Findings of ECRs' research-related needs analysis

ABOUT the CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to identify, analyze, and discuss the findings regarding the needs and personal understanding of research activities of eighty-six Early Career Researchers (ECRs). First, it examines qualitative and quantitative data from an online survey concerning the ECRs' needs analysis and their perceptions of research activities. Data are divided into the following sections: information regarding the ECR's communities; cultures of research; research governance and choices; researcher positionality and reflexivity; and personal understanding of research activities. It then goes on to discuss the issues and emerging themes related to the data presented and discussed in the previous sections. In essence, one of the main goals of the EUREDIE project is to identify the needs of ECRs so they can plan and carry out research projects that are sensitive to the inherent interculturality and represent diversity, regardless of the specific subject they investigate. By and large, this goal is fulfilled through the examination and discussion of the needs analysis survey.

Keywords: Early career researcher, needs analysis, research activities

Introduction

Recent research on Early Career Researchers (ECRs)' needs and attitudes has been somewhat scarce. To illustrate, the following are representative of these investigations: Bhakta and Boeren (2016) carried out a survey to investigate the training needs of ECRs in British research-intensive universities; Eigi-Watkin et al. (2018) held focus-group interviews to investigate ECRs' needs regarding support, frustrations, and resources; Locke et al. (2018) conducted a survey and interviews to assess ECRs' roles, opportunities, and support in the social sciences; Christian et al. (2021) implemented a survey to examine ECRs' overall needs and challenges; Berezko et al. (2021) conducted a survey on European ECRs' attitudes towards Open Science and scholarly publishing taking into consideration economic, geographical and research career variables; Jackman et al. (2021) carried out a survey to investigate ECRs' perceived benefits and challenges of the COVID lockdown in the UK; Merga and Mason (2021) held interviews to identify ECRs' perceptions of sharing research with academic and non-academic audiences.

In these circumstances, the EUREDIE Project aimed at filling in this gap by conducting a thorough analysis of ECRs' research-related needs in the field of interculturality in language education. Fundamentally, this chapter aims at identifying, analyzing, and discussing the findings regarding ECRs' needs and personal understanding of research activities. The analysis and discussion of the needs analysis survey allow for the fulfillment of one of the main objectives of the project, namely, to put forth ECRs' needs so they may plan and execute research projects that are sensitive to the inherent interculturality and represent diversity, regardless of the particular subject they investigate.

Overview of the Data

The purpose of this section is to examine data regarding ECRs' needs analysis and their perceptions of research activities. Eighty-six ECRs replied to an online needs analysis survey as part of an online survey targeting ECRs' perceptions of interculturality in language education For the project's purposes, ECRs were defined as (a) ongoing MA or PhD students; (b) MA or PhD graduates who are within 5 years following the completion of their MA or PhD or equivalent professional training; (c) postdocs, fellows or research assistants; and (d) engaged in language-related academic fields (e.g. English language teaching, linguistics, language studies, etc.) and/or in others involved in thesis and/or research focusing on language and interculturality related topics.

The data that concern the project participants' needs analysis are both quantitative and qualitative in nature as the questions consist of multiple-choice questions, quantifiable open-ended questions, Likert scale questions and open-ended questions that require a

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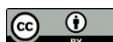
critical analysis. To facilitate the interpretation and understanding of the data, they are grouped into the following sections: information regarding the ECR's communities; cultures of research; research governance and choices; researcher positionality & reflexivity; and personal understanding of research activities.

Needs analysis: Information regarding the ECRs' Communities

This section provides data about the participants' perceptions of the age average of the academics at their university/organization and the participants' perceptions of their academic context.

Age Average of the Academics

The data show that there is a good balance in the age distribution (see Figure 1). 40-49-year-old participants make up for 39.3 % of the academics, followed by 23.8% who range from 30 to 39 years old. The younger generation of academics aged 20-29% account for 23.8% and finally 13.1% are aged 50 and over. Results indicate that most respondents report that academics at their university/organization are between the ages of 30 and 49, which possibly suggests we are dealing with more experienced academics in this particular study.

Figure 1
Academics' age average

Which category below best reflects the age average of the academics at your university/organization?
84 respostas
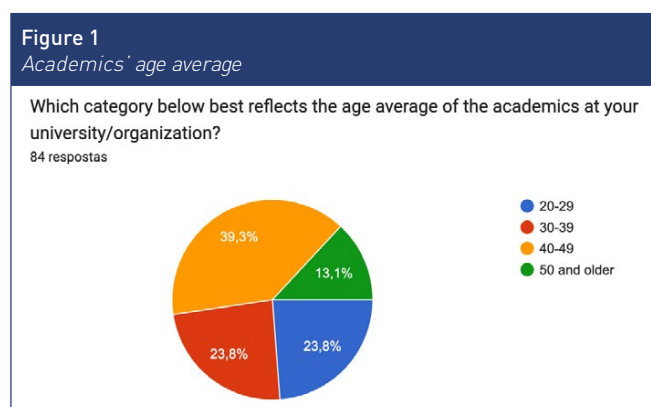
Perceptions of the Academic Context

When asked to best describe their university/organization, respondents were allowed to select as many options as they deemed necessary. The three most common answers describe universities/organizations as a community that values collaborative research (63.1%), a community that values diversity of research (60.7%) and a community that categorizes its members based on their academic titles/positions (59.5%). Along with a strong sense of hierarchy, responses emphasise the importance of collaborative and diverse research. The following three most selected options portray these institutions as a community that values interdisciplinary research (53.6%), a community that values individual research (46.4%) and a community that categorizes its members based on their disciplinary background (41.7%). Once again, the importance of research and hierarchization emerge from the respondents' answers.

