Recent studies seem to indicate that when teachers engage with research great benefits to both lecturers' teaching and students' learning happen (Hoang, Thi Bich, Phuong, Bich, 2018). However, the integration of research in teaching-learning practice can still be identified as a challenge that needs to be met in higher education, (Vereijkena, van der Rijsta, Jan de Beaufortb, van Drielc, and Dekkerd, 2018). Besides, there seems to be a paucity of studies conducted to explore teacher educators' research engagement in English as a Foreign Language contexts. Thus, this study aimed to examine EFL teachers' engagement with and attitudes towards educational research in a Mexican teacher education programme. The team of researchers conducted a mixed-method study in which a sample of the population of educators answered the the Teacher Attitude Scale towards Educational Research (Ilhan et al. (2013). Qualitative data emanated from interviews to 6 teachers. The findings suggest that teacher educators perceive a need for educational research, however, its value and applicability cannot be ascertained. Barriers which impede teacher educators' engagement with research were also identified.

Carolina Reyes Galindo is an English teacher currently studying a Master's Degree in TEFL. She is interested in researching educational actors' perspectives on research training at higher education. Carolina has been a speaker at several national and international conferences and co-authored a book chapter.

Carolina Reyes Galindo
Oscar Manuel Narváez Trejo

Teachers' Perceptions Of Educational Research

A small-scale study

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Imprint

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: A SMALL SCALE STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Rationale

My interest in researching about the research culture at the school investigated emanates from my experience in doing a small-scale research project as a result of the introductory course I took in second semester. Ever since that time, I have been taking every opportunity to collaborate in different research projects as part of a research group. To me, it is an important part of my training as future teacher of English for research has been considered as one of the university's foundations to form integral students as research promotes basic skills that every undergraduate should possess: analysis, observation and reflection skills. However, I have noticed that research appears to be not so relevant to most of the teachers. This has made me wonder what teachers' attitudes towards research are.

In education, doing research is one of the important duties that need to be fulfilled so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Hoang, Thi Bich, Phuong, & Bich, 2018). In the last decades, foreign language learning has resorted to the implementation of research. However, the gap between theory and practice in the profession has still been a matter to be solved (Kutlay, 2012). Because there seems to be a paucity of studies conducted to explore English teachers research engagement in English as Foreign Language (EFL) context, this study aims to examine teachers' perceptions of and engagement with educational research in a public university in Veracruz.

Research in higher education

Today, given the accelerated knowledge changes, competent university students are required to respond to the problems of a complex and dynamic reality. Students are also required not only to adopt a reflective and critical attitude regarding their present and future educational reality but also that they possess the necessary competences to investigate that reality and to transform it creatively. Research promotes the development inquiry, observation and reflection skills that allow the development of logical-formal, analytical and critical thinking that will have as main purpose the generation of knowledge. Undoubtedly, the development of research skills among university students seems to be the key to responding to the complex and changing reality of today's global environment (Rodriguez, Navarrete, & Holguin, 2018). It is therefore pertinent to train professionals who carry out the permanent task of studying reality, to ask themselves about the everyday and the obvious, professionals who give answers to the problems that exist in the area of language teaching.

Higher education institutions must support any change or improvement to their educational programs based on social needs, always trying to prepare their graduates to perform in the best way to serve society. To achieve this, it is pertinent to carry out studies that yield reliable data about the situation of the educational programs. The inclusion of the voices of educational actors closely linked to the program is undoubtedly necessary if the situation is to be better understood. In this sense, this study seeks to inform about the role of research in a teacher education programme and the factors that foster or hinder educational actors' engagement with and attitudes towards academic research.

Significance

At the University of Veracruz (UV), the current institutional educational model envisages the research competence as one of the pillars of students' integral development. It is therefore necessary to investigate the role of research at the different educational programmes that the UV offers. This study took place at the BA Degree in English Language (LLI for its Spanish initials), which belong to the School of Languages (FIUV, hereafter). The LLI aims at forming English professionals with knowledge in two main areas: teaching and translation. Nonetheless, this research is focused on the research component of the curriculum.

With a change in curriculum in 2008, the LLI sought a change in the training of future professionals graduated from the English-language educational program. Regarding research training, the curriculum comprises two research-related courses or educational experiences. A compulsory, introductory course is offered in the second semester. This educational experience is the starting point for students to understand the theoretical and practical complexity of the research process in language teaching, and identify the characteristics of academic papers to encourage students to carry out small-scale research projects (Facultad de Idiomas, 2018). That is, students develop basic research skills which they are then expected to use in their other courses. The second research course, also mandatory, is offered in the seventh semester. This prepares them to do another research project which becomes their final research paper (thesis). It can be inferred that research plays a secondary role in students' teacher training. Hence the need to approach the topic of research engagement among teacher educators at the LLI.

Thus, the aims of this study are:

➢ To find out the role research plays amongst the English teachers

➢ To examine teachers' engagement with research

➢ To identify teachers' attitudes about doing and reading research

➢ To assemble teachers' opinions about factors that foster or hinder their engagement with research.

Research questions

This small-scale investigation aims at depicting teacher educators' attitudes towards and engagement with research at university level. Nevertheless, it is also hoped that this research can help future teachers interested in the subject within the area of languages. The following research questions are addressed:

▪ What are teachers' attitudes to research in an English as a Foreign Language setting?

