

**UNIVERSIDAD DE QUINTANA ROO**

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**División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades**

**State of the Art in Research on Teaching and Learning  
Foreign Languages in Chetumal, Quintana Roo  
from 2000 to 2010**

**TESIS  
Para obtener el grado de  
LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA**

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## LICENCIADO EN LENGUA INGLESA

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## CHAPTER ONE

### I. - INTRODUCTION

It is very clear that if we wanted to talk about the first foreign language centers in higher education in Mexico, we should not forget to mention the *Centro de Enseñanza para Extranjeros de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), which was built in 1923. In the 70's many foreign language centers similar to the UNAM's were founded in higher education institutions in this country. These centers expanded very quickly and most of them concentrated on the teaching field.

Many new undergraduate and graduate programs in foreign language teaching have been opened in many Mexican higher level institutions; consequently, the requirements associated with the new national guidelines in order to accredit and certificate those programs encourage the teachers, and the increasing incorporation of full-time professors with post graduate degrees, to create centers or departments focused not only on teaching but also on research studies.

Nevertheless, there is not enough systemic information about these research studies, as Gilbón and Gómez (1996) rightly state. With regard to the available information about the research studies, it is worth to mention McLean's research (1978) about Applied Linguistics in Mexico; Da Silva and Gilbón (1995), about the state of knowledge of the research studies on the area of foreign language in 1982 and 1992; Gilbón and Gómez (1996), about the development of language centers in Mexican higher level institutions;

Chasan, Rall and Valdez (1997), about the graduate theses in Applied Linguistics; Encinas and Busseniers (2003), about teaching English in the Mexican higher level education; and a research project done by Valdez (UNAM-CELE, 2005) about a catalog of research projects, undergraduate and graduate programs in Linguistics, Foreign Languages Teaching, and similar areas in Mexico.

In 2004, a group of researchers from several higher level institutions in this country started a larger and more ambitious research project than those already mentioned above. They came up with the state of the art in research in Foreign Languages Teaching and Learning in Mexico from 2000 to 2005, and the criteria used in this ambitious research project were research papers, reports of experiences, educational ideas, innovation and reflective products.

This research findings were presented in a book titled "*Las investigaciones sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en México*" coordinated by Ramírez (2007). As part of the research coordinated by Ramírez, there is a chapter dedicated to Quintana Roo by Reyes and Murrieta (2007), who report most of the research by either undergraduate or graduate students.

Another major contribution to the field of research done in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning is "*Las investigaciones sobre la enseñanza de las lenguas extranjeras en México: una segunda mirada*" also coordinated by Ramírez (2010), which offers updating results of the states that were not included in the first book.

Another reason why this research was developed, it is because since 2007 new generations of the Bachelor's program in English Language at *Universidad de Quintana Roo* (UQROO) and other graduate programs in *Universidad Nacional Iberoamericana para el Desarrollo* (UNID) and *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* (UPN) have finished their studies and some of the students have done research projects. Consequently, this research intends to update the new research studies, have a general overview of what has been occurring in the decade from 2000 to 2010 in the Foreign Language Teaching and Learning field, and to contribute to increase the number of research studies in the same field, which is scarce.

As a student of the English Language major at the University of Quintana Roo, it was a really interesting and rewarding to conduct a research on the state of the art in research, in order to know what is happening on the Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages field in Chetumal, Quintana Roo.

Expecting to add more information and to update the available material, the aims of this research are to document and analyze previous research on the processes of teaching and learning foreign languages done from 2000 to 2010 in Chetumal, Quintana Roo. In order to generate information about what has been researched in the field, we intend to explore who is doing research and how they are doing it, and what the results are so that we can hopefully influence the improvement of both: research in the foreign languages field and in the foreign languages teaching and learning. In addition, we expect the results will work as a critical catalog for future researchers who are starting to do research. In order to have all



this information, certain points need to be stated for conducting this research. The following are the research questions that guided this research:

- How many research studies have been done in the field of foreign languages from 2000 to 2010 in Chetumal, Quintana Roo?
- Which is the language most researched?
- Who are the people doing research in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning?
- What are the most recurrent topics in research about foreign languages?
- Which are the epistemologies and the methods used in the foreign languages research in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from 2000-2010?
- What are the institutions that produce foreign languages research in Chetumal?
- What are the means of dissemination of foreign languages research in Chetumal?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of these research studies?

