

THE PROFILE OF TEACHERS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEGREE PROGRAMS IN COLOMBIA IN COHERENCE WITH THE TRAINING PROPOSALS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Faced with the growing challenges of higher education in Colombia, it is necessary to recognize the profile of foreign language teachers in degree programs and their training needs in order to contribute to the training of new professionals according to the training objectives set by the institutions. This doctoral thesis is the result of several years of research on teacher training in foreign language teaching. The study focused on investigating the coherence between the profile of teacher trainers and the teacher training profile proposed by the degree programs in foreign languages in Colombia in the light of the curricular reforms that the degree programs in foreign languages have undergone according to the guidelines of resolution 18583 of 2017 issued by the Ministry of Education in Colombia. The research carries out an analysis of the academic offerings of the Bachelor's degree programs in foreign languages, the proposed profiles and the profile of the teacher trainer of the same programs, making a relationship between the competences aligned with the substantive functions of higher education.

This research is of a mixed type with an exploratory-descriptive study approach with a random sample of 160 teachers belonging to 20 bachelor's degree programs in the country, it was identified that there is no direct correlation between the profile of the teacher trainer and the profile of the graduate proposed by the institution, which leads to carry out analyses and initiate permanent training plans, especially in the training of competences related to the substantive function of research and social projection. So far, higher education institutions have focused their efforts mainly on strengthening undergraduate programs while neglecting the continuing in-service teachers training.

Keywords: *teacher training, foreign languages, competence development, teachers' profile, bachelor degree programs*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current perspective of higher education in Colombia, many academics focus on teachers and their pedagogical and didactic performance, since this is a fundamental factor in the improvement of the quality of education and the innovation of educational practice (Zabalza, 2009; Bozu, 2010a).teaching in higher education is becoming increasingly complex given that with the inclusion of new educational policies, substantial changes are taking place that require new institutional as well as organizational and functional devices (Barnett, 2002). Therefore, the need to link highly qualified teachers, with professional, human and social competencies whose willingness and commitment is evidenced in the quality of teaching, is increasing.

Thus, the training of higher education teachers is a fundamental factor on which institutions should focus their objectives, since the way in which they develop their teaching work, their experience and training profile are fundamental aspects that have an impact on the training of students in the process of professionalization. Therefore, these teachers require a set of competencies consistent and coherent with the training profiles proposed in higher education programs. Celís, Díaz and Duque (2013) affirm that the teaching profession needs not only a specific training but also principles, attitudes, rituals and good practices to produce didactics in the disciplines in a way that enables students to learn effectively what to learn and when to learn it.

In the case of the performance of teachers in foreign language degree programs, it has taken on new perspectives in recent years due to the impact that foreign languages have had on society and the educational system. For this reason, it is necessary to review educational practices, teacher training and a critical and reflective look at the profile of teachers in these programs.

In this sense, educational policies in Colombia have advanced significantly in order to achieve a quality offer. The Colombian Ministry of National Education in the latest guidelines for degree programs (2014) and resolution 18583 of 2017, proposes the training of foreign language teachers with high communicative competencies in the target language, which allow them to ensure good teaching models in the language; pedagogical and didactic competencies that allow them to employ relevant and effective strategies to ensure the academic success of their students; all this articulated to research processes where the teacher becomes aware and attentive to the situations or possible problems in their classroom and leads them to make proposals to improve possible situations in the educational context.

From this vision, it is needed of a holistic profile of the teacher accompanied by a reflective practice where his main objective is to carry out good pedagogical practices and make contributions in the educational process, this undoubtedly implies that the teacher must be in a process of permanent training to be aware of new educational trends and thus, be updated not only in his specific field of training but in everything concerning educational processes in general.

Martínez (2011) affirms that a competent language teacher is one who knows how to articulate in an appropriate and creative manner different types of disciplinary and professional knowledge when planning, promoting, conducting and evaluating learning processes. Likewise, the foreign language teacher must grow as a person, be autonomous, master the teaching practice through critical reflection, is called to know the natural and social environment and its multiple interactions to generate attitudes that allow him/her to support opinions and commitments, Martínez (2006) cited by Fandiño (2016, p. 124).

Along the same lines, Zea (2012) states that among the qualities and characteristics that an English teacher should have, the following stand out: 1) competencies from the pedagogical point of view that allow him/her to harmoniously combine the content of his/her discipline with the pedagogical knowledge and mastery of the teaching and learning processes of his/her students that make academic success possible. 2) Competences from the methodological point of view, which enable him/her to direct the didactic process of the English language in the planning, organization and execution according to the particularities of his/her students. 3) Competences from the academic point of view, which imply an advanced linguistic knowledge of the language to be taught. 4) Communicative competencies, which refer to the accuracy and fluency to communicate in a foreign language and the knowledge of its culture. 5) Competencies in universal values that allow him to practice and promote qualities in his students from the socio-political contexts. 6) Research competencies that lead him/her to apply reflective teaching bases so that his/her actions become a process of research-action, that is to say that while monitoring his/her teaching, he/she reflects and modifies his/her object.

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The main objective of this research was to examine, through a mixed research methodology with a descriptive exploratory approach, the profile of teacher trainers in 20 foreign language degree programs in Colombia and to evaluate its congruence with the training profile of future teachers, proposed in the academic offerings in light of Resolution 18583 of 2017. The research conducts an analysis of the academic offerings of foreign language degree programs, the proposed profiles and the profile of the teacher educator in the same programs. To do this, 20 undergraduate programs in foreign languages in

the country were selected. The relationship between teacher's training competencies aligned with the substantive functions of higher education was analyzed.