▪ What do teachers think of the relevance of research in their career?

▪ How do teachers view research regarding their professional life?

▪ To what extent do these English teachers say they are research-engaged?

▪ What experience do teachers have in research?

▪ What factors facilitate their research engagement?

The results of the study will be useful not only for the academic community of the educational program in question but also for those who work in similar teacher education programs and even for postgraduate programmes in the area of teaching English. Similarly,

the results can serve as input for future evaluations and modifications to the curriculum. Finally, the information obtained can also be useful for the students of this educational program and similar ones, this information might make them wonder on their own perspectives towards research.

CHAPTER 1: Literature review

Teacher researcher

In the last decades, research has focused on how research training can help in the acquisition of a second language (Kutlay, 2012). However, the integration of research in teaching-learning practice can still be identified as a challenge that needs to be met in higher education

Prosser and Trigwell (2014) agree that teachers should practice research in their undergraduate teaching, as it seems to be an approachable way for students to benefit their learning process. The relationship between teachers and undergraduate researchers is an important component of the learner research experience (Craney, McKay, Mazzeo, Prigodich, & Groot, 2011), and for those that have an opportunity to conduct research with a faculty member it can be "a life changing experience" (Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup, & Gonyea, 2007). Nevertheless, teachers often struggle to integrate research and teaching; as a result, students do not see the relation between research and the teaching-learning process (Myers, Sawyer, Dredger, Barnes, & Wilson, 2018).

Recent studies seem to indicate that when lecturers engage with research, either by reading research or by doing research themselves, great benefits to both lecturers' teaching and students' learning happen. Moreover, reading and doing research involve lecturers to change their roles from passive positions in educational systems to innovative roles in curriculum development. In addition, taking lecturers to do research is a feasible way to help them to change their frustrated and isolated feelings in the teaching process as well as

their teaching challenge encounters or become less dependent on external challenges (Hoang, Thi Bich, Phuong, & Bich, 2018). Borg (2010) summarizes a number of advantages if teachers use research knowledge for educational practice. Research can make deeper sense of their work, detect ideas to experiment within their classroom, extend their discourse for discussing teaching, authenticate with a theoretical rationale what they already do, or examine their planning and decision-making processes.

Verburgh and Elen (2011) mention that integrating research into teaching seems to be one of the most important factors in promoting student learning and student beliefs about research. Few studies have focused on undergraduate student perceptions of research in teaching during the first undergraduate year (Levy & Petrulis, 2012; Spronken-Smith, Mirosa & Darrou, 2014).

 "However, not many in quantity, some research have been conducted in the field of English language teaching which aimed to enquire the research perceptions of teachers." (Kutlay, 2012, p. 190). Because there seems to be a paucity of studies conducted to explore English teachers and students' research engagement in this field of study, this study aims to examine teachers and undergraduate students' perceptions about educational research by identifying if the participants read and do research in a public university in Mexico.

Teacher research is more commonly associated with qualitative forms of inquiry and investigative strategies, which are accessible to teachers, though in theory, there are no limitations on the strategies that teacher researchers can deploy. Borg (2010) defines teacher research as systematic, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively. Teacher Research aims to improve teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work. In addition, teacher-

research may contribute to increase the quality of the teaching-learning process in classrooms, and enhance institutional improvement and educational policy more generally.

 Teachers are viewed as the implementers of the findings produced by researchers (Kutlay, 2012). However, this view has been changing in recent years because teachers are considered as practitioners of educational research (Kutlay, 2012). Borg (2010) suggests that we should be mindful of the potential of research to transform teacher research into an exercise driven by mainly instrumental goals. Teachers ought to practice research in their classrooms in order to produce and transfer functional knowledge (Mayke, et al., 2018). As they succinctly put it: *"Teachers should explicitly express research in their undergraduate teaching in a way that is visible and approachable for students in order for student learning to benefit research integration, since student perceptions of teaching play an important role in fostering student learning outcomes"* (Mayke et al., 2018, p. 425). Haberfellner and Thomas (2017) mention that research should produce propriety functional knowledge and that teachers should be able to find, understand, and transfer this knowledge into their teaching practice.

According to Borg (2010), teacher research as part of a university degree requires more supervision that practicing teachers doing teacher research would not normally receive. This is one advantage of the academic model of teacher research, and highlights the central role that expert mentors can play in enabling teachers to sustain their engagement in teacher research. Developing teacher research can also improve teacher's critical thinking, creativity and research competence (Hoang et al., 2018). Many faculty members could benefit from strategies that enable them to generate new research ideas, create time for research, effectively mentor undergraduates, garner external finding, establish successful

collaborations, and maintain their level of expertise (Hunter, Laursens, Seymour, Thiry, & Melton, 2010).

Alison and Carey (2007) reported lack of time, lack of encouragement, lack of expertise and confusion about the concept of "real" research as the main factors that hindered teachers from doing research. According to Kutlay (2012) teachers do not like to do research, they do not know how do to it, and there is confusion about "the real" concept of research, teachers who have more experience tend to do more research.

Teachers' beliefs about research

Teachers and administrators believe, based on their experiences, that undergraduate research results in high quality student learning, but they do not know that with confidence because cautious assessment has not been done (Hunter et al., 2010). They reported that insufficiencies in campus infrastructure to support dynamic and productive research programs are also prevalent.