I have decided to do research about the state of the art in teaching and learning foreign languages in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from 2000 to 2010 for several reasons. First, because it would be a useful tool for future students who are willing to work on a research study and do not have a clear idea of what to research. Besides, it may be helpful to know who has done research, about which topics, the methodologies used for doing the research and what topics have been neglected. Basically, this project will work as a critical catalog, allowing future students to see what has or has not been researched yet.

Another reason is that I believe it would be beneficial to know if the research done as a thesis for obtaining the undergraduate degree fulfills an academic quality. In other words, to know which the minimum requirements are so that the committee in charge of thesis projects can approve or disapprove. It is my opinion that there are not proper courses for doing an excellent research project during our undergraduate studies; consequently, the results of this work could be a good way of pointing out the need of adding more subjects related to research in the Teaching Foreign Language undergraduate and graduate programs in order to do more coherent research. Furthermore, there are not many similar research studies to this one in Chetumal, Quintana Roo.

Finally, doing research about the state of the art in research is considered as a helpful tool for planning new research and supporting the development of the research studies in course, according to Hirsch (2006). Consequently, it will be helpful for future students or researchers to know the current state of the art of the foreign languages field.

## **Limitations and Delimitations**

Some limitations faced was the authors' unwillingness to make their research available for this study, or their research could not be found in the libraries. Moreover, some difficulties was the access to some theses. Furthermore, the lack of electronic databases about the foreign languages research was another limitation because it was difficult to find where the research were.

Ultimately, this study considered the city of Chetumal, Quintana Roo, from 2000-2010. One of the reasons is due to the lack of financial support. 2000-2010 was the period researched because it was detected a considerable amount of research projects in the Foreign Language Teaching and Learning field.

Finally, this study only investigated those research studies covering the pedagogy in foreign languages. It would have been remarkable to investigate those which are about translation and native languages like Mayan, but because of a matter of time and financial support, it was only focused on teaching and learning foreign languages in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from 2000 to 2010.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. - LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter the theoretical studies from which this research was developed are described. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first part is about Bourdieu's Field Theory and focuses on how it is related to the foreign languages field. Additionally, some concepts are explained so that the theory can be more understandable. In the second part, there is essential information about the educational policies about research studies in Mexico, and finally the studies that have researched the state of the art in the teaching and learning foreign languages field.

#### **Bourdieu's Field Theory**

Bourdieu is one of the most outstanding sociologists of the second half of the twentieth century. He is well-known because his ideas are of great importance in both social theory and in empirical Sociology, especially in Education.

Bourdieu applied a new analysis model where society is seen as a set of fields which are related among them. Nonetheless, these fields are autonomous at the same time. In other words, they are independent from other fields. Each field is an area of conflict between actors who are seeking the products offered by each field.

The use of metaphors in Bourdieu's theory is extremely repetitive. Exhaustively he developed the notion of social field and space. Most importantly is that *field* can only have a meaning if it is related with its complement categories of habitus and capital. Field, which is one of the concepts that used in this theory, and as Bourdieu said, is "to think in terms of field is to think relationally" (Bourdieu, 2005).

Bourdieu (1987) states that all the social relations are objective. In other words, they do not depend on any agents or intersubjective ties of individual consciousness or the own will. Consequently, everything that can be relational has its own ontological foundation and the field has specificity as an object of study.

Bourdieu defines *field* as:

A network or a configuration of objective relations among positions. These positions are objectively defined on its existence as the determinations that impose on their occupants, agents or institutions, for their present and potential situation (*situs*) in the structure of species distribution of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to specific benefits are at stake in the field, as well as their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96).

What Bourdieu tried to explain in his concept is that the *field* is composed by objective relations which are independent of the individual conscience. Moreover, he points out that the field is full of positions because the actors are not only individual agents but also collective. For instance, institutions and groups of academic professors.