This research makes significant contributions to foreign language degree programs, and degree programs in general, given that higher education institutions have concentrated their efforts on configuring academic proposals that are competitive with the market and in accordance with the demands of the new policies of the Ministry of National Education, without stopping to reflect on the implications in terms of human capital, investment and infrastructure that these programs require to achieve high quality academic offerings.

After analyzing the numerals of Resolution 18583 issued by the Ministry of National Education (MEN) in 2017, through which provisions are issued to advance processes of renewal of qualified registration and high quality accreditation in the country's degree programs; it is found that the programs have attended the indications of the MEN given that the academic offerings of these programs comply with the or components set forth in the resolution.

However, when reviewing the competencies of the teachers in charge of implementing these academic offerings, it was found that only 5% of the programs do not have the conditions to implement these curricula. Section 3.7 of the resolution mentions that the teaching staff of the programs must have an adequate level of research and academic production; the same resolution highlights the importance of maintaining a teaching staff with foreign language skills, and professors involved in the relationship of the program with the external sector.

In order to develop this research, a mixed research design was chosen with an exploratory-descriptive study approach that allows making a contribution to the educational instructions to initiate permanent training plans for their teachers in accordance with the policies and the global dynamics and demands of education. The population consisted of a random sample of 160 teachers belonging to 20 undergraduate programs in the country. The results show that there is no direct correlation between the profile of the teacher educator and the profile of the graduate proposed by the institution.

The findings of the research show that, although the curricula have included these competencies for the training of new foreign language teachers, a high number of teachers have no experience in research, do not carry out a research practice within their teaching work and do not have experience in social projection projects. Likewise, it was evidenced that not all teachers have international certifications that accredit their level of English.

The findings show a lack of commitment on the part of the educational institutions in the ongoing training of teacher trainers. There is evidence of a need for training in research competencies; research practice; competencies in new technologies; pedagogical and didactic competencies; and intercultural competencies. It is also found that a considerable number of institutions have opted for hiring teachers on hourly and part-time contracts, reducing the number of contracts analyzed or indefinite contracts.

It is also found that some institutions and participating teachers have not been aware of the high level of responsibility and demands in their role as teacher trainer and sometimes the hiring processes are only focused on reviewing the level of communicative competence of the teacher, leaving aside the other competencies required to ensure an adequate training process of future foreign language teachers.

There is also a lack of motivation and incentives for teachers to pursue postgraduate studies, continuing education and research processes. Likewise, in some educational institutions there was a high rate of permanent teacher turnover, which affects the adequate development of training processes for new teachers; research processes; and the process of relating with the external sector. There is also a lack of motivation and incentives for teachers to pursue postgraduate studies, continuing education and research processes. Likewise, in some educational institutions there was a high rate of permanent teacher turnover, which affects the adequate development of training processes for new teachers; research processes; and the process of relating with the external sector.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Following the mixed research design, we opted for a sequential exploratory, descriptive, sequential design. This type of design allows the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative information sequentially in two phases, with one form of data collection following and informing the other. This is a design is a descriptive mixed methods design also called a two-phase model; Creswell & Plano (2011) involves collecting quantitative data first and then collecting qualitative data to help describe or develop the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that quantitative data and results provide an overall picture of the research problem. Analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is necessary to refine, extend, or explain a phenomenon.

In this study, priority has been given to quantitative (QUAN) rather than qualitative (QUAL) data collection and analysis. In other words, qualitative data are collected first, followed by the collection of quantitative data. In this sense the qualitative data are used to refine the results of the quantitative data. One of the advantages of this method is to have clearly identified quantitative and qualitative data.

This research is of a mixed type with an exploratory-descriptive research approach. EXPLORATORY since this is a research topic that has been little studied, as it was said at the beginning, in the field of foreign language research, the research has been more focused on the student, some on the training of higher education teachers at a general level, however, in teacher training at the level of degree programs in foreign languages specifically, there is little research on the training profile of teachers in English language degree programs. DESCRIPTIVE given that it seeks to specify the characteristics and profiles of individuals, groups, which in this case corresponds to teachers of degree programs, as stated by Hernández & Fernández (2014), this type of research "only seeks to measure or collect information independently or jointly on the concepts or variables to which they refer, that is, its objective is not to indicate how they are related".

2.1. Materials

For this research a simple random probability sampling was chosen. Since a random method is used to select the sample, which is represented by the members included in the study, the population is understood as "the set of all the individuals in which the phenomenon is to be studied".

The population is understood as "the set of all the individuals in which we wish to study the phenomenon", and the sample as "the subset of the population on which the observations are made" (Bisquerra, 1989, p. 81). For this research, the population is made up of professors from 20 undergraduate programs in foreign languages in charge of guiding the disciplinary areas, that is, the courses that are oriented in English, as well as the participation of 15 administrators (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, Hernández et al. (2014). In this case, a Likert scale is used for the survey as a data collection instrument, as it is one of the instruments with the highest scientific rank, Tejedor, García and Prada (2009). The scale used for data collection included the teaching competencies considered necessary in the profile of foreign language teachers:

Communicative competencies

Didactic and pedagogical skills

Technological competencies

Research competencies

2.2. Methods

For data processing, the Atlas TI software is used, as well as T students and SPSS. A manual analysis will also be carried out, using a Word processor as a reference for the process of distilling the information (Vásquez, 2005). For the analysis of quantitative data, two software tools were used: the R programming language and the graphical interface for R called Rstudio. R has different extensions, called packages, that allow it to perform a wide variety of tasks. R programming language was used to perform statistical

analysis of data. Being freely distributed and extensible has allowed it to grow to be one of the most widely used tools in statistics that stands out for its wide variety of functionalities.