Beycioglu (2010, cited in Kutlay, 2012) carried out a study, which revealed that 68% of the teachers reported that they have considered educational research in their practices since they started teaching. Academic journals were the most frequent means of accessing research (28.2%) followed by books (18.8%). Busseniers, Núñez and Rodríguez (2010), carried out a study in the current context, which aimed to make teachers aware of the benefits of research in the academic area; they found out that professors believe doing research improves their teaching and help them to solve problems in the classroom, but they perceive themselves as teachers not as researchers. Similar results were found by

Matoshi and Loewen (2019), who reported that teachers believe research helped them to deal with classroom problems, but the participants also reported that in higher education L2 teachers only conduct and publish research so as to retain their jobs, consequently they feel pressure. Matoshi and Loewen appraised teachers because they provided useful information to increase research engagement among faculty members: cooperate with other teachers, interpret results into applicable pedagogical tools, and conduct classroom research with research procedures integrated into existing curricula.

On the other hand, McNamara (2002) reported that the most negative perception of teachers about research was the quantitative and statistical nature of research. They did not rely on statistics, as they are open to manipulation. They also believe that facts produced in research are not applicable in classrooms. Alison and Carey (2007) examined the perceptions of 22 language teachers in Canada, regarding the relationship between professional development and research, and they reported some factors that hindered teachers from doing research. Lack of time, lack of encouragement, lack of expertise and confusion about the concept of "real" research were the most common reasons. Some teachers find difficult to become involved in undergraduate research because it is time consuming. They think that undergraduate students need more training and supervision than graduate students do, so involving undergraduate students in undergraduate research requires planning and preparation. However, some teachers believe that their students receive significant educational benefits from the research experience (Webber, Laird, & BrckaLorenz, 2012).

Banegas (2018) investigated L2 teachers' notions in Argentina. He found that they conceptualize research as an academic activity, which is organized systematically,

objectively, with a variety of data collection tools (e.g., questionnaires or surveys), analysis, and socialization of findings that are expected to be generalizable, and with classroom application. For teachers, good research should include hypotheses and tests. A remarkable observation was that they perceived other professionals, not teachers, in charge of carrying out research. Among the factors hindering their research engagement, the participants mentioned that research is not supported by institutions and as a result they do not collaborate with other universities. Second, teachers assessed lack of knowledge of research and lack of time as obstacles. Teachers need to invest part of their personal time, and if they have part-time jobs, it is even more difficult to conduct research. Also, EFL teachers mentioned lack of access and lack of practical advice. It was concluded that even though research is important, it is difficult to see its benefits.

CHAPTER 2: Methodology

As there seems to be a lack of studies conducted to explore English teachers' research engagement, and students' beliefs on research in English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, the present study seeks to explore English teachers perspectives on research and students' views of research at a public university in Veracruz.

This methodology chapter consists of two major sections. The first defines the chosen qualitative research paradigm and the case study approach. The second section explains the data collection procedure beginning by describing the context, the population and the participants of the study. Next, the instruments will be identified, then the data collection process will be described. This will be followed by the explanation of the data analysis while the last two sections will cover issues of trustworthiness and limitations of the study.

This mixed method approach pursues to shed light upon the factors which help develop research participants' perspectives on educational research, and how these perspectives are shaped. The following research questions guided this study to reach the objectives:

1. What are teachers' attitudes to research in an English as a Foreign Language setting?

2. What do teachers think of the relevance of research in their career?

3. How do teachers view research regarding their professional life?

4. To what extent do these English teachers say they are research-engaged?

5. What experience do teachers have in research?

6. What factors facilitate their research engagement?

Mixed methods design

The quantitative and qualitative paradigms are described as being two different cultures, each with its own traditions about the way phenomena can be explained (Holliday, 2002). The quantitative paradigm describes a problem using a post positivist view in which a relationship of cause and effect is built among the identified variables to be tested, it uses surveys and experiments as strategies for inquiries, and it draws conclusions from statistical data aimed at applying the results to a wider population scope (Creswell, 2009). On the other hand, qualitative research aims to study complex issues which could not be approached efficiently by clearly identifying and isolating the variables as it is done in a quantitative design (Flick, 2009). As Creswell (2003) explains: A qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative. or change oriented) or both. It also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data. Whereas perspectives to research have been traditionally studied using quantitative designs, the emergence of qualitative research has complemented the quantitative findings (Holliday, 2002) and provided in-depth interpretations of the contextual and dynamic complexity of educational actors' perspectives of educational phenomenon, such as the perspectives and engagement with research. In order to achieve the main objective of the study, which is to

explore English teachers, pre-service teachers and students understanding of and engagement with research, a mixed-method approach was chosen.

Case study approach

The case study design aims to understand a specific phenomenon or situation by describing how the individuals involved in a given case or problem experience said situation (Narváez, Estrada, & Núñez, 2017). In a case study approach, the researcher studies a specific case or cases which belong to a specific group by using data collection techniques which allow for an in-depth and detailed data to be collected and which include various sources of information such as observations, interviews, documents, reports and audio visual material (Wellington, 2015). This approach was chosen for this study as it may allow for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study as it interacts with various social, contextual and intrapersonal factors, which is the general objective of this investigation.