Needs analysis: Cultures of research

This section illustrates the cultures of research at the participants' university/organization by examining aspects like the research

topics encouraged/preferred, means of research dissemination encouraged, prioritized target groups for research dissemination, research methods that have greater authority, and the academics' role/responsibility for carrying out research activities.

Research Topics Encouraged/Preferred at the Participants' University/Organization

Participants were inquired about the specific research topics in their field of study that are encouraged and/or preferred at their university/organization. Understandably, answers were wide-ranging and reflect the interests of these institutions, and what follows is a collection of the most common answers. An important feature to highlight at this stage is that 24.3% of the respondents claimed that there were no specific indications regarding preferred research topics at their universities, and that researchers were free to carry out activities in their field of choice. However, another 23.4% revealed that topics related to language teaching (e.g., ELT, ESP, EFL, ELF, EFL, CLIL, bilingualism, among others) were highly favoured. Moreover, 17% claimed that topics related to intercultural studies were popular among their organizations whereas 12.1% indicated linguistics as a preferred theme. Finally, matters related to ICT integration in the classroom (e.g., CALL, MALL) account for 6% of the answers while teacher education is referred to by only 4.8% of the respondents.
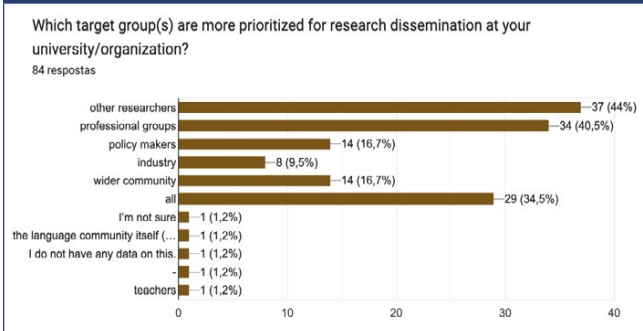
Means of Research Dissemination

Unsurprisingly, journal articles (64.3%), conference presentations (59.5%) and book chapters (42.9%) are the most common means of research dissemination in participants' universities/organizations (see Figure 2). Books (38.1%) and web pages (28.6%) account for the next most popular choices whereas 39.3% of the respondents claim all the options indicated above are encouraged.

Figure 2
Means of research dissemination encouraged

Which means of research dissemination are encouraged at your university/organization?
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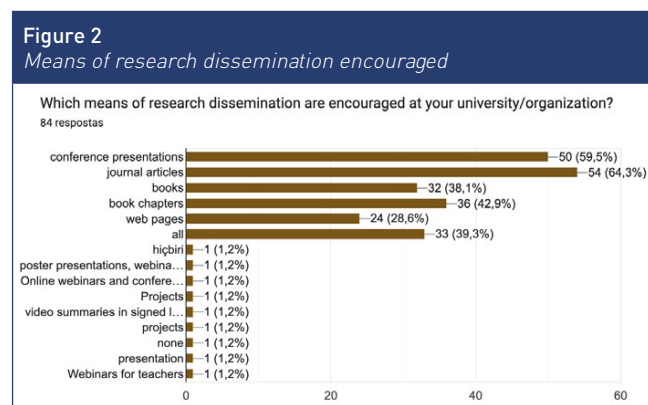
Prioritized Groups for Research Dissemination

For 44% of the participants, research dissemination at their university/organization is mainly aimed at 'other researchers' (see Figure 3). 'Professional groups', selected by 40.5% of the respondents, is another target group as far as research dissemination is concerned. Other groups preferred were 'policy makers' and 'wider community', with 16.7% of the answers each. Moreover, 'industry' was the choice of only 9.5% of the participants. Interestingly, 34.5% picked all groups identified ('other researchers', 'professional groups', 'policy makers', 'wider community', 'industry')

Figure 3
Prioritized target groups for research dissemination

Which target group(s) are more prioritized for research dissemination at your university/organization?
84 respostas

other researchers — 37 (44%)
professional groups — 34 (40,5%)
policy makers — 14 (16,7%)
industry — 8 (9,5%)
wider community — 14 (16,7%)
all — 29 (34,5%)
I'm not sure — 1 (1,2%)
the language community itself (… — 1 (1,2%)
I do not have any data on this. — 1 (1,2%)
- — 1 (1,2%)
teachers — 1 (1,2%)

Figure 4
Research methods that have greater authority

Which research methods have greater authority at your university/organization?
84 respostas