For the analysis methodology, descriptive (bar) graphs are used, which correspond to multiple correspondence analysis graphs to study the association between the questions Spearman correlation matrix for hypothesis tests that judge the association between variables. Spearman correlation methods is a bivariate technique used in situations where the researcher wants to observe representations of the information, which allow establishing similarities or discrepancies between variables and individuals, Montes et al (2021).

3. RESULTS

When analyzing the qualitative results with the quantitative ones, the question is answered by taking the categories of analysis foreseen: communicative competences; research competences; technology competences and intercultural competences. These categories were taken according to the substantive functions of higher education: teaching, research and social projection. A comparison is made here between the academic offerings of the foreign language degree programs and the findings of the qualitative and quantitative instruments. The results found for each of these categories are presented below. Each category is presented by making a comparison between the competencies of the teacher trainer profile and the profile of the teacher trainee proposed by the programs.

3.1 Public policy and the guidelines of the Ministry of National Education

From the public policy and the guidelines of the Ministry of National Education, the bachelor's degree programs in foreign languages define the training areas according to the guidelines for bachelor's degrees proposed by the MEN (Resolution 18583, 2017). The different components established by the MEN are the component of didactics, pedagogy, general foundations, and specific knowledge. Hence, the activities proposed to be taken into account are pedagogical practice, methodological, development of foreign language competence, research. The common areas found in the bachelor's degrees reflect the coherence with these components and activities suggested by the MEN, these are the areas of foreign languages, pedagogy and education, research and practice, and the development of foreign language competence.

In Colombia in light of resolution 18583 of September 2017, the Ministry of National Education defines the competencies in which new teachers in the country must be trained. Following these guidelines, from that year onwards, higher education institutions made curricular reforms through which the profile of the licensed teacher is defined. The following image summarizes the competencies proposed by the MEN for the training of future teachers.

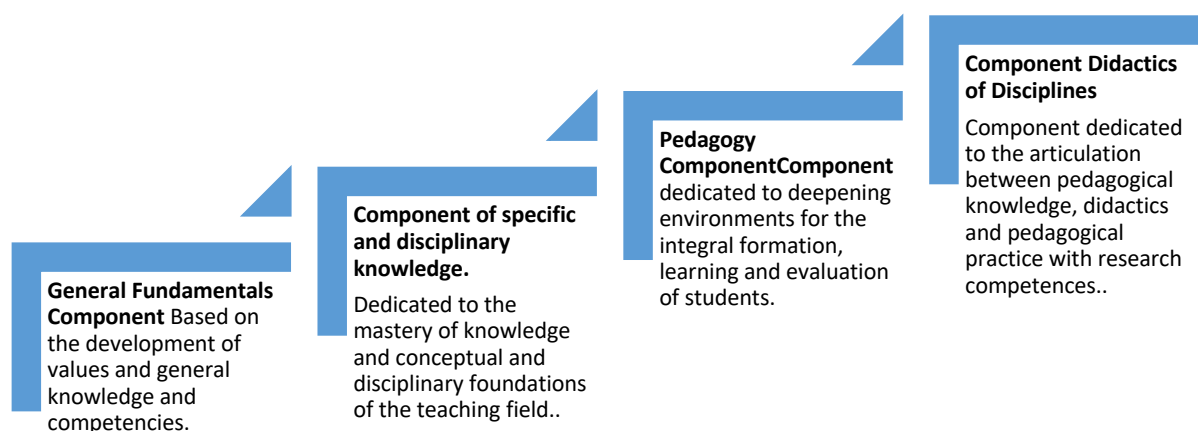


Fig 1. Training components for future teachers according to the public policy in Colombia.

The figure above shows the training components for future teachers that should be included in the undergraduate academic offerings in Colombia.

3.2 Academic programs offered in Colombia

The documentary review made it possible to identify the profile of graduate training in the academic offerings of the foreign language degree programs. Twenty bachelor's degree programs in foreign languages at the national level, all of them with high quality accreditation in face-to-face mode, participated in this study.

The duration of the academic offerings is between 8 and 10 semesters. The difference between one semester and one year in some programs may be a relevant factor affecting teacher training, depending on the training emphasis. Of the 20 programs analyzed, 16 present a suggested route of 10 semesters, 3 to 9 semesters and only one is proposed for 8 semesters. With respect to the academic credits dedicated to the training of graduates, it is observed that the programs have an organization between 140 and 180 credits respectively.

Most of the institutions adopted the denomination of "foreign languages", only two in "modern languages" and two-degree programs adopted the denomination of bilingualism, specifying the language of training. The denomination corresponds to those set out in the aforementioned resolution 18583 of 2017. The language of predominance in all academic offerings is English, this in coherence with the policy of the national Ministry of Education and the bilingualism program, however, a trend is observed in the inclusion of another language which would increase the labor performance profile of the graduate.

It is observed that 10 of the 20 universities include French as a second foreign language of instruction, which constitutes 56% of the total number of programs examined. In one program, German is included as a foreign language, in two programs (11%), Portuguese is included. Programs that include the mother tongue and the foreign language English can also be observed in five programs (28%). It is important to clarify that, in some degree programs, although the aforementioned languages of emphasis are not explicitly mentioned, it was possible to verify that, within the optional or elective courses, students can access a second or third foreign language such as French, Portuguese, German, among others.