Research context

The context of the study is one of the largest and most prominent schools in the state of Veracruz. For the purposes of this study, only the BA Degree in English will be described since this study concerns teacher educators' perspectives of research. The English major is a seven-semester program which aims to develop professionals with an extensive knowledge of English and abilities in the areas of teaching and translation (Facultad de Idiomas, 2007). Similarly, the curriculum states that students should possess the ability to design and elaborate research projects and these abilities should be acquired by the time the

student reach the seventh semester, time at which they are required to write a *trabajo recepcional*.

Population

The population of this study were English teachers. The participants chosen represented this population as a whole, and although the findings of this study will not be able to be generalized to this whole population, Richards (2003) acknowledges that the success of the any investigation depends on the extent it allows the readers to *engage* with the situation described and the interpretations offered so that the findings will provide an understanding of the individuals who possess similar characteristics to the participants of this study.

Sampling

The purpose of mixed method research is to study a specific phenomenon in depth, and for this reason, qualitative researchers must intentionally choose specific individuals or a specific site instead of randomly selecting the number of individuals who will provide the information needed for the research (Creswell, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the strategy for selecting the participants was convenience sampling, which implies selecting those cases that are easily accessible to the researcher given the circumstances in which the research is taking place, for example when dealing with limited resources of time and people (Flick, 2009). Yin (2011) argues that this type of sampling is not the most effective for research as it is likely to lead to incomplete data for the situation being studied because the chosen participants may not be the best candidates to provide information. However,

this type of sampling will be the most efficient to obtain the desired number of participants because the researcher lacks the time to become sufficiently acquainted with the population being studied to be able to purposefully select the participants who would more likely provide greater information. Nonetheless, this issue was addressed by using the TASER, which was answered by 18 other teachers (aprox. 90% of the target population). Thus, the total number of teachers for the present study was 23.

Participants

The case study included five teachers (3 female and 2 male). Their ages ranged from 28 to 67 years old (mean = 45; SD = 15.79). They shared several key learning/teaching backgrounds. First, all of them are EFL teachers, with an average teaching experience of 19.8 years (SD = 12.53; range = 6-37). Second, all teachers spoke English as an L2. Third, all had formal training as English teachers by completing Bachelor's, 3 teachers hold a Master's and one a PhD. Only one teacher had experience conducting research individually.

Participant	Age	Degree	Years of experience
Sheldon	55	PhD	28
Amy	40	MA	16
Bernadette	35	MA	12
Penny	28	MA	6
Leonard	67	BA, Dip.	37

Table 1. Interviews' research participants

Research Instruments

 Interview guide

Creswell (2012) suggests that extensive forms of data collection be used for a case study approach "such as documents and records, interviews, observations, and physical artifacts" (p.121). Out of the provided options, interviews were employed because it would be the best instrument to allow teacher participants to give lengthy and in-depth information by providing their points of view about the case. Gillham (2005) argues that qualitative interviews have an objective and a reproducible disadvantage as they rely on subjective characteristics for obtaining the necessary information pertaining to the case being studied, for example, the subjective aspect of the participants' responses to the questions, the dependability of the participants' responses to the rapport or interpersonal skills of the interviewer, and the subjectivity of the researcher's interpretation of the interview responses. However, Yin (2011) suggests that the use of a formal instrument could prevent the informality of this procedure, and a "rigorously defined data collection procedure" (p. 131) can provide the readers a better understanding of the choices made during the data collection process. Furthermore, Creswell (2012) points out that qualitative interviews allow the researcher to obtain large amounts of data regarding unobservable behaviour, such as perceptions, beliefs, perspectives. Also, the use of interviews allows the researcher to have "better control over the types of information received, because the interviewer can ask specific questions to elicit this information" (Creswell, 2012, p. 218). In consequence, the interviews for this study were carried out following a semi-structured format which allows the interviewer to have guiding open-ended questions to lead the participant's responses while maintaining the flexibility to pursue interesting developments or to further

explore certain issues (Gillham, 2005). Thus, an interview protocol was developed to help steer the interview in the appropriate path in order to gather the necessary information, to provide introductory questions to encourage the participants to open up and share information. The questions included in the semi-structured interview guide were based on Sato and Loewen (2019) as their focus of investigation was similar to this study. These focused on teachers' understanding of research, questions focused on obtaining their definition of 'EFL research', their impressions of research/researchers and research accessibility. Other questions aimed at obtaining teachers' use of research, usefulness of research, actual use of research, obstacles to using research and advice to researchers. The interviews were recorded using an audio recording application on the researcher's smart phone to ensure more accurate documenting of the interviews and to facilitate the transcription process with word processing software.

Survey

A modified version of the Teachers Attitude Scale towards Educational Research (TASTER) developed by İlhan, Şekerci, Sözbilir and Yıldırım (2013) was also used to collect data from a larger population of teachers. TASTER is a five-point Likert-type scale consisting of 20 items with answers including, 'I Strongly Disagree' (1), 'I Disagree' (2), 'Neutral' (3), 'I Agree' (4), and 'I Strongly Agree' (5). In a study conducted by Ilhan et al. (2013), reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of TASTER was 0.87. TASTER has three sub-dimensions, which are 'Necessity of Educational Research' (Items 1,3,7,10,14,17,20), 'Value of Educational Research' (Items 2,6,9,11,12,16), and 'Applicability of Educational Research' (Items 4,5,8,13,15,18,19). The items no 4, 5, 8, 13, 15, 18, 19 are negative items, which are analysed by converting them into positive statements in data analysis.