Qualitative research — 18 (21,4%)
Quantitative research — 15 (17,9%)
Mixed-methods research — 28 (33,3%)
All — 48 (57,1%)
New to the university, I'm not s… — 1 (1,2%)
I do not have any data on this. — 1 (1,2%)
- — 1 (1,2%)
I have no idea. — 1 (1,2%)
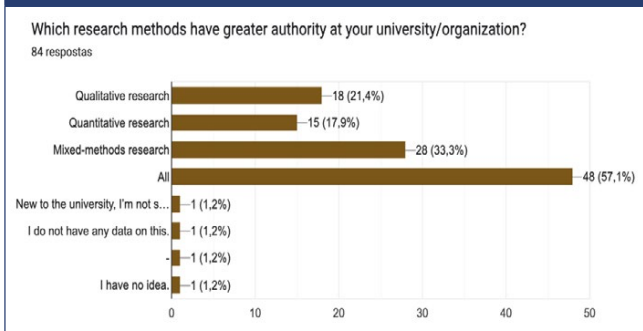
as possible targets of research dissemination. Finally, it is worth mentioning that 'teachers' and 'the language community itself (minority group)' were selected as target groups of research dissemination by just one respondent (1.2%) each.
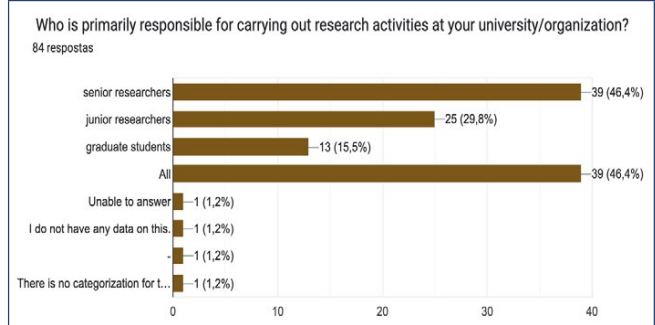
Research Methods That Have Greater Authority

Regarding the research methods that have the greatest authority at universities/organizations, more than half of the respondents (57.1%) stated that all types of research methods are valued at their institutions, thus including qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research (see Figure 4). This was followed by mixed-method research (33.3%), qualitative research (21.4%) and quantitative research (17.9%). Only a very slim percentage (4.8%) stated that they did not know how to respond to this question. These responses clearly indicate that the great majority of institutions value all types of research.

Academics' Role/Responsibility for Carrying out Research Activities

Answers regarding who is primarily responsible for conducting research activities at participants' organizations show divergent results (see Figure 5). While 46% of the respondents claim that all researchers (senior, junior and graduate) are responsible for this task, the same number of responses (46%) reveal that it is the senior researchers who are in charge of carrying out research activities. A smaller number (29.8%) signals junior researchers as accountable for this task while 15.5% of the answers collected show that it is graduate students who are expected to carry out these activities.

Figure 5
Academics' role and their responsibility for carrying our research activities

Who is primarily responsible for carrying out research activities at your university/organization?
84 respostas

senior researchers — 39 (46,4%)
junior researchers — 25 (29,8%)
graduate students — 13 (15,5%)
All — 39 (46,4%)
Unable to answer — 1 (1,2%)
I do not have any data on this. — 1 (1,2%)
- — 1 (1,2%)
There is no categorization for t… — 1 (1,2%)

Needs Analysis: Research Governance and Choices

The data presented in this section are based on a Likert scale (1=not at all, 5=very much) as participants were asked about the research environment at their university/organization, more specifically, if it (a) was supportive of research activities, (b) encouraged research cooperation between people who have complementary expertise, (c) encouraged inter- or trans-disciplinarity in research activities, (d) supported a diversity of competencies, experiences and merits of individuals within the research community, (e) supported a diversity of research methods, data, tools, outputs, and communication types, and (f) if researchers at their university/organization were free to pursue research activities of their own choice. Overall, participants reacted somehow positively to all questions as the mean for the answers provided ranged from 3.73 to 3.91 (see Table 1).

Table 1
Views of the participants on their research environment

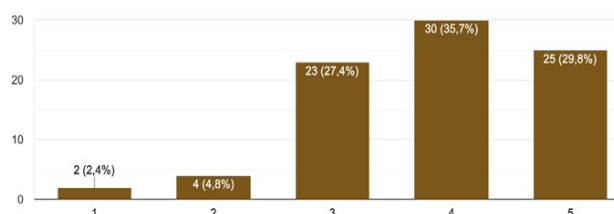| Sub-heading	Mean	Ranking
Support of research activities	3.86	2nd
Research cooperation between people who have complementary expertise	3.82	3rd
Inter- or trans-disciplinarity in research activities	3.82	3rd
Diversity of competencies, experiences and merits of individuals within the research community	3.73	6th
Diversity of research methods, data, tools, outputs and communication types	3.91	1st
Ability to pursue activities of the researchers' own choice	3.74	5th

Support of Research Activities

When asked if their university/organization was supportive of research activities, the majority (65.5%) replied positively, with 27.4% selecting the neutral reply (see Figure 6).