There is clarity between the inclusion of the general competencies and those specific to each of the emphases, in order to contribute to the integrality of the curriculum. With respect to the general competencies proposed in the programs, these are consistent with those established in the general foundations' component proposed in MEN in resolution 18583 of September 15, 2017, under which the development of values, competencies and general knowledge common in the training of teachers of all emphases are structured. It is suggested a deep training and mastery of current knowledge and knowledge specific to the training emphases that allows them to develop research process in the field of their discipline, as well as the appropriation of "epistemological foundations of the disciplinary field and/or of the specific knowledge that structure the training program" (MEN. resolution 18583. 2017).

The programs analyzed dedicate a high number of credits to the training of their students in foreign languages, that is, courses dedicated to the study of communicative competencies in the target language. The universities with the highest percentage of credits dedicated to foreign languages are institutions that have included more than one language in their training proposal, for this reason a wide range of between 19% and 59% is observed in dedication to the learning of other languages, where English is common to all. This vision of the programs is coherent with their disciplinary training and with what Richards (2011) affirms about the high communicative competences in the target language that the foreign language teacher must achieve. However, it is important to clarify that the content courses are also oriented in English, which contributes greatly to the strengthening of these competencies,

In this sense, the institutions aim at training professionals to meet the needs of bilingual education, understood in a broad sense as teaching in two languages, the mother tongue and the second language, and in a more comprehensive sense as teaching not only the language but also the cultures in which the target languages are immersed. This implies a major challenge in terms of curricular planning and resources in response to the needs of the contexts where this type of education is taught.

With respect to research processes, it is observed that these are processes that have been strengthened in undergraduate programs. According to Hernández (2009), the teacher in the university context implies a relationship between teaching and research whose purpose is to transform social contexts. Simancas (1998), quoted by Hernández (2009), states the need to articulate teaching and research in pedagogical practices as a principle of interdisciplinarity. In this same sense, this articulation process is part of the training of teachers at the undergraduate level, since it is from the context where professional practice is developed where situations and problems arise that the teacher, through the research process, can make contributions to improve the teaching and learning processes of their students.

In this context, the programs show an important number of credits to the development of research processes in their students, in most of them this process begins at the beginning of the academic formation, this suggests an articulation with the pedagogical processes of the program. It is observed that some programs dedicate up to 10% of the academic credits to strengthen these competencies, a positive aspect that in the future will result in the strengthening of the academic process developed inside the classroom. From these results, it is inferred that there is a concern to contribute from research to strengthen the academic process of pedagogical practices.

The programs analyzed show that six of them present training in pedagogy and didactics as a strong component in the curricular proposal, with between 18 and 26% of the academic credits dedicated to strengthening this area. Only one program presents an average of 4% of the courses dedicated to strengthening this area.

The programs coincide in the training areas proposed in their curricula, in accordance with MEN guidelines. All of them include similar training areas in foreign language, specific didactics, linguistics, pedagogy and research. Although training areas such as those related to ICT and global competencies are not explicitly shown, they are included in each of the areas because they are transversal competencies in the curriculum; however, they are included when defining the teacher training profile.

3.3 Teacher's competencies in the bachelor's degree program

The competencies proposed by the MEN are associated with each of the substantive functions of higher education: Teaching; Research and Social Projection. Results are shown according to the following categories:

3.3.1 Communicative skills

Higher education institutions propose, in the training profile of new teachers, training in English foreign language at a C1 level, in addition to training in a second foreign language that varies between French, Portuguese or German. Some programs require students to have a language level certification as a graduation requirement.

With respect to communicative competencies in English, 95% of the teachers interviewed have a bachelor's degree in foreign languages and related subjects; only 5% have a bachelor's degree in another area of training with foreign language proficiency. Likewise, 100% of those surveyed have master's degrees in foreign languages, including master's degrees in new technologies, applied linguistics, specific didactics and English literature. With respect to the level of English, at the time of the survey, the teachers showed that they have high communicative competencies in English language that qualify them for teaching, 75% stated that they have C1 and 20% B2 and the remaining 5% are not sure. The teachers have also opted to have international certifications of English level, 75% of them have current official certifications. It was also found that 98% of the teachers periodically participate in ongoing training activities that allow them to maintain a good level of foreign language.

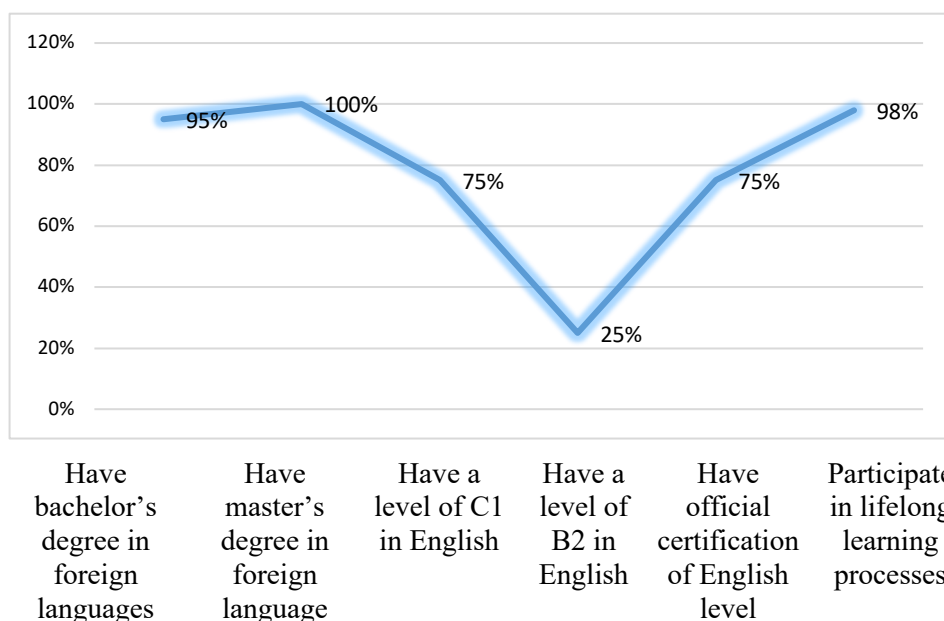


Fig. 2. Teachers' profile in foreign language

After reviewing the profile of the teacher trainers, we found that 75% stated that they have C1 and 20% B2, 5% are not sure of their level. Seventy-five percent of the teachers have international certifications of English level. Upon inquiring about the knowledge of the structures of the language, it was found that teachers have weaknesses in the knowledge of linguistics, sociolinguistics and pragmatics, and it was mentioned that these are components that should be further strengthened.