Data collection procedure

Quantitative data was evaluated by means of descriptive (arithmetic mean) statistical techniques. The data was analysed using Excel©. Independent groups t-test was performed to investigate whether there was a statistically difference in mean scores among the different groups of teachers in the study. A correlation analysis was performed to determine the significance and strength of the relationship between the variables.

The first step to the data collection involved the researcher contacting the Admissions Secretary of the School of Languages in order to obtain the necessary permissions to approach the teachers from the English major. Next, semi-structured interviews were held during the month of May of the 2019 spring semester. For this study, six English teachers were interviewed. The teacher interviews were carried out in order to achieve triangulation of the data provided by the survey. These participants were interviewed once during the month of May, depending on the convened schedule. Before beginning each interview, the participants were reminded of the confidentiality of their responses. During the interviews, an interview protocol was used to help record relevant aspects of the participants' answers. The participants were interviewed in a quiet environment where their attention to the interview and the audio recording was not affected. The participants were provided with a consent form in which they acknowledged their agreement to participate in this study, the use of the information they provide, and the protection of their identities. The consent form was signed before the interview began. The participants were reassured of the

confidentially of their responses to make them feel more comfortable thus potentially allowing them to share more information.

Data analysis procedure

According to Creswell (2012), qualitative data analysis "consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion" (p. 148). Hence, the analysis of the interview data of this study was based on the steps for thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) which are as follows:

1) The first step is to become familiar with the collected data set by transcribing the data using a word processing software and by reading it through multiple times. The researcher may also write down his initial thoughts at this time.

2) The next step is to generate the initial codes by highlighting the interesting features of the data which are found throughout the entire data set. This must be done systematically and making sure to gather data pertinent to each code.

3) Next, the researcher must search for the themes by putting together all the codes relevant to each potential theme.

4) The fourth step is to review the previously established themes in relation to the coded extracts and the overall data set. This is done to begin creating the thematic map of the analysis.

5) Then, the themes must be further defined and named through repeated analysis. The result of this step is the latent formation of the overall interpretation of the case being studied.

6) The last step is to produce the report by performing a final analysis of the coded extracts and themes regarding the research questions and objectives. Also, the researcher should select the most appropriate extracts as striking examples to include in the report. Thus, the concluding product of this step is the report itself.

As explained in the steps above, once the data had been transcribed the researcher continued analysing and reviewing the data at every step of the way. As Creswell (2007) describes, "the researcher engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach… [He] touches on several facets of analysis and circles around and around" (p. 150). Accordingly, the analysis and interpretation of the data from the interviews of the English teachers would let the researcher identify the perspectives towards and engagement with educational research. In addition, the interviews of the English teachers were analysed to corroborate the quantitative data provided by the students and the rest of the Faculty regarding their perspectives towards research.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In evaluating a research project, Richards (2003) establishes a difference between the terminology and strategies used within the quantitative and qualitative paradigms; while in evaluating quantitative research one may refer to validation as the accurate description of the phenomenon being studied, and to reliability as the possibility to replicate the investigation and obtain similar results, in qualitative research one refers to achieving

trustworthiness (Yin, 2011). The trustworthiness of an investigation is determined by evaluating it upon the aspects of credibility, dependability and transferability; the first is similar to the quantitative validation and refers to the accuracy of the findings, the second refers to being able to follow the research process through a detailed description of its procedures, and the last is the ability of the reader to deeply understand the context of the study in order to be able to judge whether it may relate to other contexts (Richards, 2003). Furthermore, Yin (2011) suggests three objectives the researcher must accomplish to ensure that the investigation can achieve a trustworthy status among the scientific community.

1) The first objective is to ensure that the research procedures be carried out in an explicit, clear and well documented manner as to allow the audience to understand and evaluate the work that has been done.

2) The second objective is to carry out the research by following formal procedural guidelines while allowing the flexibility of qualitative research. This includes taking into consideration the researcher's position within the research process by performing constant self-reflections and publicly describing any biases or possible distortions caused by his points of view.

3) Finally, the third objective is to make sure the results reported strictly adhere to the participants' accounts of the matter being studied. This may include cross referencing and analyzing data from different perspectives to the same problem in order to verify the consistency of the data from the different sources.

In contrast to the quantitative strategies for achieving validity and reliability, the qualitative strategies include prolonged engagement and persistent observation, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias at the onset of the

study, participant verification of interpretation, detailed descriptions of the participants and settings, and external audits (Creswell, 2007).

For this study, credibility would be achieved by asking the participants to verify the explanations they have provided after these have been analysed. The use of this strategy would ensure that the teachers' interpreted responses are what they were trying to portray. Furthermore, triangulation was used to obtain information from various sources (teacher interviews, students survey and teachers survey). Peer review was used to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the research instruments and the thematic analysis performed.

Ethical considerations

One of the responsibilities of the researcher is to safeguard the rights of the participants of the study (Narváez, 2009). To ensure that research followed the accepted codes of ethics, the researcher avoided harming participants, and the participants partook the research voluntarily and were properly informed of what their participation entailed. In the present investigation, the ethical considerations for protecting the participants' rights were to provide them with written consent forms to ensure that they are informed of the requirements of the research for their participation and that they acknowledge that their participation is voluntary and can be terminated whenever they wish. Furthermore, the consent form also explained the confidential nature of the information the participants would provide; thus, this form also gave the participants the option to create a pseudonym to protect their identity. Also, through the member checks, the participants were able to corroborate the interpretation of their responses, and if they chose to, they were able refuse the publication of any of the information already given.