Another relevant point is that the positions of the field are defined by the situation and aspirations of the agents according to the distribution of power. Furthermore, the positions of power facilitate the access to the advantages of the field. Finally, the relations of the positions in the field are conflicting, dialectical, in permanent struggle for the benefits of the field.

In order to have an intuitive understanding of the field, let us use an analogy used by Bourdieu. It is about a card game. He stated that the players accept the game rules so that they can only play: "The players are allowed in the game, oppose each other, sometimes with ferocity, only to the extent that agree in their belief (*doxa*) in the game and what is at stake, what they give a recognition out of any question" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 98-99).

The game is an internal and merciless fighting among the competitors for winning. The game is determined by the cards that the players have. "As the relative value of the cards change for each game, the hierarchy of the different species of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic) varies in different fields" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 98-99).

In the Foreign Languages Field, the game is about to know the rules that are essential in the research field. For instance, the financial sources, research topics that are more susceptible of being financed, the connections that are needed with the productive sector to do projects that have a user who supports the proposal. Briefly, it is really necessary to have formation, know the games rules and how to play it for doing research.

In order to follow the analogy's of Bourdieu, the next concepts are considered:

- Symbolic capital
- Cultural capital
- Social capital
- Economic capital

These different kinds of capital determine the location of the positions in the power relations within the field. For instance, *symbolic capital* is about the prestige within the field. For instance, the quality of the research projects conducted by certain academics. Followed by that, *cultural capital* involves all the academic titles. *Social capital* takes into account the birthplace of the researchers and their relations within and outside the field. Finally, *economic capital* involves the access to different research resources.

Cultural capital is essential in Bourdieu's theory and it can be found in three different states. The incorporated state is the first one and is about all the knowledge, ideas, values and skills that people acquire through socialization. This state in the foreign languages field corresponds to all the material that the research professors have done through their academic life. These materials are the tools that permit the research professor to perform successfully in the work environment. Furthermore, all the values that the research professors have added according to the area where they have worked and his interests are found. The cultural capital of the foreign languages field researchers is measured through

their research production. For instance, thesis projects, publications and research papers. (Ramírez, Reyes and Cota, 2010.)

Objectified cultural capital like books, artifacts, dictionaries, and paintings are the second state (Bourdieu, 1986.) In the foreign languages field, the cultural goods consumed as a priority are the textbooks about the foreign language teaching and theories and methods for learning and teaching a foreign language. The objectified cultural capital quality can be measured through the amount of published research; books and articles. Furthermore, the objectified cultural capital quality is also related with the kinds of publishing companies; local, national or international. On the other hand, the quality magazines are measured either by verifying if they are peer reviewed or included in an index. (Ramírez, Reyes and Cota, 2010). As an example of objectified cultural capital some books published by professors at *Universidad de Quintana Roo* can be identified. For instance, *Creencias, Estrategias y Pronunciación en el Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras* (Reyes, 2009), *Effects of Strategy Training on the Development Skills* (Mendez, Marin, 2007), *20 Años de Lenguas Extranjeras en la Universidad de Quintana Roo* (Reyes, 2011) and *El Error en el Aprendizaje de Lenguas* (Reyes, 2002).

Finally, the institutionalized state is about the academic titles that confer recognition to the institutionalized cultural capital. For instance, educational qualifications. In the foreign languages field, the more superior educational qualifications, specifically a PhD degree, the more amount of institutionalized capital will be possessed by someone. Furthermore, the British, American or French academic qualifications are to be more recognized because



those are the places where the languages taught are spoken. Finally, in the foreign languages field, there are not still many research professors with a doctoral degree; however, the rate is increasing. (Ramírez, Reyes and Cota, 2010). In other words, it is understood by institutionalized state all the academic formation that the foreign languages teachers have. For example, some professors of *División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades* DCPH at *Universidad de Quintana Roo* have academic diplomas from different international universities: *Universidad de La Habana*, Ohio State University, Tufts University, The University of Manchester, University of Nebraska, Concordia University, San Diego State University, University of Essex, University of Maryland, Baltimore; consequently, their institutionalized state is high.