3.3.2 Technological competencies

It is found that teachers are familiar with some of the applications used for teaching foreign languages, the most prominent being Moodle, kahoot and canva. It is found that all the teachers surveyed are familiar with at least one of the mentioned applications and that they make effective use of them in their classes.

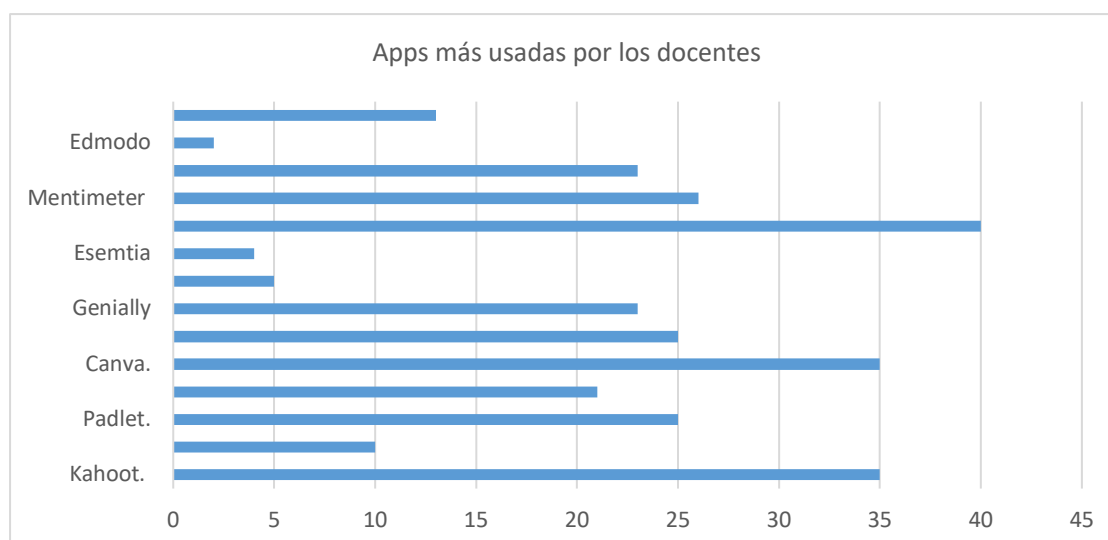


Fig. 3. Applications most frequently used by teachers

The development of technological competencies is highlighted in the teacher training profiles presented by the higher education institutions. The universities consulted coincide in mentioning within the teacher training profile the development of these technologies as part of pedagogical innovation and the dynamization of the teaching process. However, when reviewing the profile of the teacher trainer, these competencies turn out to be another opportunity to strengthen.

Teachers were motivated to implement new methodologies and technologies in their classes. The teachers, especially those with more years of experience, state that they have achieved learning that they could not have imagined and that they are the first to be surprised by the advances in technology and its benefits in education, this has motivated them to continue training permanently in an autonomous manner and not as an obligation or to respond to an institutional requirement, but by their own conviction and motivation to improve the dynamics of their classes.

This ratifies the commitment assumed by higher education institutions in the permanent training of new graduates and therefore of the professors in charge of their training. Therefore, it is up to the institutions to restructure their curricula with a view to meeting these new training challenges for the new technological culture, Miranda (2015). As mentioned above, the development of technology is permanently advancing, therefore, teacher training plans must be permanent and even more so when the teacher training profiles of the degree programs offered by higher education institutions contemplate the training of new professionals with high competences in technology, this implies teachers with high training in these competences. Miranda (2015) states that professional training institutions are called to create programs in the field of bilingual education that include the development of new technologies in their curriculum.

It is clear that technological advances are dynamic and that the generation gap between the teacher trainer and the teacher in training does not favor these educational processes, so permanent updating programs are required to maintain a group of suitable teachers to guide the training processes of new professionals.

3.3.3 Pedagogical and didactic competencies

The institutions that train foreign language teachers emphasize, within their training purposes, the development of pedagogical competencies in the teaching of a foreign language capable of assuming their role as agents of change in the educational and social reality of the country. From this point of view, the training of a teacher with the capacity to lead and transform the teaching and learning process is assumed, which is achieved through innovation and research processes.

When reviewing the data obtained in the qualitative and quantitative instruments, it is found that the teacher educators have opportunities for improvement in the management of new methodologies. Teaching continues to be disconnected from research; the number of teachers dedicated to research is reduced. In spite of the fact that the teacher educators have undergone training processes in didactics and pedagogy from undergraduate to postgraduate training, their pedagogical performance still needs to be improved if we take into account that educational processes are dynamic and changing according to the pace of the educational needs of each generation. In this regard, in the interviews, program directors and coordinators agreed that traditional classes are still observed.

The quantitative interviews show that 100% of program teachers have master's degree training; however, in the qualitative interviews it was mentioned by directors and coordinators that in some programs there are teachers who have not yet completed their master's degree training.