Figure 6
Support of research activities

To what extent do you think the research environment at your university/organization is supportive of research activities?
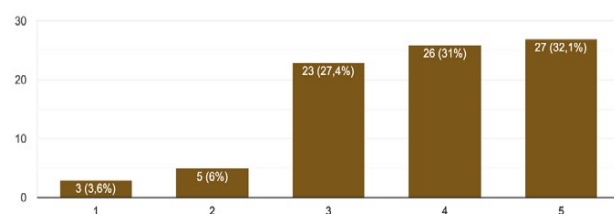84 respostas

Figure 7
Research cooperation between people who have complementary expertise

To what extent do you think the research environment at your university/organization encourages research cooperation between people who have complementary expertise ?
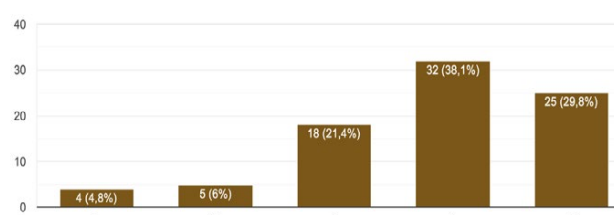84 respostas

Figure 8
Inter- or trans-disciplinarity in research activities

To what extent do you think the research environment at your university/organization encourages inter- or trans-disciplinarity in research activities?
84 respostas

Figure 9
Diversity of competencies, experiences and merits of individuals within the research community

To what extent do you think the research environment at your university/organization supports a diversity of competencies, experiences, and merits of individuals within the research community?
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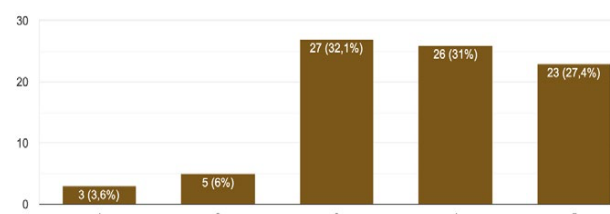
Figure 10
Diversity of research methods, data, tools, outputs, and communication types

To what extent do you think the research environment at your university/organization supports a diversity of research methods, data, tools, outputs and communication types?
84 respostas

Research Cooperation between People Who Have Complementary Expertise

Regarding their university/organization encouraging research cooperation between people who have complementary expertise, respondents also answered favorably (63.1%) (see Figure 7). Similar to the previous statement, 27.4% chose the neutral option.
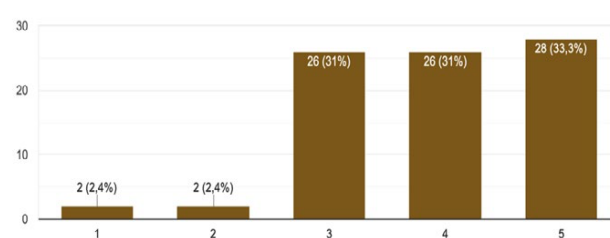
Inter- or Trans-Disciplinarity in Research Activities

Participants were then asked if their university/organization encouraged inter- or trans-disciplinarity in research activities (see Figure 8). Results show that 67.9% replied approvingly, and that 21.4% of the answers were impartial.

Diversity of Competencies, Experiences and Merits of Individuals within the Research Community

Participants' beliefs regarding to what extent their university/ organization supported a diversity of competencies, experiences and merits of individuals within the research community were also optimistic, with 63.1% of positive replies (see Figure 9). However, 27.4% replied in a neutral manner.

Diversity of Research Methods, Data, Tools, Outputs and Communication Types

There is also an overall positive perception of the participants regarding their university/organization's support of a diversity of research methods, data, tools, outputs and communication types (see Figure 10) as the majority (64.3%) chose the two positive Likert items. Interestingly, this question received the highest neutral response (31%) of all questions in the section.

Ability to Pursue Activities of the Researchers' Own Choice

Finally, participants were questioned if researchers at their university/organization were free to pursue research activities of their own choice. Significantly, 63.3% believed researchers were free to choose their research activities (see Figure 11). Nonetheless, 22.6% selected the neutral option while 14.3% expressed a more negative opinion (the highest among the six questions in this section) about research freedom in their university/organization.

Figure 11
Researchers' ability to pursue research activities of their own choice

To what extent do you think researchers at your university/organization are free to pursue research activities of their own choice?

84 respostas
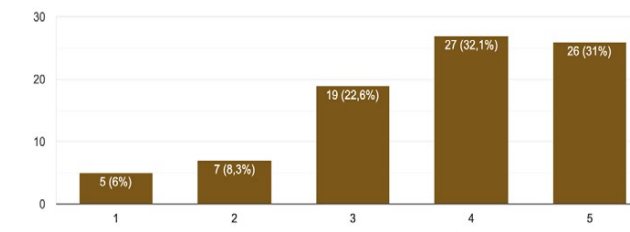
Needs Analysis: Researcher Positionality & Reflexivity

In this section, participants were asked to state the degree of their agreement or disagreement regarding the following 11 statements based on a Likert scale that ranges from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree to (5) strongly agree.

Social Research Is Separate from Wider Society

In the first statement, "Social research is separate from wider society", the vast majority strongly disagreed (40.2%) or disagreed (40.2%) with this, while some were undecided (13.4%). Only a few participants strongly agreed (1,2%) or agreed (4.9%) with this statement (see Table 2).

Social Research Is Free from Ideological Forces

As for the following statement, "Social research is free from ideological forces", once again, the majority strongly disagreed (20.5%) or disagreed (43.4%) with this, while there were 15.7% of undecided responses and 20.5% who agreed (14.5%) or strongly agreed (6%) (see Table 2). The fact that many believe social research is constrained by ideological forces may have to do with which country respondents are based, as there may be certain limitations in terms of the research conducted or data obtained.

