specifically those in degree programs, is to articulate teaching with research under the mission and social commitment of the university to develop as a research teacher.

In this respect, Campos (2003) states that the role of the teacher-researcher is not to be the protagonist in the classroom, but to act as an intellectual guide, being aware of his/her strengths and learning opportunities. In this sense, the teacher should promote opportunities for reflection, encourage the development of critical thinking, motivate the student to generate new research, and start with their own experiences and problems observed in their teaching context. Research findings should be shared with their students and socialized in academic events and academic networks to set an example of their permanent reflective teaching and committed work with their community.

> The teacher-researcher can begin to investigate and observe their needs and those of their students, analyze and interpret what happens every day in the classroom, give their students the opportunity to participate in this happening and initiate collective research projects. One research methodology that can be used to gather perceptions about what happens in the classroom is the systematization of experiences. (Peláez & Piedrahita, 2018, p. 46)

Saavedra & López (2018) state that one task of foreign language teachers is to direct research projects that arise from problems observed in their contexts and thus contribute to improve their teaching performance. Professors must promote opportunities for reflection, encourage the development of critical thinking, motivate the student to generate new research based on their own experiences and the problems they observe in their environment (Cely-Betancourt, 2023). Therefore, the English teacher must achieve mastery of tools that facilitate to contextualize the teaching-learning of foreign languages by identifying the needs that arise out of their context and thus respond to the dynamics of their institution and the constant changes in education.

Professors in foreign language degree programs, within their teaching role, fulfill an important mission, which consists of guiding students in research knowledge and promoting in them the motivation towards research. For this reason, the teacher needs to carry out

a process of permanent reflection based on observation, enquiry, the ability to question, argue, counter-argue and be on constant professional updating. In this sense, they must be able to propose and carry out pedagogical implementations that enable the successful academic development of their students, as well as systematize their proposals, based on reflection, and socialize them in academic and scientific networks and communities (Cely Betancourt *et al.*, 2023). It can be seen that the commitment of the foreign language programs professors is quite demanding, considering that pre-service teachers are invited to develop research from their pedagogical practicum, for which they need their professors as supporters and motivators.

Research design

This mixed research followed an exploratory, descriptive, and sequential design. This type of design allowed me to gather information sequentially in two phases (Creswell & Plano, 2011), collecting quantitative data first and then qualitative data to obtain much more reliable results. Descriptive design helped to find characteristics and profiles of individuals, which in this case correspond to teachers of degree programs (Hernández *et al.*, 2014). A probabilistic sampling randomly was used, made up of professors from 20 undergraduate programs in foreign languages in charge of guiding the disciplinary areas, the courses that are oriented in English, as well as 15 administrators participants (directors and/or coordinators of the same programs). The instruments were documentary review, to check the policies and academic offerings in Colombia, interviews, and surveys using metric scales. Data analysis was carried out using K-Medoids clustering, taking as a measure of similarity the information contained in Spearman's correlation matrix.

The curricula of 20 universities in the country with high-quality accreditation were reviewed and the data was systematized using the Power BI template to create Excel grids and pivot tables. The team reviewed the Ministry of Education guidelines for undergraduate teacher training as well. An ad hoc survey-type questionnaire was developed for this study, validated by an expert and pilot-tested for validity. The survey, designed to recognize teachers' research competences and to investigate their practice, contains 30 questions, classified into three categories: 1) knowledge of research; 2) perception of research; 3) participation in research projects.

The information was coded on the basis of pre-coded or fixed-response questions to ascertain the opinion of respondents through the options: completely agree, agree, disagree, completely disagree. Interviews were crucial to complement the results of the surveys and to gather the information in a closer and more user-friendly way. Professors were inquired on:

1. Belonging to a research group.
2. Monograph advice.
3. Master's thesis advice.
4. Participating in research projects.
5. Guiding research courses for undergraduate students.
6. Leading study groups or research groups with students.
7. Having carried out research as part of their teaching practice.
8. Having carried out research work as a requirement in their master's degree.

Findings

The instruments applied, including literature review, surveys, and interviews, reveal that the undergraduate programs have made significant progress, but there is still ample scope for improvement. The documentary review showed that the curricula of the 20 undergraduate programs analyzed dedicate up to 10 % of the academic credits to strengthening research competences, which is a positive aspect that in the future will result in the strengthening of the academic process in the classroom. Ortiz *et al.* (2020) affirm that, in most of the academic offers of degree programs in the country, research processes begin at the start of academic training, which suggests an articulation of the pedagogical processes. These results infer a concern to strengthen the academic process of pedagogical practices. On the other hand, it was found that the Ministry of Education policy asks the programs to include the development of skills to research, innovate and articulate their knowledge to the pedagogical practice. Likewise, the didactic component of the disciplines mentions the capacity to integrate pedagogy, didactics, and research.

The results show that teachers need research training and much more support and encouragement from educational institutions. Below, the analyzed categories are presented. The following tables show the results of the questions in the survey.