The intention is not to judge the training or the competencies of the teacher trainers, but to reflect on the need to maintain ongoing training in issues related to educational advances in pedagogy and didactics in order to have a broad and deep knowledge that will allow them to guide the training of new graduates. As has been mentioned, educational processes are in permanent change, which implies that the teacher-trainer anticipates processes and stays at the forefront of the advances in education, based on the fact that in education there is always something new to learn. For this, permanent reflection is necessary and the connection between theory and practice is something that must be present in the teaching and learning processes. This practice must be transmitted from teacher educators to teacher trainees.

The results show that few teachers show mastery in cutting-edge methodologies as they mentioned new methodologies such as EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction), Flipped Classroom, Gamification, learning by challenges (APR), among others. It is also found that teachers have difficulties in didactics. Eleven percent have difficulties with time management in the classroom; 15% have difficulties with the design of resources that support their teaching processes in the classroom; 10% have difficulties with the design of evaluations; 3% have difficulties in promoting students' autonomous work; and 16% have difficulties with the implementation of new technologies in their classes. The quantitative results were of great help in complementing the qualitative results, since they allowed us to know the statistical details of the training needs, while the qualitative data only allowed us to infer some imprecise answers.

3.3.4 Research competencies

The following figure shows the linear relationship between trend variables. The development of communicative competencies in the language is shown as a trend in the response as shown in the equation: $y = -19.2x + 73$, where $R^2 = 0.6252$. It can be observed that only 10% of the teachers mention communicative competencies in the language, competencies in specific didactics and research competencies as being necessary for the training of new graduates. Only 10% mention research competencies, while intercultural competencies and competencies in new technologies are not mentioned; it is possible that they have been omitted because they are considered as part of the didactic or communicative competencies.

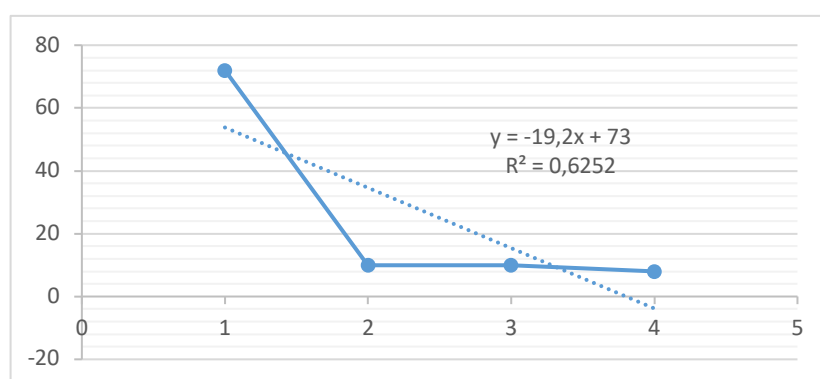


Fig. 4. Coefficient of determination in teaching competencies

In the review of the training profiles proposed by the higher education institutions, it is found that the programs emphasize the training of research teachers, this in coherence with the guidelines and requirements of the MEN. Thus, the programs dedicate an important part of the academic credits to research training, in addition to this, the programs develop strategies such as research seedlings and academic events where students have the opportunity to participate, meet and share research experiences. The above evidences a high demand in the training of new teachers and the concern for achieving a holistic profile of the teacher that would ensure quality processes in education.

When reviewing the research competencies of the teachers of foreign language degree programs, it can be observed that the teachers have developed research within their professional training and their teaching work. All of the participants have master's degrees and 10% have doctoral degrees. Therefore, all teachers have research experience. However, this research experience has been developed as a requirement to obtain their academic degrees and not as a permanent practice that contributes to the teaching process.

It is noteworthy that, upon inquiring about the teachers' work plans in terms of the substantive functions assigned in them, only 10% of the participating teachers have hours for research in their work plans. This denotes a low level of participation in the field of research, only 12% of the teachers belong to research groups, 25% have had experience advising monographs, 1 teacher advises master's theses (2.5%); 5 teachers develop research projects as part of their teaching work (12.5%); 5 teachers guide

research projects as part of their teaching work (12.5%); 5 teachers guide research projects as part of their teaching work (12.5%); 5 teachers advise research groups (1.5%). 5%), 5 professors guide courses dedicated to develop research competencies in students, which corresponds to 12.5%; 7 professors have had or have experience guiding study groups and undergraduate research groups (17.5%).

Reviewing research policies at national and international level, it is observed that this tendency in undergraduate programs to have a low participation in research processes is not consistent with those proposed by the Ministry of National Education. In line with Jiménez (2006), research training has had great relevance in the context of higher education. Currently, the research practice of the programs is constituted as an evaluation criterion in the processes of qualified registration and high-quality accreditation of academic programs, from the guidelines for program accreditation, research is not only conceived as developing projects but also as using research adequately in the training process, preparing students and professors to use it and also to conduct research themselves. Jiménez, (2006).

UNESCO (2009), for its part, approaches research from the standpoint of independent intellectual study of different disciplines for the development of new knowledge. Through research, countries face development challenges and provide solutions to problems for the benefit of society. Against this backdrop, foreign language degree programs face challenges in the research training of teachers. As mentioned by Parodi, (2013). The first challenge is to motivate students about research processes and their positive impact on their lives and on the life of society in general.

To achieve this purpose, it implies first reviewing the interests of teachers for research in the classroom and from the classroom. Parodi, (2013), states that if students do not recognize a researcher model in their teachers, it will be difficult for them to assume the commitment that research implies. However, teachers must be aware that from their role they assume a commitment to contribute to the improvement of the country's education and this is achieved through permanent reflection that leads them to problematize their pedagogical work through research practice.