Once the concepts of the different capitals were explained, the analogy can be continued; the players use the best combinations of their cards (capitals) so that they can defeat their opponents. The temporary victories and losses become war strategies to get the final victory. So that players can gain a favorable position in the relations of power, capital becomes a weapon of war. And as Bourdieu stated: "Capital is what is effective in a determined field, both as a weapon and issue at stake in the contest, which allows to its possessors to have a power, an influence; therefore, exist in the field in consideration, instead of being considered a negligible figure" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 98-99). The research production in the foreign languages field has the same process because all the capitals are important so that the research professors can continue playing. In other words, they keep doing research and are recognized for that activity.

This analogy has its limitations related to the concept of field. For example, the positioning in the power relations within a field unlike the game is not based on luck. Furthermore, in a field there are no final victories, but circumstantial hegemonies. "As a space of potential and active forces, the field is also a field of struggles aimed at preserving or transforming the configuration of those forces" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 98-99). The field consists of a political boxing around to preserve and transform the positions of power, and the identity of the field itself to improve their position and to impose the principle of hierarchization most favorable to their own products.

According to Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992, p. 98-99), the boundaries of a field can be investigated empirically, but for a thorough understanding it is necessary to:

- Analyze the field position against the field.
- Map the objective structure of relations between positions occupied by agents or institutions that compete for the legitimate form of specific authority in the field.
- Study the acquisition of habitus among agents.

In Bourdieu's theory the habitus is seen as a generator and unifying principle which reproduces the features of a social position in a life style. Bourdieu defines the habitus as the acquired and common dispositions of actors who belong to a particular field. The habitus refers to the acquisition of a position, "a certain way to build and understand the practice in their specific logic" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 19). For instance, it is when a research professor has been socialized in a particular way for doing something. In the foreign

languages field the habitus can be reflected when the professors have learned through their careers how to teach but not to do research. Therefore they could have difficulties in doing research because it is not part of their habitus (Ramírez, Reyes and Cota, 2010).

The field is also determined by other fields and external factors. There are certain structural and functional hegemonies between the fields and the structure of a social space. In other words, between war of positions within a field, and the class struggle that shapes a particular social formation. However, it is important to note that external determinations are never applied directly to the field, but it is through the various positions taken by agents; those determinations are obviously external.

In the research field of the foreign languages, the international and national educational policies have an essential role. As it has been stated before, until very recently this field was exclusively for teaching and not doing research; nevertheless, the world trends in education have forced the foreign languages field to do research so that it can still be in the game. For example, if the research professors stop doing research, they would be excluded of the game and they could not access the financial resources, because most of the time they are destined to research.

This disadvantage of the foreign languages professors implies a serious difficulty because being in the “game” has not been natural and it is necessary to learn in a long term; therefore, the winners of the game are the people who have already a research formation.

For example, the PhD research professors of other different fields to the foreign languages. It will not be easy for the rest of the professors to locate in a good position in the game.

According to Bourdieu (2005, p. 430), “those who dominate a given field are in a position to make it work for their convenience but they should always face resistance, the claims, the political differences or otherwise, of the dominated”. In order to complete the concept of *field*, it can be said that it is structured by relations of power, born of conflict and competition for the acquisition of advantages over the different positions, unlike a system that arises from the impending self-structure.

Briefly, it can be summarized that the structure of a field understood as a space of objective relations between positions, defined by their position in power relations or possession of various species of capital, varies from one context to another. Therefore, despite the different structural levels of a field, it is important to rethink the foreign languages research in terms of area, power and capital. These terms are related to this research because the objective is to know about the state of art; consequently, it is important to know that if one of these terms is missing, the consequence will probably be that the research production in the field of Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages is going to be scarce.

## **Educational Policies about the Research in Higher Education in Mexico**

This section presents essential information regarding the educational policies about research in higher education in Mexico. Moreover, information about the foreign languages field and the changing role from teacher to professor-researcher is reviewed.

### **The Foreign Languages Field**

The foreign languages field has been through different phases. For instance, in the 80's the study of foreign languages was almost exclusively for language centers due to the lack of universities offering the study of this area in higher education. Nonetheless, in the 90's more universities started offering foreign language undergraduate programs and the educational profile of the language instructor started to become more competent because most of them had studied their postgraduate studies in foreign universities supported by the *Programa de Mejoramiento del Profesorado (PROMEP)* (Ramírez et al., 2007).