Table 1

Results of teacher's knowledge of research

Variables	N Valid	N Fail	Mean	Median	Mode
I find it difficult to define research objectives clearly.	40	0	2.98	3.00	3
I have the ability to use databases and identify research background.	40	0	1.90	2.00	2
I am able to define the theoretical framework according to the research topic.	40	0	1.88	2.00	2
I recognise data collection techniques and apply the most appropriate ones to my research.	40	0	1.80	2.00	2
I can easily recognize a research problem and define it clearly.	40	0	1.85	2.00	2
I can define the research problem statement.	40	0	1.83	2.00	2
I find it difficult to identify a research problem and define it clearly.	40	0	3.00	3.00	3
I can easily define the research objectives and use the verbs provided for this purpose appropriately.	40	0	1.85	2.00	2
I have difficulty in analyzing and interpreting the data collected in the research.	40	0	3.15	3.00	3
I consider research to be fundamental for my teaching work.	40	0	1.45	1.00	1
I have not had good experiences doing research.	40	0	3.15	3.00	3
I have only done research as a compulsory exercise for a degree requirement.	40	0	2.53	2.50	2
I am not clear on the appropriate design and application of research instruments.	40	0	3.25	3.00	3
I am familiar with scientifically endorsed research methods to address the research process.	40	0	1.90	2.00	2
I tend to confuse the different research methods and use them according to their research design.	40	0	2.98	3.00	3
I have the ability to analyze data in my research.	40	0	1.83	2.00	2

Note: the table show results found in surveys about teacher's research knowledge.

The table shows a mean of x =2.33/40, a median (Me) =1.90/40 and mode (Mo) =2/40. There is a tendency for teachers to report low levels of research competences and difficulties in the research process. The teachers state that they have knowledge of research, can define a research problem, define the research objectives, consult

databases, and construct a theoretical framework, as well as recogni-ze and apply research instruments. Similarly, teachers recognize the importance of research as part of their teaching work. However, difficulties are observed in research methodology, research design, and data collection and analysis.

Table 2

Teacher's perception of research

Variables	N Valid	N Fail	Mean	Median	Mode
I recognize the importance of research in generating new knowledge.	40	0	1.13	1.00	1
I believe that research is not necessary to create new knowledge.	40	0	3.40	4.00	4
Research activity: I carry out research proces-ses as part of my teaching activity.	40	0	1.88	2.00	2
I do not include research processes as part of my teaching.	40	0	3.33	3.00	3
I would like to do research, but I feel that I do not have the necessary knowledge to do so.	40	0	2.93	3.00	3
I would like to do research, but I feel that it requires time and effort.	40	0	2.08	2.00	2
I consider that research is not fundamental to my teaching performance.	40	0	3.38	4.00	4
I participate in research groups endorsed and recognized by certifying bodies.	40	0	3.00		3

Note: this table shows result found in the survey about teacher's perception of research.

As can be seen, the data shows a mean of $x = 2.9/40 = 0.5$, a median (Me) $= 3.00/40$ and a mode (Mo) $= 3/40$. There is a tendency to con-sider that research is not fundamental in educational processes or for teaching performance; therefore, it is not included in their teaching and learning process.

Table 3

Participation in research projects

Variables	N Valid	N Fail	Mean	Median	Mode
I participate in academic events by presenting papers.	40	0	2.60	3.00	2
I publish scientific articles in indexed journals to publish the results of my research.	40	0	2.88	3.00	3
I am good at writing scientific articles and preparing papers.	40	0	2.17	2.00	2

I have defined a research topic and have experience doing research on that topic.	40	0	2.05	2.00	2
I belong to academic networks and associations where research experiences are exchanged.	40	0	2.93	3.00	3
I constantly update my CvLAC.	40	0	2.58	2.00	2
I publish at least one article every year in indexed journals.	16	24	3.31	3.00	3

Note: this table shows teacher's participation in research according to the findings in surveys.

Regarding participation in research processes, the data shows a mean of x =2.6/40, a median (Me) =2.60/40 and a mode (Mo) =3/40. There is evidence of positive participation in research processes such as academic events, article writing and CvLAC updates. This is consistent with the qualitative data found in interviews, where participants state that they have had research experience during their undergraduate and master's degree training processes.

As mentioned, the quantitative data collection from the survey was completed with a series of interviews whose information allows to support the results regarding the experience that each teacher has in the research process. The survey reported that all the teachers attached to a foreign language degree programs oversee training new graduates, and have had research experience during their academic training: all 40 teachers have had some research training during their undergraduate studies and with greater emphasis on their master's studies, especially in the completion of their theses.

The surveys show that 5 lecturers belong to approved research groups (12 %); 10 lecturers have had experience at the undergraduate level in advising monographic work (25 %); 1 lecturer advises master's theses (2.5 %); 5 lecturers develop research projects as part of their teaching work (12.5 %); 5 lecturers guide courses dedicated to developing research skills in students (12.5 %); 7 lecturers have had or have experience guiding study groups and research groups at the undergraduate level (17.5 %); 5 lecturers guide courses dedicated to developing research competences in students (12.5 %); and 7 lecturers have had or have experience guiding study groups and research groups at the undergraduate level (17.5 %).