In relation to the teachers, the results show that they have a positive attitude towards research and the importance of the academic process itself, it is also evident that teachers are motivated to participate in academic events where they socialize and share significant experiences in their teaching work. However, this positive perception of research is not reflected in their teaching work.

The results show that teachers do not engage in research processes, the very demands they have, one reason is because research demands time and effort and they feel that this is not rewarded within their labor contract, in fact, their work plans are mostly dedicated to teaching, without hours for research or research training. Garnica & Calderón, (2021) state that one of the purposes of higher education is to contribute to the social, cultural and technological development of the country. From this point of view, it is expected that teachers linked to higher education programs assume an active role in research processes.

Some of them have had bad research experiences or simply consider that research does not determine their professional training because they consider other competencies more important than the formation of research competencies. The teachers who feel motivated by research do not take the risk because of fear or perhaps insecurity in the process, they manifest lack of accompaniment and motivation on the part of the programs.

In this regard, we can affirm that the competencies of the teacher trainer are not coherent with the competencies of the teacher in training. While the degree programs strive for the formation of a graduate with research competencies, the teachers in charge of training have weaknesses in the development of these competencies. This is a situation that calls attention and invites higher education institutions to initiate training and support plans for teachers, but above all to initiate strategies to encourage teachers to engage in research processes and to link research as part of their teaching work.

3.3.5 Global and intercultural competencies

Social projection is one of the most relevant substantive functions of higher education, since universities owe a duty to society, that is to say that the projects and processes carried out in them must have a direct impact on improving the quality of life of the community. This fusion could not be separated from

research, nor from teaching; but in an articulated way, projects that tend to make significant contributions to the communities should be developed.

Now, from a particular point of view, when talking about the teaching competencies required to carry out this social projection projection, the teacher must reach a level of multi and intercultural competencies, which are part of the global competencies that allow him/her to coexist and interact respectfully with people from other cultures. Likewise, these competencies enable teachers to guide their teaching processes in the global and local context.

It is important to clarify that global competencies refer to the ability of a human being to analyze local and global problems, to perceive and value the different ways of seeing the world of other human beings, to interact appropriately with people from other cultures and to work for collective well-being and sustainable development. Multicultural competence refers to the ability to coexist with people from different cultures who share the same territory. Intercultural competence prepares the human being to carry out dialogues and relationships with different social groups, through the recognition of the other and the different cultural knowledge, to achieve a peaceful society, towards the promotion of inclusion, respect and appreciation for difference, Haros Perez, (2020).

Higher education institutions, aware of this need, have included the development of intercultural and global competences in the training and construction of the foreign language teacher's profile. Observing the academic proposals, some of them even include courses dedicated to interculturality within the academic curriculum, which shows a very positive advance in the training of future teachers.

When analyzing and interpreting the data collected, significant progress was observed in the implementation of intercultural competencies by the teacher educators. The teachers are aware of the importance of intercultural competencies; 75% of the teachers state that they strongly agree with the inclusion of these competencies in their classrooms and 87% maintain positive attitudes towards their implementation.

Intercultural competencies are necessarily related to the function of social projection since the university as an institution influences society and is directly responsible for regularizing that influence with clear orientations that promote the transformation of the areas of social and economic vulnerability present in society, Cetina Torres (2019). In this sense, all teachers should include the development of these competencies in their teaching processes since these are skills or values that lead to the development of good relationships between human beings starting from the interactions that take place within the classroom and the projection of this in society.

When reviewing the profile of the teachers in the undergraduate programs, it is found that 78% of the teachers do not have experience with social projection processes. In other words, this would be an opportunity for improvement for higher education institutions. This is a challenge that can be taken up by all the interested parties, both the directors of the higher education institutions as well as the professors. Being aware that the development of global and intercultural competencies has a direct impact on the responsibility that the university assumes with society, in this sense, it should prioritize the actions that lead to make contributions to improve the welfare of society from the multicultural and intercultural training in the classroom that is subsequently projected to strengthen changes in society.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings of this research are consistent with the findings of a study developed by the Universidad de la Sabana in Colombia, by Ciro Parra Moreno et al., (2010), entitled: The training of university professors: a pending subject of the Colombian university. In this research, it was found that higher education teachers should be trained in research methodology and the development of reading and writing skills for intellectual production. The authors affirm that the training of their own professors is a task still postponed in the Colombian private university. A decade later, we can see that this task is still pending and that teachers currently express the same training needs, i.e., there has been no evidence of progress in teacher training after 13 years and universities are still in debt in relation to the training of their own teachers in Colombia.

On the other hand, the findings of this research are consistent with those found by Jato (2014) in a study entitled: The training needs of university teachers: an analysis from the teacher training program of the University of Santiago de Compostela. The study showed that teachers demand more training in teaching-learning and evaluation strategies, followed by teaching planning. It was also found that teachers require more training opportunities in information technologies, management of virtual classrooms and educational reforms. The same study shows that teachers are interested in training in other languages.

This shows that not only in Colombia but also in other parts of the world, there is a need for teacher training. Nine years later, it is found that teachers perceive the same training needs and that pedagogical and didactic competencies are perhaps one of the most frequent needs in teacher training.

With respect to training in communicative competencies, it is a task and a commitment that each teacher must assume in order to maintain a high level of language proficiency. As mentioned above, only 75% of the population reported having an English level of C1 according to international certifications. It is worth mentioning that this is another commitment that higher education institutions, and especially programs dedicated to the training of foreign language graduates, must assume, is to guarantee that all their teachers have English levels between C1 and C2 with current certifications, this would ensure in one way or another the development of successful processes. Studies show that the training of teachers in communicative competencies in English is not successful.