Social Research Is Independent of the Individual Researcher's Biography

Regarding the third statement, "Social research is independent of the individual researcher's biography", more than half of the respondents strongly disagreed (17.1%) or disagreed (41.5%), with 23.2% of respondents as undecided and 18.3% who agreed (13.4%) or strongly agreed (4.9%) (see Table 2). Once more, it is clear that many consider that social research is dependent on the researcher's biography.

Social Research Is a Process in Which the Researcher and the Researched Participate Jointly in Knowledge Creation

With the next statement, "Social research is a process in which the researcher and the researched participate jointly in knowledge creation", the vast majority agreed (45%) or strongly agreed (32.5%,), while only a few were undecided (11.25%), disagreed (3.75%) or strongly disagreed (6.25%) with it (see Table 2). In essence, these results prove how social research is perceived to be a joint process where both parties, the researcher and the researched, are required to collaborate.

Researchers' Multiple and Varied Positions, Roles, Values, Beliefs, Experiences and Identities Are Intricately and Inextricably Embedded in the Process And Outcomes of Social Research

Subsequently, with the statement "Researchers' multiple and varied positions, roles, values, beliefs, experiences and identities are intricately and inextricably embedded in the process and outcomes of social research", roughly two-thirds of the respondents agreed (51.2%) or strongly agreed (17.1%), only 14.6% were undecided and 17.1% either disagreed (11%) or strongly disagreed (6.1%), hence proving that researchers' backgrounds cannot be disassociated from the process/outcomes of social research (see Table 2).

Social Research Ultimately Seeks to Find the Most Effective Tools to Solve Problems Arising From Daily Necessities

Whereas more than half of the respondents have a positive view on the statement "Social research ultimately seeks to find the most effective tools to solve problems arising from daily necessities", i.e., 38.75% agree and 20% strongly agree, 12.5% disagree and 11.25% strongly disagree with the statement. Lastly, 17.5% of the participants provided a neutral answer (see Table 2).

Social Research Ultimately Seeks to Understand How Different Groups of People Are Doing What They Are Doing and Also Why They Are Doing So

On one hand, 54.22% and 27.71% agree and strongly agree, respectively, with the statement "Social research ultimately seeks to understand how different groups of people are doing what they are doing and also why they are doing so" (see Table 2). On the other hand, 1.21% of the participants disagree and 6.02% strongly disagree, while 10.84% of the respondents did not express any position about this question.

Social Research Ultimately Seeks to Empower the Subordinated Groups in Society through Demystifying Social Institutions, Practices, and Policies That Produce and Reproduce the Domination of Certain Groups in Society

Whilst more than half of the respondents expressed their agreement with the statement "Social research ultimately seeks to empower the subordinated groups in society through demystifying social institutions, practices, and policies that produce and reproduce the domination of certain groups in society", i.e., 34.94% agree and 19.28% strongly agree, 12.05% disagree and 6.02% strongly disagree with it. Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents (27.71%) did not express either agreement or disagreement (see Table 2).

The Larger Socio-Political Context Where the Researcher Is Located Influences the Research Activities

When asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statement "The larger socio-political context where the researcher is located influences the research activities", the majority of respondents agreed (44.6%) or strongly agreed (25.3%)

with this declaration. Furthermore, 14.5% of the respondents indicated they were undecided, and a similar number expressed they disagreed or strongly disagreed (8.4% and 7.2%, respectively) (see Table 2). These results seem to indicate the importance of the broader socio-political setting for the informants and show that for most respondents the context has an impact in the activities in social research.

The Researcher Has Greater Authority Over the Research Process Than the Research Participants

As for the statement "The researcher has greater authority over the research process than the research participants", 43.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (35% and 8.4%, respectively) (see Table 2). However, there was a considerable number of respondents who indicated they were undecided (31.3%), while the remaining ones (25.3%) disagreed (16.9%) or strongly disagreed (8.4%). These numbers seem to indicate conflicting views regarding the roles of researcher and research participants, researcher positionality, and/or choices of methodological orientations in social research.

The Research-Study Context Influences the Research Activities

The vast majority of respondents (81%) agreed (53.6%) or strongly agreed (27.4%) with the statement "The research-study context influences the research activities", while 10% of the participants were undecided, and the same number disagreed (3.6%) or strongly disagreed (6%) (see Table 2). Again, this shows that context is recognized as very important for the respondents in terms of its impact on the research activities, and in this case the specific research-study context.

Table 2
Researcher positionality and reflexivity (ST: statement)

ST	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
1.4.1	40.2	4.02	13.4	4.9	1.2
1.4.2	20.5	43.4	15.7	14.5	6
1.4.3	17.1	41.5	23.2	13.4	4.9
1.4.4	6.25	3.75	11.25	45	32.5
1.4.5	6.1	11	14.6	51.2	17.1
1.4.6	11.25	12.5	17.5	38.75	20
1.4.7	6.02	1.21	10.84	54.22	27.71
1.4.8	6.02	12.05	27.71	34.94	19.28
1.4.9	7.2	8.4	14.15	44.6	25.3
1.4.10	8.4	16.9	31.3	35	8.4
1.4.11	6	3.6	10	53.6	27.4

Personal understanding of research activities

The data presented in this section result from five open-ended questions that require a more critical approach as they consist of qualitative data. These data are related to the participants'

reasons to do research, their perceptions of how their research activities may affect or will affect the setting/context and the participants involved in the study, their viewpoints on how their socio-cultural background, identities, world view and experiences are involved in their research activities and processes, what they think about the uses or possible uses of their research findings, and their thought on the possible impact of their research activities. Considering that the data provided contribute to the analysis of emerging themes and issues, they are the object of discussion in the following section of this chapter.