However, despite this apparent lack of experience in research, it was found that 31 of the 40 teachers interviewed (78 %) report that they have carried out research exercises as part of their work and teaching reflection, but there is no systematization of their experience or publication of their work. In other words, although the process

has not been carried out in its entirety and with the expected scientific rigor, there are some research attempts that show the teachers' interest in improving their practices.

From the figure 1, an analysis of the number of teachers interviewed and their research experience reveals that 17 % of them are linked to formal research processes, i.e., belong to approved research groups, guide degree projects, publish papers, guide research groups, etc. On the other hand, 60 % of the teachers carry out small research projects or exercises as part of their teaching activities and 23 % of the population are completely unrelated to research, although motivated to develop research projects and works.

Figure 1

Research experience according to surveys
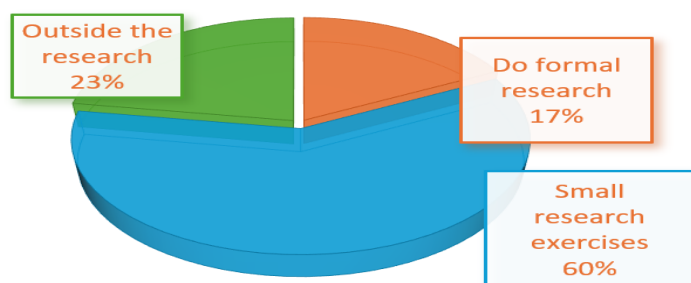
Note: The figure represents teachers' research experience according to the surveys.

Discussion of the results and conclusions

Perhaps, not all teachers in undergraduate programs are responsible for the development of all three substantive functions. Some lecturers are mainly dedicated to teaching, others to research and some others to social projection. However, if the aim is to train teachers who could dynamically articulate the knowledge of their own emphasis with pedagogy, didactics and research, in a way that results evident in the contexts of pedagogical practice, it is necessary to reflect on the practice of teacher educators, and review whether these same dynamics are carried out in each one class of the degree programs. In principle, there should be coherence between the profile of the teacher trainer and the profile of the student. In this way, it

will be possible to identify the need or not to establish a training plan and define a profile for teachers who teach in degree programs. It is important to highlight that the development of research skills ranges from basic aspects associated with methodological research processes to the integration of more complex topics, such as metacognition and self-learning management (Rojas & Aguirre, 2015).

Institutions should implement actions to promote the training of teachers in research, in a way that stimulates permanent innovation in curricula and teaching methods, at the time that ensures appropriate professional and financial conditions for teachers to guarantee excellence in research and teaching (Reiban Barrera, 2018). This is because research is becoming more and more important in people's lives, especially in technological, social, and humanistic aspects (Maldonado-Díaz & Núñez-Díaz, 2023). This requires a commitment by institutions to ongoing training in research competences for in-service teachers. Similarly, Betancourt & Jiménez (2025) argue that, in order to adapt successfully to the changing needs of the foreign language teaching landscape, teachers require strong teaching skills, a dedication to continuous research and technological abilities.

Considering the close difference between the research competence and research practice, it can be concluded that one is a consequence of the other, i.e., if teachers do not have research competences, it is difficult for them to carry out research practices in their pedagogical performance. The results of this research show that teachers need not only training in investigative competences but also support and motivation from educational institutions so that they can develop investigative practices motivated by those investigative competences.

Foreign language teacher-training institutions have been concerned with providing research training for recent graduates to meet the requirements of the Ministry of National Education. However, they have not been aware of the profile of the teacher trainer and their research competence, so that they can link and motivate students in the development of research as part of their practice. Sosa *et al.* (2017) state that higher education teachers require specialized knowledge that allows them to guide their students in the research processes relevant to the country's dynamics.

It is worrying to note the low number of teachers who are linked to formal research processes, a total 17 %, compared to 23 % who state that they are completely alien to research-related processes. Tapia *et al.* (2017) state that the quality of education offered by educa-

tional institutions to their students is reflected in the quality of their research works and publications.

The motivation of teachers for research contrasts with the lack of training in research skills. Although teachers have carried out research exercises as part of their professional training, this practice is not maintained over time. Despite having the experience and knowledge, teachers are not motivated to continue researching. There is an apparent need to promote greater social commitment by university teachers, so that they can put their skills and competences into the service of others (Blanco, 2020). They should use their knowledge and experience to make contributions to the good of the community.

It is essential to bear in mind that the research teacher is an example to follow for his or her students and a motivator for his or her colleagues (Quezada *et al.*, 2020). In coherence with Vallejo (2020), the role of university teachers in the training and motivation of research students is crucial, especially in the current moment of education, in which the best way to ensure that they become protagonists of the changes occurring in the world is sought.

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