In the last two decades the programs dedicated to the formation of foreign language teachers have developed quickly. According to *Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior (ANUIES, 2006)*, from three undergraduate programs and one graduate program that existed in the foreign language area before 1985, in 2005 more than twenty undergraduate programs and nine master's programs were found. (Ramírez et al., 2007)

As the number of graduate and undergraduate courses developed in the last two decades, the number of research studies increased as well. Some of these research projects were conducted as a requirement for getting the diploma of a certain major in foreign languages. For instance, at University of Quintana Roo if a student does not achieve a grade point average (GPA) equal to nine or more (on a scale of 1-10), the requirement asked is to elaborate a thesis, monograph or other similar research projects (Zanier, 2011).

The educational policies have made an important change in universities and higher education institutions in Mexico. For instance, in the past the professor was only required to teach classes. Currently, a professor is not only required to teach but also to do research in the field where he or she works. Due to these new educational policies, conferences and events have begun appearing.

In the foreign languages field, some institutions and new organizations emerged in order to create seminars and share instruments and techniques about the languages they are specialized. These seminars, organizations and associations were created by academics or professors. They are an important part to the field of research in foreign languages because even if their main goal is not to create research, professors have started to do more research in order to share their works in conferences. The following conferences are the most well-known:

1. AMIFRAN (*Asociación de Maestros e Investigadores en Francés*)

Founded in 1970.

2. AMIR (*Asociación Mexicana del Idioma Ruso*) Founded in 2005.
3. AMIT (*Asociación Mexicana de Italianistas*) Founded in 1999.
4. AMLA (*Asociación Mexicana de Lingüística Aplicada*) Founded in 1986.
5. FEL (*Foro de Estudios en Lenguas Internacional*) Founded in 2005.
6. AMMLEX (*Asociación Mexicana de Maestros y Maestras de Lenguas Extranjeras*) Founded in the 80's.
7. AMPAL (*Asociación Mexicana de Profesores de Alemán*) Founded in 1992.
8. CIPLE (*Organización de Profesores de Portugués*).
9. FEULE (*Foro de Especialistas Universitarios en Lenguas Extranjeras*)  
Founded in 1986.
10. MEXTESOL (Mexican Association of English Teachers) Founded in 1973.

In some states, there are organizations created by research professors in order to let people know about their latest projects and their results. For instance, in Chetumal, there is a forum called *Foro de Estudios en Lenguas Internacional (FEL)* that every year offers a number of conferences about investigations in the foreign languages field. Some of these investigations are offered by international researchers, academic professors of the UQROO, professors of others universities, higher level institutions and languages centers of Mexico and even by students who are starting their *debut* in the research field.

Briefly it can be seen how the different educational policies have had a significant impact in the foreign languages field. Currently, the foreign languages professors should line up to

them so that they can have the same benefits as other professor of others areas have, and have access to the financial support for doing research as well.

### **The changing Role from Language Instructor to Language Professor-Researcher**

In this part, some research on the changing role that has occurred from being a teacher to a professor-researcher will be reviewed. Some studies were done by Garcia, Landesmann and Anton (1993) and Garcia, Landesmann and Grediaga (2003).

In 2006 Mexico participated in an international study about the reconfiguration of the academic profession "*The Changing Academic Profession*" (Brennan, 2006). As the title reads, it is about how the academic profession is changing through the time in different countries. Basically, surveys were given to academics, who work in different higher level institutions in Mexico, in the school year from 2007-2008 in Mexico. In order for Brennan to carry out his research, he had to do it in two phases. In the first stage 101 institutions of higher education were identified and then 2,826 academics were selected from lists provided by academic staff of 81 institutions. 1973 questionnaires were recovered, and 1775 questionnaires were answered by full-time academics (Galaz-Fontes et al., 2009). The result of all these surveys was that the academics are like a mosaic: sortable diversity but not in any particular way. It is a profession in construction in which, while it builds, has to create conditions for recasting what had not yet solidified (Galaz-Fontes et al., 2008).