CHAPTER 3: Findings

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. These are organized as follows: First, the quantitative data obtained from the survey is shown. This in turn is subdivided into the general results about teacher's attitudes towards educational research and then, the results from the sub dimensions are discussed in detail. The quantitative analysis is followed by the presentation and discussion of the qualitative data. This is organized according to the categories identified in the analysis which, in turn were interpreted according the sub dimensions of the survey.

Survey Data

Results from the survey were interpreted following the procedure suggested by Ilhan et al. (2013). A score interval between 1 and 2.59 indicates negative attitudes, a score interval between 2.60 and 3.40 means moderate attitudes and a score interval from 3.40 to 5 represents positive attitudes. The general mean score was 3.28, which means teachers' responses on educational research are moderate to positive as most of them think this sort of research is beneficial regarding their professional development, to improve the curriculum at schools, and because research outcomes are meaningful for the students' success.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Educational research provides beneficial information that I can use in class.	12	6	0	0	0
2	Scientific publications regarding education (dissertations, articles, books etc.) contribute to an increase in the quality of education.	8	8	2	0	0
3	I am happy to teach a lesson in the class according to the findings of educational research.	5	9	4	0	0
4	Educational research conducted by academicians is undertaken only to enhance their own careers.	0	1	4	10	3
5	If I teach lessons according to the data obtained from educational research, the syllabus cannot be completed.	0	2	4	11	1
6	Teachers should benefit from the findings of educational research.	8	10	0	0	0
7	I like attending seminars on educational research.	7	9	2	0	0
8	I believe that the scientific publications regarding education (dissertations, articles, books etc.) are superficial.	0	1	7	5	5
9	Following educational research is part of the process of being a teacher.	7	8	2	1	0
10	Educational research contributes to the development and renewal of curricula.	5	12	1	0	0
11	It is necessary to conduct scientific research regarding education.	8	9	1	0	0
12	It is important to be informed about educational research.	7	11	0	0	0
13	It is a waste of time to teach lessons according to the results of the educational research.	0	0	1	8	5
14	Educational research generates solutions for the problems I encounter in teaching.	1	10	2	0	1
15	I do not think that educational research is applicable.	1	0	0	7	6
16	Educational research contributes to the development of the teaching profession.	2	11	0	1	0
17	The findings of educational research that are recounted in seminars are beneficial.	2	8	2	1	0
18	Educational research is not applicable in a school environment.	0	0	1	7	6
19	Teaching lessons according to the findings of educational research reduces the success of students.	0	2	1	8	4
20	The findings of educational research are important for me in the selection of a teaching model, method and technique according to the topic in the teaching process.	1	9	3	0	1

Table 2. Teachers' Attitudes about Educational Research

After analyzing the data, no item was recognized to have negative attitudes towards educational research. Items 1 to 12 (M= 3.6) represent positive attitudes towards educational research, whereas items 13, 14, 15, 18, and 20 (M= 2.8), 17 (M= 2.6) and 19 (M= 3) show moderate attitudes. The next step in this study was to examine the results obtained from the sub dimensions of the TASER.

Necessity of Educational Research

The results obtained from the 'The Necessity of Educational Research' sub-dimension provide a mean score of 2.82. That is, participants have moderate attitudes towards educational research, in the sense that they do not see the need to carry out studies

conducted to improve teaching practices. This seems to indicate that there is a need to develop a sense of a research culture at the site of investigation so that teachers become

	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
1. Educational research provides beneficial information that I can use in class.	3.6	5.37
3. I am happy to teach a lesson in the class according to the findings of educational research.	3.6	3.78
7. I like attending seminars on educational research.	3.6	4.16
10. Educational research contributes to the development and renewal of curricula.	3.6	5.13
14. Educational research generates solutions for the problems I encounter in teaching.	2.8	4.09
17. The findings of educational research that are recounted in seminars are beneficial	2.6	3.13
20. The findings of educational research are important for me in the selection of a teaching model, method and technique according to the topic in the teaching process	2.8	3.63

more involved in research.

Table 3. Necessity of Educational Research

Applicability of Educational Research

The same situation can be perceived regarding 'Applicability of Educational Research' since the main score was 3.17, which indicates that teachers also have moderate attitudes in this dimension. The fact that teachers do not consider research results having an impact on their teaching practice appears to explain why the teacher participants do not engage in

research processes. As they seem not to see the applicability of research, there is no necessity to do it.

	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
4. Educational research conducted by academicians is undertaken only to enhance their own careers.	3.6	3.91
5. If I teach lessons according to the data obtained from educational research, the syllabus cannot be completed.	3.6	4.39
8. I believe that the scientific publications regarding education (dissertations, articles, books etc.) are superficial	3.6	2.97
13. It is a waste of time to teach lessons according to the results of the educational research.	2.8	3.56
15. I do not think that educational research is applicable.	2.8	3.42
18. Educational research is not applicable in a school environment.	2.8	3.42
19. Teaching lessons according to the findings of educational research reduces the success of students	3	3.16

Table 4. Applicability of Educational Research

However, the mean score for 'Value of Educational Research' was 3.4. According to this result, participants appear to have positive attitudes towards this sub-dimension. What this result means is that participants agreed with the fact that research is important. Nevertheless, as it was previously mentioned, teachers do not go further; they do not carry out studies, this situation hinders their engagement with educational research.