Emerging Themes and Issues

The purpose of this section consists of presenting the emerging themes and issues regarding the quantitative and qualitative data identified and described in the previous sections (1.1 to 1.5).

Needs Analysis

Regarding the ECRs' communities, the data show that most academics' age range is between 40-49 years old and that the majority of the respondents value aspects like collaborative research, a community that values diversity of research and that categorizes its members according to their academic titles/positions.

With reference to the cultures of research, the data report several topics, i.e., research topics, means of research dissemination, research target groups, research methods and the type of researcher. Firstly, while some researchers were free to choose the topic of their research activities as there were no specific indications about preferred topics, others stated that they were encouraged to carry out research activities related to language teaching. Secondly, journal articles, conference presentations and book chapters represent the top three choices of the participants as encouraged means of research dissemination. Thirdly, the data show that research dissemination is mainly aimed at other researchers. Next, all types of research, i.e., qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research activities, are the preferred research methods among the participants. Finally, results indicate two realities relevant to the research contexts of the respondents: either all researchers are responsible to carry out research activities or only senior researchers are.

Regarding research and governance choice related to research activities, the data show that the participants have a positive view on their research environment. Significantly, more than half of the participants express that (i) their organizations are supportive of research activities; (ii) they are encouraged to develop cooperative research with other researchers who have complementary expertise; (iii) inter- or trans-disciplinary research activities are encouraged; (iv) their organizations support a diversity of competencies, experiences and individual merits within the research community; (v) their organizations support a diversity of research methods, data, tools, outputs and communication types; and (vi) the participants have the ability to pursue research activities of their own choice.

In relation to the participants' positionality and reflexivity, whilst a considerable number of respondents demonstrate agreement with the majority of the statements of the survey, some of them seem to disagree. On the one hand, several participants expressed

their level of agreement on items related to the process of social research, the context in which the research takes place, and the researcher, as follows: (i) social research is a process in which the researcher and the researched participate jointly in knowledge creation; (ii) social research ultimately seeks to find the most effective tools to solve problems arising from daily necessities; (iii) social research ultimately seeks to understand how different groups of people are doing what they are doing and also why they are doing so; (iv) social research ultimately seeks to empower the subordinated groups in society through demystifying social institutions, practices, and policies that produce and reproduce the domination of certain groups in society; (v) the larger socio-political context where the researcher is located influences the research activities; (vi) the research-study context influences the research activities; (vii) researchers' multiple and varied positions, roles, values, beliefs, experiences and identities are intricately and inextricably embedded in the process and outcomes of social research; and (viii) the researcher has greater authority over the research process than the research participants.

On the other hand, some participants expressed their level of disagreement related to aspects of social research, as follows: (i) social research is separate from wider society; (ii) social research is free from ideological forces; and (iii) social research is independent of the individual researcher's biography.

Personal Understanding of Research Activities

The following analysis of the qualitative data regarding participants' own understanding of research activities is presented according to the five open-ended questions they answered.

Why Do You Research? What Kinds of Interests Motivate You to Do Research?

The reasons provided by the participants for carrying out research activities can be grouped in the following categories, from the most to the least frequent, accompanied by some of the participants answers (see Table 3):

- Intention to contribute to their field of study and work, i.e., Language Studies, Education and English Language Teaching;
- Self-development and curiosity for learning;
- Institutional and professional expectations that are placed on them and the impact on professional advancement;
- Pressure to publish in academia;
- Importance of carrying out research, although they do not like it.

The data show that most of the participants aim to contribute to their field of knowledge while other participants carry out research activities for personal fulfillment. Some respondents expressed that the reason associated with their research activities is related to institutional and professional expectations, as well as the possibility of career advancement. A few participants feel some pressure to publish, and a few others do not like to carry out research activities, in spite of being aware of their importance.

How Do You Think Your Research Findings Affect or Will Affect the Setting/Context and the Participants That You Studied?

In this section, the data show the participants' views on how they perceive their research findings affect or will affect the setting/

Table 3
Reasons of the participants for carrying out research and some illustrative answers)

Contribution to their field of study and work

"To contribute to the development of English Language Teaching in local and global context and to help not only my own students but also other English language learners and teachers"

"I am very motivated to do research about foreign languages as interculturalism should be more represented in the specific field"

Self-development and curiosity

"Doing research itself motivates me. Because I know that I am going to learn something about the topic I am interested in"

"To improve my teaching abilities"

"I love learning and I am curious about the issues that I am conducting research. I am motivated to learn, and question more. I want to express people's situation, the context and how and why things are like how they are"

Institutional and professional expectations

When I do some research it's always for academic purposes. Even though I'm motivated to explore cultural topics, I don't usually do research for pleasure."

"I do research due to professional and personal reasons. Some main reasons are because of obligation as a lecturer to do research, next because I want to find solutions to some problems or to find answers for some questions."