In Mexico, in the 80's, there was not a clear idea of who the academics were. The only information known was the hours they worked and their salary. Information like age, where the academics studied, sex, or what they think was not registered (Galaz & Antón 2009). Something that makes the case of Mexico more interesting is that the job of an academic, when it was taking shape, it also began to perceive and receive the impact of changes resulting from new global environment and its effects on higher education in the world (Galaz and Antón, 2009).

The foreign languages teachers also went through the same evolution. Most of them only taught classes, but now they are doing research even if it is difficult due to the lack of time or experience in doing research. Similar results to the Galaz and Antón's research were found by Hernández, Gómez and Murrieta (2011). They stated that even if the main activity of the teachers used to be teaching, currently there is a considerable progress in research in the area of languages.

As it has been stated before, some public universities were limited to teach and participate in cultural events, according to PROMEP (2006). Professors were not accustomed to conducting research. The new policies established more activities to the university professors and one of them is to do research. For instance, since 2001 PROMEP launched a new policy to develop research through *Cuerpos Académicos* (Academic Groups). It should not be forgotten that these new policies have brought some benefits. For instance, opportunities to pursue postgraduate studies and economic incentives.

In the next paragraphs some policies established in universities and institutions of higher education are described. One of them was that all full time professors must be part of a *Cuerpo Académico (academic research group)* (Hernández, Gómez and Murrieta, 2011). For instance, in the *División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades* at *Universidad de Quintana Roo*, there are two *Cuerpos Académicos Consolidados* (Consolidated academic research groups) and three which are *Cuerpos Académicos en Formación* (Academic research groups in progress).

Considering Hernández, Gómez and Murrieta's work, several policies have been found. One of them was particularly established at the UQROO, and it was created for evaluating the work of the researcher- professor. This consisted of doing research and having one article published per year as a minimum. This policy was created in 2002 by the *División de Ciencias Políticas y Humanidades*, which is in charge of the English Language undergraduate program at UQROO.

Another one is about the *Profesores de Tiempo Completo (PTC)* (Full-time professors), which demands that faculty members need to add to their work plans some activities for enrolling to *Programa de Mejoramiento del Profesorado (PROMEP)*.

More national and UQROO educational policies found in Hernandez, Gómez and Murrieta's research are the following:

- The “optional” participation of researcher professors in callings of *Sistema Nacional de Investigadores* (SNI), *Programa de Mejoramiento del Profesorado* (Improving Teachers Program) & *Programa de Estímulos al Desempeño del Personal Docente* (Incentive Program for Teachers )
- It is considered as a priority to strengthen the spreading of the research results inside and outside the universities.
- The consolidation of <sup>1</sup>*Cuerpos Académicos* (CA), which must have a development plan.
- The creation of institutional committees in order to evaluate the formation of the *Cuerpos Académicos* according to the policies at UQROO.

Hernández, Gómez and Murrieta concluded that there has been a considerable advancement in research in the foreign languages field at UQROO. Nevertheless, new policies and strategies that assist the harmonization of the roles of teacher-researchers are needed so that so that the activity of doing research stop being difficult.

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<sup>1</sup> Note 1: It refers to the second kind of academic research groups which is *Cuerpos Académicos en Cosolidación* (CAEC) and most of the members have experience in teaching and formation of human resources. (PROMEP, 2006)

In general, this changing role has been problematic in different disciplines. There is still a long path ahead of the Foreign Languages Field mainly because foreign language teachers are more used to teaching rather than doing research.

### **c) Research on the state of art in the Foreign Languages Field**

In this section more research studies about the state of the art of a certain field are reviewed. First, we look at the state of art about professional values in Mexico, and then we focus on similar research in the foreign languages field.

Creating research about the state of the art is considered a helpful tool for planning new research and supporting the development of the research in course, according to Hirsch (2006). This is a strong justification used by Hirsch and he did a remarkable work in order to know the state of the art in a specific topic which was “The State of Art about Professional Values in Mexico”.