Although no significant studies have been found on the state of the level of communicative competencies of teachers and/or students in foreign language degree programs, it is known that in general the level of English in Colombia is quite low. A study conducted by Kostina, Irina (2012), which sought to investigate the level of English proficiency of future language teachers, i.e. students in the last semesters of the Bachelor's Degree in Foreign Languages at the Universidad del Valle, identified that only half of the students achieve the required level of language to graduate, while the other half does not. Although the study was carried out a decade ago, the results of this research open the possibility of initiating a new study that would account for the communicative competencies of in-service teachers and teacher trainees in foreign language degree programs.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this research was to investigate the competencies of teachers in foreign language degree programs in Colombia. The research was justified by the fact that the programs in question, from their academic offerings, propose high training profiles for new graduates. Thus, based on a documentary review of twenty programs, it was found that the academic offerings dedicate a considerable number of academic credits to training in communicative competencies in English at a C1 level, in addition to the inclusion of other languages.

Similarly, the profile of a teacher with research skills, capable of innovating, reflecting and theorizing from practice, was also mentioned. Another important aspect observed is the development of high pedagogical and didactic competencies that include the use of technology in the foreign language teaching process. Finally, the development of intercultural competencies and the ability to bring them to the classroom is mentioned.

The academic offerings observed in the degree programs in foreign languages in Colombia are aligned with the policies of the Ministry of National Education (MEN), from which the profile for the new graduate in English is proposed; however, it is questionable to see that the MEN only give guidelines for the training of new professionals, but it has not mentioned the requirement for university institutions on ongoing training plans for teacher trainers. It is assumed that the teachers in charge of training the new graduates have an optimal development of competencies.

A reflection on the profile of the teacher-trainer arises. In view of the commitment of the programs in the training of new graduates, with high holistic profiles, a teaching staff with higher competencies than those proposed for the training of future teachers is required. Therefore, the question that guided the

entire research was: To what extent is the profile of the teacher educators congruent with the teacher training profile proposed by the foreign language degree programs in Colombia?

The above given that, from the MEN, in resolution 18583 of September 15, 2017, the following training components are mentioned: 1) general foundations component that includes the development of competencies for: reading, writing, argumentation, mathematical and quantitative reasoning skills, appropriation of research, handling of a foreign or second language, citizenship training, pedagogical use of ICT. 2) Specific and disciplinary knowledge component, which includes the development of competencies to master knowledge and updated knowledge in their area, research, innovate and articulate their knowledge to the pedagogical practice. 3) Pedagogy component, which includes the development of competencies that allow them to carry out comprehensive training, learning and evaluation processes with students. 4) didactics of disciplines component, which mentions the ability to integrate pedagogy, didactics and research. Of course, these components are associated with the substantive functions of higher education.

As can be observed, in each of the component's emphasis is given to the development of research processes, in addition to the optimal management of pedagogical and didactic competencies, use of technology, and communicative competencies both in the mother tongue and in a foreign language. To achieve this training of new graduates, a staff of researching teachers is required, with high competences in the use of new technologies, the use of specific didactics, pedagogy and a broad knowledge of disciplinary knowledge.

Reviewing this resolution in detail, not only does it make demands on the training components for new graduates, but it also requires higher education institutions to have a staff of qualified teachers. Paragraph 3.7 provides clarifications in this regard. These numeral mentions that for applications for the granting and renewal of qualified registrations, higher education institutions must prove that 50% of the teachers of the programs must have master's or doctorate degrees.

The same numeral mentions that the teaching staff must include, for the most part, professors with an adequate level of research and academic production; with command of a foreign language, and professors involved in the relationship of the program with the external sector. Here it is evident the requirement of having professors with experience in the three substantive functions of higher education; teaching, research and social projection.

The results show that the training profiles presented in the academic offerings of the foreign language degree programs are not coherent with the profiles of the teacher educators. Although the programs have a suitable teaching staff for the training of new graduates, there is no coherence between the profile of the teacher-trainer and the profile of the new teacher. Higher education institutions have been mainly concerned with consolidating attractive academic proposals with high academic demands and the configuration of competitive profiles for the training of new graduates.

It is as well as in 20 country licensing programs, all with high quality accreditation, it is proposed training of teachers with communicative competencies in more than one foreign language, linguistic knowledge of both the linguistic knowledge of both the mother tongue and foreign languages; pedagogical and didactic competencies of foreign languages; competencies in the handling of new technologies; linguistic competencies; and global and intercultural competencies. It also mentions the training of innovative teachers, capable of making contributions, transforming and energizing educational processes through research.

It was observed that the MEN have clear guidelines for the training of new foreign language graduates; however, no training plans have been implemented for teacher trainers. When investigating each of the required competencies, it is observed that it demands training needs for teachers, which implies greater investment on the part of the universities.

The results found show an imbalance in the development of the substantive functions, although these are contemplated in the work plans of the teachers of the programs, it is observed that the function of research and social projection are at a great disadvantage with respect to the teaching function. From the programs, education is still conceived from the development of teaching activities and research and

social projection are still disjointed. It is observed that 77% of the teachers linked to the programs are only dedicated to teaching, 10% of the teachers in each program are dedicated to research and 13% are dedicated to leading social projection projects and guiding the pedagogical practice as part of the social projection exercise carried out by the institution. This reality does not correspond with what is stated in numeral 3.7 of Resolution 18583 of 2017, where a teaching plan with both teaching and research and social projection experience is requested, without placing more emphasis on one or the other.

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