"I do research as part of my degree/job."

Pressure to publish

"First, publish or perish. Second, my personal interests in the topic I am doing research."

Importance of carrying our research despite disliking it

"I'm not a fan of research. I actually find it boring and uninteresting."

"The honest answer is that I do not like research but that I realise (after completing my BA Hons TESOL) how important (up-to-date) research is in my field. I want my students to excel in their studies and the only way to do so is by equipping them with the necessary skills. However, many factors hinder people from achieving success and at the forefront of this, is cultural differences. Issues that revolve around English competency and what is perceived as competency remain problematic and this often puts people off from reaching their potential, as they feel inferior. This is mainly what motivates me, to conduct research into what would make me a better teacher, what would make the experience worth it for students."

context, as well as the participants involved in the research. Their perspectives are grouped in five categories, as shown next.

Firstly, the respondents have a positive view on the impact of their research findings as they believe that their research findings have or will have a positive impact on the setting/context and on the participants of their investigation. The reasons that justify this view are as follows:

- Positive impact on the teaching practice;
- Expansion of knowledge of the participants involved in the study and/or the researcher's knowledge about the research topic;
- Increased (critical) awareness and understanding of the

participants involved in the study and of the issues approached;

- Impact on policy-makers and/or other researchers;
- Creation of a better classroom environment for the learners;
- Fostering of a feeling of empowerment on the participants as they see their interests, needs, and resources as valuable in the research;
- Stimulation of more publishing/sharing of knowledge and experiences;
- Personal development;
- Curiosity;
- Need to take an active role in the research.

The majority of the participants demonstrate a positive perspective because the findings have a positive impact on the teaching practice, contribute to the expansion of the participants involved in the study and/or the researcher's knowledge about the research topic, and lead to an increase of (critical) awareness and understanding of the participants involved in the study and of the issues approached. At the bottom of the list, the respondents state that the findings of their research activity contribute to personal development, to spark curiosity and that to have a positive impact, the participants are required to have an active role in the research.

Secondly, the respondents also have a negative view on the impact of their research findings. Some of the reasons behind these perspectives are listed below:

- The setting/context and individuals (participants and/or the researcher) can be affected in general;
- The findings provide insightful results but have little impact on the setting/context and/or on the participants due to the reduced number of participants of the study;
- The participants can benefit positively from the findings if they can access them but will have little benefit if they cannot access them.

Most participants expressed that the findings can affect the setting/context and individuals in general as well as provide insightful results, although with little impact on the setting/context and/or on the participants of the study. Since the type of impact is not clearly specified, it is possible to interpret it as both positive and negative.

Lastly, the respondents demonstrate neither a positive nor a negative view on the impact of their research findings. Some of the motives that support this attitude is related to the following:

- Difficulty in identifying the kind of impact;
- The findings do not affect the setting/context and/or the participants;
- The findings do not provide information on this matter.

The data show that the respondents believe it is difficult to determine the type of impact their research findings have and that they do not have any impact on the setting/context and/or the participants. In both cases, it is possible to interpret these results as generating neither a positive nor a negative impact.

How Do You Think Your Socio-Cultural Background, Identities, World View and Experiences Are Involved in Your Research Activities and Processes?

Participants were also requested to reflect on how their socio-cultural background, identities, world view and experiences are part of their research activities and processes. As expected, answers are based on first-hand knowledge or experience and consequently diversified. Nonetheless, it was possible to verify a consistent trend in the data collected. Out of the 80 answers available, the majority of these responses claim that the personal features indicated above greatly influence their research outcomes, as the following observations clearly indicate:

- "Who I am affects what questions I ask and how I analyse the data";
- "It influences how one views the world and one way or the other we will look for what we believe in, even if unconsciously";
- "They have formatted who I am and what I am interested in";
- "I think all of these factors stated above determine the research topics, research problems, questions, approaches, methods, tools we choose, language we use, actions we take";
- "They shape the core of my research. The topics, methods and everything is influenced by these".

However, despite the influence that socio-cultural background, identities, world view and experiences may have on a researcher, participants acknowledge the need for unbiased research, as the claims below clearly show:

- "I usually take every precaution I can take to prevent my identity influencing my research. I know completely eliminating is impossible, but I try my best to prevent it";
- "I would do everything to avoid that";
- "I can't escape my own biases in research but I can strive to acknowledge and mitigate them";
- "I will do my best to be objective and unbiased. Hopefully process won't be affected";
- "I try to be an unbiased researcher. My identity as a teacher sometimes blocks me but I guess I've learned how to overcome this problem";
- "I think that a researcher must be objective and that qualitative research must be peer reviewed".

In What Ways Do You Think Your Research Findings Are/Will Be Used?

Some of the main arguments regarding the use of some participants' research findings were that they may provide understanding of problems addressed in English language teaching and teacher education, emphasizing possible innovative solutions and suggestions on how to deal with them. Furthermore, some respondents stated that research findings were meant to identify gaps in research, raise awareness and bring about change in the research field, in the home institution as well as other institutions, and inform stakeholders, such as, directors, decision-makers and curriculum developers. The following are some of the answers to this question

- "They (will) bring some understanding of the identified problems related to the English language teaching, provide solutions and suggestions to the identified problems regarding the English language teaching. In addition, they (will) bring innovative ways to English Language teaching and English Language teacher education. Furthermore, they will both raise

awareness and knowledge of the other researchers in the field for further studies."