In the foreign languages field, three similar studies were found. The first one, mentioned previously, is “*Las investigaciones sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en México,*” (Research on teaching and learning foreign languages in Mexico) coordinated by Ramírez (2007). This is similar to the present research because it analyzed all the research studies related to the teaching and learning of foreign languages. Nevertheless, this study was larger because it focused on Mexico (15 states) from 2000-2005. The criteria taken into account for selecting the research was according to the

following elements: topic, problem, objective, hypothesis, theoretical framework, methodology of study, results and references.

The results found were that there is a notable amount of research reports about English Language. For instance, 96% of the research was about English, 3% was about the French language and only 1% about the Spanish language. As Reyes and Rodríguez stated (2007), there is a need of the training of research professors of other languages that are different to the English Language. Additionally, it was found that the quantity of projects created from 2000-2005 in the 15 states is rather scarce: 494 research studies were found and only 264 achieved the minimum requirements to be considered in the study. 56% of the total were undergraduate theses, 21 % were graduate theses, 14 were research not related to getting a diploma, 3% were doctoral theses, 2 % were journal articles and also papers and 0% for book chapters and proceedings.

Most of the topics were about the teaching of skills and sub skills, strategies and learning styles, methods and techniques, and evaluation. According to Reyes and Rodríguez (2007), research about culture, learning, technology were found but with a lower magnitude. Writing with 30% and reading with 27% were the most popular skills researched, speaking with 14 %, grammar with 9 % and, finally, listening comprehension with 2%.

The objective of most of the research is to describe some phenomena related to the teaching or learning foreign languages. 69 % of the projects have this objective, 18% to evaluate, 10% to intervene, 1% to explain and also to develop, and the remaining 1% did not present

any objective. Reyes and Rodríguez described in more detail matters of methodologies or instruments where questionnaires were very popular with 41%.

According to Reyes and Rodríguez (2007), it was concluded that the research about teaching and learning foreign languages is still poor in quantity and quality. It is really poor in quantity in comparison to the number of students, graduates and professors in the field. Most the research has a medium quality and they would not pass a strict analysis; nonetheless, some strength was found. For instance, the research studies done in Mexico from 2000 to 2005 have contributed for a better understanding of what is happening in the classrooms.

In “*Las investigaciones sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en México*” there is a chapter dedicated to the research studies on teaching and learning foreign languages in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from 2000-2008 written by Reyes and Murrieta (2007). 15 research studies were located but only 11 were analyzed because the rest were strictly about Linguistics and the research was only focused on Teaching and Learning. Most of them were research studies done by authors of the Universidad de Quintana Roo. Three were undergraduate theses, four were graduate theses, one was a doctoral thesis, two were a chapter of a book and finally one from a journal. The other two were master’s theses and were found in the *Instituto de Estudios Universitarios, Plantel Chetumal*.

Considering the topics of the 11 research studies, they can be divided in three different categories: educational studies focused on linguistics, didactic studies like strategies for learning vocabulary and contextual studies like factors that affect choosing the English language major. Most of the methods used were pre -experimental and quantitative; 5 studies used the pre experimental method for improving any problem in the learning process and the rest of the projects used quantitative instruments like questionnaires, interviews and tests.

Reyes and Murrieta (2007) found that almost all the projects were produced at *Universidad de Quintana Roo*, and this may be due to the fact that this is the only university that offers a foreign language major. The other two research studies were produced by students of a master's program at *Institución Superior de Estudios Universitarios*. The researchers at the undergraduate level show interest in doing research; nevertheless, the undergraduate students are poor to support the hypothesis. On the other hand, the research studies produced by students of the masters program were more sophisticated and they have a better use of research methods. In general, even if the research in the foreign languages field is still scarce, it can be perceived that all the efforts made for doing research were in an area which is poorly explored.

In 2010, "*Las investigaciones sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en México: una segunda mirada*" (Research on Teaching and Learning of foreign Languages in Mexico: a Second Look) was published for updating the new projects from 2006 to 2008 and 11 more states participated in this project, covering a total of 26 states.

This second book could prove that the foreign languages field is growing in terms of research.