	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
2. Scientific publications regarding education (dissertations, articles, books etc.) contribute to an increase in the quality of education.	3.6	4.10
6. Teachers should benefit from the findings of educational research.	3.6	4.98
9. Following educational research is part of the process of being a teacher.	3.6	3.65
11. It is necessary to conduct scientific research regarding education.	3.6	4.51
12. It is important to be informed about educational research.	3.6	5.13
16. Educational research contributes to the development of the teaching profession	2.8	4.66

Table 5. Value of Educational Research

It can be concluded that teachers have moderate attitudes (M= 2.8) towards educational research. They perceive research as valuable, but they apparently do not see the necessity to carry it out, and they seem not to apply research outcomes to their teaching practice. Yet, professors agreed that doing research increases the quality of education as well as the development of the teaching profession. Similar results were obtained from the study conducted by Busseniers, Núñez and Rodríguez (2010) which aimed to analyze the research culture at the School of Languages, UV. Their results indicate that teachers seemed to perceive themselves as teachers but not as researchers, but they consider research as beneficial for teaching and learning. The main reason for doing research was to improve their teaching profession.

Interview Data

The interview responses were classified according to the sub-dimensions from the TASER. There were no data obtained to have attitudes corresponding to 'Applicability of Educational Research'. The results indicated, contrary to the TASER, that teachers believe that doing research is significant regarding their teaching careers; participants identified research as beneficial not only because research outcomes help them to solve teaching problems but also because research may help students with the results obtained from investigations. However, participants mentioned some factors that hinder their engagement with the research process. The most common reason was lack of time due to working conditions. Finally, they were requested to provide some recommendations based on what they think they need to perform better and thus which the University should implement.

Characteristics of Research

First, teachers were asked to provide a definition of research, to have a general perception of how they perceive the process. Most participants mentioned that some of the characteristics of research have to do with the knowledge the researcher provides to the potential readers and the field. They also think research is interesting, important in the professional field, it widens people's curiosity, which is an innate characteristic.

Regarding this last point, Professor Sheldon stated that **"research is basically an action that is innate in the human being since we are born…they start investigating in order to adapt and to develop within the environment in which they live"**. However, the participants also mentioned that for undertaking educational research, it is necessary to

organize your time, to be willing to follow sequences and procedures, to be disciplined and organized as well as being emotionally intelligent to interact with others.

Concerning the role of research among students, it is important to mention that professors think doing research causes distress in students because they probably do not know how to do it. This may imply that even though teachers regard research as important and beneficial to students, teachers must take into consideration the aspects of timing, discipline, good rapport with others among other characteristics to undertake it.

Necessity of Educational Research

The participants define educational research as a formal process that is necessary to do in order to improve teaching, as well as finding solutions to teaching/learning problems. They mentioned it is a process in which both teachers and students must be involved in order to find answers regarding learning situations. Professor Bernadette said, **"I would say it is important and meaningful because no matter how small or how simple things you think you are researching, those are important and because of small details bigger things can come up".** This might lead us to state that the teachers interviewed consider educational research meaningful and important for the teaching-learning process as it provides new ideas and knowledge to share with students,

Nonetheless, they also stated that educational research implies hard work because of their workload. Research is time-consuming as it involves working with people, so you need to find the time to do it. Nevertheless, to achieve significant results participants suggested doing teamwork; this can be achieved by forming research groups in which teachers and

students work together. Besides, it is also important to establish times and schedules so research aims can be achieved.

Value of Educational Research

Professors seem to perceive research as valuable for their professional practice. They agreed that doing research lets them find solutions to problems they encounter and helps them to improve their teaching practices. Participant Amy succinctly puts it **"It is meaningful, because if you want to improve your teaching practice, I think it is necessary to do it [research]. There is a problem, and if you do not know how to solve the problem, then you have to find a solution and a good way to do it is through researching."**

However, professor Sheldon answered that even though doing research is important, he just does it for his own purposes; **"I research what I think I need, what I enjoy reading. Because nobody asks me to, I don't do it for those purposes, but I do it for me."**

This particular view seems to indicate that although research brings new knowledge, different perspectives, and new outcomes that you can apply in your academic life, there is still a lack of interest in contributing to this field, and limited experience regarding research.

Research Engagement

Regarding teacher's research practice, most participants said they read and did research when they studied their major and their master's degree. At the time of the investigation,

some of the consulted professors were carrying out research for personal interest, in order to prepare for a PhD, and as advisors for different projects. That is, the research experience and their engagement with research is mainly degree oriented.

Regarding the product of research or the academic production resulting from research processes, participant Sheldon said he does not research for publishing whereas participant Leonard mentions he publishes once a year. According to professor Sheldon's opinion, doing research is a matter of having a full-time job. He stated, **"I don't do research for papers that will be published because I don't hold a full-time job."** In contrast, professor Leonard, who holds a full-time job, said he has published several times, in national and international journals; also, he participated in a program called "Perfil PRODEP" for six years. But currently he does not publish. He stated, **"I wanted to do it on my own. That is what I have done. But also, because I want to help my students."** This might imply that teachers recognize the value of doing research, whether they publish research papers or not. They also see the applicability of the results. It is not a matter of holding a full-time job; it is a matter of doing research because it helps them in their teaching practice.