- "To support weak spots in the research field and improve what is good for better results."
- "Hopefully, it will be read and used by other researchers and students in the field but my ultimate goal is to create a change in the practice. So, I try to address issues with possible teaching implications."
- "My PhD study can contribute to the reading acquisition of bilingual as well as monolingual children."
- "My research findings can be used in various ways. They can be used to change applications both in my institution and also in other institutions. They can also be used to raise awareness of the topic and inform directors, decision-makers, and curriculum developers. In addition, my research can help to inform the development of new technologies."

What Do You Think Is the (Possible) Impact of Your Research?

When asked about the (possible) impact of their research, respondents' answers were quite varied. While there were some who chose to simply not answer this question, there were others who mentioned that they did not know the impact of their research. There were still several who considered the impact low, as one mentions, "I am skeptical that my research will have a significant impact. It will most-likely be read by a handful of people interested in the same line of work." However, the great majority did answer, and responses indicated their research is largely connected with education, teachers and students, demonstrating the practical side of the research conducted as well as the impact it may have in schools. Some answers included issues such as:

- creating awareness among policy makers and other authorities, which can eventually lead to educational policy changes;
- having administrators, teacher educators, teachers reconsider programs, so to make changes and redesign them;
- raising teachers' awareness about their autonomy and their teaching styles;
- helping teachers to create lessons and courses that motivate students;
- raising the standards of English language teachers;
- getting student teachers and teachers to reflect on their own or future professional understandings, practices and dispositions;
- developing teachers' skills and improving their teaching practices. As for learners, helping them improve their learning outcomes and academic achievement;
- analyzing how institutions treat immigrants;
- instigating change;
- creating awareness;
- contributing to the professional development of other practitioners.

Conclusion & Discussion

The analysis of the data regarding ECRs' needs analysis and their personal understanding of research activities is quite revealing. First and foremost, it is interesting to note that the data show that the academics at the participants' institutions are relatively young as the majority are between 30-49 years old. Moreover, participants perceive their academic context as a community that values collaborative research, diversity of research, and that categorizes its members based on titles/positions.

At the same time, the topics of research in those institutions are diverse, reflecting the interest of the respondents' academic communities, which tend to publish their research in journal articles and present it in conferences. Hence, they aim to disseminate their research among other researchers as well as professional groups, employing qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research. Carrying out research is also valued, although the participants differ on who has more responsibility, i.e., whilst some believe that all researchers should be involved in research, others think that senior researchers should have a preponderant role.

Furthermore, the participants' institutions show a pattern of support regarding research i.e., carrying out research activities; cooperation between people with complementary expertise; inter- or trans-disciplinary research; diversity of competencies, experiences and merits of individuals within the research community; diversity of research methods, data, tools, outputs and communication types; and the possibility of pursuing activities of the researchers' own choice. As noted in section 1.2.1, some respondents mentioned their ability to choose the topics of their research. Thus, there is a parallelism between the possibility of choosing the topics and the research activities.

Significantly, most of the participants' expressed firm beliefs regarding their positionality and reflexivity about research. According to them, research is related to external factors such as, connection to society, to the individual researcher's biography, and influence from ideological forces. The role of the researcher and of the participants is also valued, i.e., participants hold that social research generates knowledge due to the interaction between the researcher and the individuals involved in the research, although they believe the researcher has more control over the research, due to the researcher's own individuality. More specifically, research is solution-oriented, provides insight, and empowers individuals, i.e., it finds solutions for daily life problems, understands the way people act and their reasons, and empowers subordinated groups in society, respectively. In addition, carrying out research is related to the socio-political context where the researcher is located and by the research-study context.

The data enable the identification of five main emerging themes regarding the contribution of research: (1) research contributes to the expansion of knowledge; (2) research findings have a positive impact on the setting and on the participants involved; (3) personal characteristics of the researcher influence the research findings (which is in line with the data provided in 1.4.3 and 1.4.5, i.e., the researcher's profile and their background); (4) research findings help to understand and solve existing problems, (which is in consonance with the solution-oriented purpose mentioned in 1.4.6); and (5) research raise awareness among professionals responsible for changes in educational policies. Overall, the respondents value research activity, see it connected to their personality and background, and envision it as a possible contribution to necessary adjustments in the educational field.

Some of the findings presented in this chapter have also been the object of analysis of recent studies, such as ECRs' motivation to

research (Krauss et al, 2023), collaboration with other researchers (Martin et al., 2023), impact of external factors on the ECRs' professional life (Jamali et al., 2023), social network relations and new professional roles (Rienties & Hosein, 2020), use of digital tools for research dissemination (Nicholas et al., 2018), and ECRs' role and professional activities as well as initiatives that could be implemented by the larger socio-political context to support research activities (Pizzolato et al., 2023).

All in all, taking into consideration one of the primary goals of the EUREDIE project which is to highlight the needs of ECRs so they may organize and carry out research projects that reflect diversity and are sensitive to the intrinsic interculturality regardless of the specific topic they study, the findings above of the needs analysis survey distinctly indicate ECRs increasing awareness of fundamental research-related matters.

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