Factors Hindering Research Engagement

The participants specified what factors foster or hinder their engagement in research. Among the most common factors are lack of time and energy. Professors commented that you have to find the time to do research. This is closely linked to teachers' type of hiring condition, whether they are full-time or hourly-paid teachers. There are professors that hold two or three jobs, and as a result, it is difficult for them to find the time. This factor also has

to do with the lack of energy, the ones who have long working hours, do not feel energetic enough to carry out research. Moreover, they consider they cannot work along the research process as a single area. It is essential to be in contact with other fields, as Leonard stated, **"We also need to be in touch with other areas, such as administration, statistics, maybe other sciences in general."**

All the participants agreed that the University ought to contribute more to the research process. They expressed that first it is important to provide with resources that enable teachers to do more research. These resources might include financial support, extra incomes to encourage professors to carry out investigations; offering full-time jobs, so they have the time to do more studies, organizing conferences in order to call teachers' attention and interest to research. In this regards, Professor Penny stated, **"Teachers do not see the importance of doing research, until they have a benefit. That would be a really good initiative".**

Research Process Development

Professors' notions about the significance the university seats on the research process has changed with the implementation of the 2008 curriculum. Professor Sheldon mentioned, **"Students look at things in a different way, it is different. Supposedly the learning is autonomous, so because it's autonomous it engages people into doing research."** Positives changes have been implemented, as participant Leonard said. **"…I thought at that moment that students needed to know how to write essays in English first. Teachers were talking about triangulation, but students did not know what was that,**

not at this level... teachers learn this in the MA and they want students to learn it in the BA. We have to be more realistic".

As the participants said, some changes have been implemented. However, there is still disinformation regarding the significance the University should give to the research process. In order to improve the research engagement at the EFL context. The teacher participants in this study provided different suggestions such as motivating students by taking them to real experiences that can enhance their interest in doing research, bringing them to investigate meaningful things since the beginning of the degree, as well as organizing more conferences. Within this aspect, the participants also mentioned that they would reduce the level of difficulty that some teachers impose when doing research. Also, they suggest providing teachers with research opportunities like keeping contact with other universities, and offering full-time jobs, so they have a set schedule in which they have time to carry out research projects.

Chapter four: Conclusions

It is true that there are plenty of studies conducted to evaluate the benefits for teachers in doing research; however, research conducted in ELT contexts is still scarce (Borg, 2009). This study aimed to answer the question: What are teachers' perceptions of research in an English as a Foreign Language setting? To answer this question, it was necessary to analyze how teachers conceptualize research, and to examine their engagement and experiences with research.

The findings obtained in this small-scale study may lead us to conclude that lack of a research culture at the institution may be affecting teachers' engagement with educational research. Participants still have moderate experiences in both reading and doing research. Even though they recognize the value of research for their careers and for the improvement of teaching processes, their involvement has only happened as part of their education; that is, they have limited experience with research. They may lack both the understanding and concrete skills that must support good quality research (Borg, 2009).

The institutional hiring conditions is limiting teachers' research-oriented activities. Professors do not have enough time to carry out research because of their schedules. As mentioned before, some of them hold more than one job. These limitations, and teachers' attitudes towards research, result in scarce productivity, which can also hinder students' engagement with research. Being involved in research processes can make them reflect on the importance and benefits research can have.

To improve research engagement, it is important that teachers discuss and set the kind of research they are interested in doing. What is recommended for the University is to contribute more

to this process. That is, preparing conferences, seminars, and workshops, so teachers and students see the significance that doing research may have on their professional development. There should be research advisors, who have more experience in doing research, open to guide and offer reunions with other teachers (Hoang et al., 2018). If these suggestions were implemented by the university, teachers' views and engagement with research could change positively.

The limited number of participants in this research may cause the results to be considered cautiously, but it is important to share them, so teachers see the impact it has on this field. As a result, more extensive studies should be done.

Limitations and delimitations

One limitation of this study is the validity of the data provided by the participants. The participants were advised to provide honest answers during the data collection process, but it was quite difficult to be certain that the participants spoke with honesty. For this reason, the data collected was taken at face value but repeated interviews and strategies for achieving trustworthiness were used to help ensure its consistency. In a similar manner, the time that the participants were able to provide for this study is considered as another limitation. Since the data was collected during the last month of the term, participants were involved with school activities, homework and academic workload. To counteract this limitation, the researcher made every effort to keep a flexible schedule for the interviews to accommodate the needs of the participants.

On the other hand, a delimitation of this study is the time available to conclude it. Nonetheless, the multiple interviews that were carried out provided sufficient data for this study. Another delimitation is the transferability of the findings from this study. The small

sample size used may not allow for generalizations, but the results may be transferable to other cases depending on how similar they are to the case being studied in this project. Also, the findings from this study could provide a different point of view of the problem at hand which could signify an opportunity for further research on this topic that could encompass a larger sample as well as a different research methodology, such as a quantitative design, to contribute with further data regarding this problem. A longitudinal study could be considered to obtain a deeper understanding of the problem at hand.

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