From 2006 to 2008, 63 research studies were found. Most of them were done at Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca with 36% of the total. Most of the analyzed were articles based on empirical research, graduate thesis with 19% and undergraduate thesis with 13%, according to Ramírez, Reyes and Cota (2010). Although most of the research studies were about the English language, studies on the French language started to appear. In general, it could be said that the research in the foreign languages field is heterogeneous and scarce. However, new signals have started to emerge and anticipate an increase in qualitative and quantitative research in the field.

Even if many research studies about the state of art on teaching and learning foreign languages were not found, it could be concluded that this field has been growing with time. Moreover, it could be appreciated how novice the topic is.

Finally, it can be said that many changes have occurred in the research field of higher education in Mexico in all the fields. For instance, in the foreign languages field there used to be a tendency only for teaching. Fortunately, it has changed and currently professors are also working on research studies, making the research in the foreign languages field more extensive.



## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. - METHOD

This is a documentary research which describes and analyzes research carried out in the field of foreign languages. In order to achieve the purposes, the next steps were followed.

1. Sample. Firstly, in order to carry out this research, all the published results of the research studies done from 2000 to 2010 in the foreign languages field in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from 4 higher level institutions were considered: *Universidad de Quintana Roo, Universidad Interamericana para el Desarrollo, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and Instituto de Estudios Universitarios.*
2. Data localization: To locate all the research reports, all the institutions previously stated in Chetumal were contacted, where there are research centers, programs about teaching foreign languages, academic professors who work in the field and ask for information about the research projects that they have done, so that they can be part of this research.
3. Data Selection: First of all, all the texts that do not include research were excluded. For example, memoirs about the social service of undergraduate students, monographs, reports of practicum in teaching a foreign languages and translations. It was only considered on this study the undergraduate theses, master theses, conferences proceedings, journal articles, book chapters and books. The criteria for

selecting the research projects were: topic, type of work, objectives and type of format.

4. Data collection: The registration of all the research reports compiled was done through a database. This registration included the following information: authors, name of the study, institution, researcher, subject or object of study, objectives, thesis, methodology, observations or comments of those who draw up the tab, and complete reference work.
5. Compilation and data analysis: the same database in Excel for collecting the research projects was used. The database contained the following information; titles of the research project, authors, reference, producer institution, methodology, instruments and objectives.
6. Data analysis. The information gathered was analyzed taking as a reference Bourdieu's field theory and how the concepts of Bourdieu are related to this documental research; symbolic capital, cultural capital, social capital, economic capital, field and *habitus* in the foreign languages field. Moreover, it was required to do research about the educational policies in Mexico in the research field. After that the 72 research reports considered in this research were analyzed taking as a reference Dane's book (2011). It was verified if the research projects fulfill all the needed requirements according to the epistemologies and the methods used.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. - FINDINGS

After introducing the topic of the study, presenting the theoretical framework, related works of this research, and describing the research method used, this chapter presents a report of the results found in order to answer the research questions stated in the earlier chapter. The results were organized to answer the research questions.

- How many research projects have been done in the field of foreign languages from 2000 to 2010 in Chetumal, Quintana Roo?

After examining all the libraries and available online databases of UQROO, UNID and UPN 153 research reports can be located which were about foreign languages. It was found that there was high tendency in proceedings with 43%, followed by the monographs with 19%, master's theses with 19%, undergraduate's theses with 10%, book chapters with 6%, books with 2% and journal chapters with 1%.

From the 153 research, 81 studies were not considered in this study, because 4 of the undergraduate and graduate theses could not be found to be reviewed; "A proposal of an English as a foreign language curriculum for a private school" (Martinez, 2006), "English teaching experience in an EFL context" (Torres, 2007), "Design of didactic strategies to reach syntactic maturity in Spanish university students" (Ucan, 2007) and "*El aprendizaje*

*del inglés una experiencia viva e integra*” (Navarrete). 3 master’s theses were <sup>2</sup>*Casos integradores*, 2 book chapters were only description of theories already developed and not research studies, 71 proceedings were presentations and not research studies and finally 1 book was a methodological guide.

In this study 72 research studies are considered in this research project, most of them were proceedings, followed by master’s theses and undergraduate’s theses. In Figure 1 this can be appreciated in more detail.

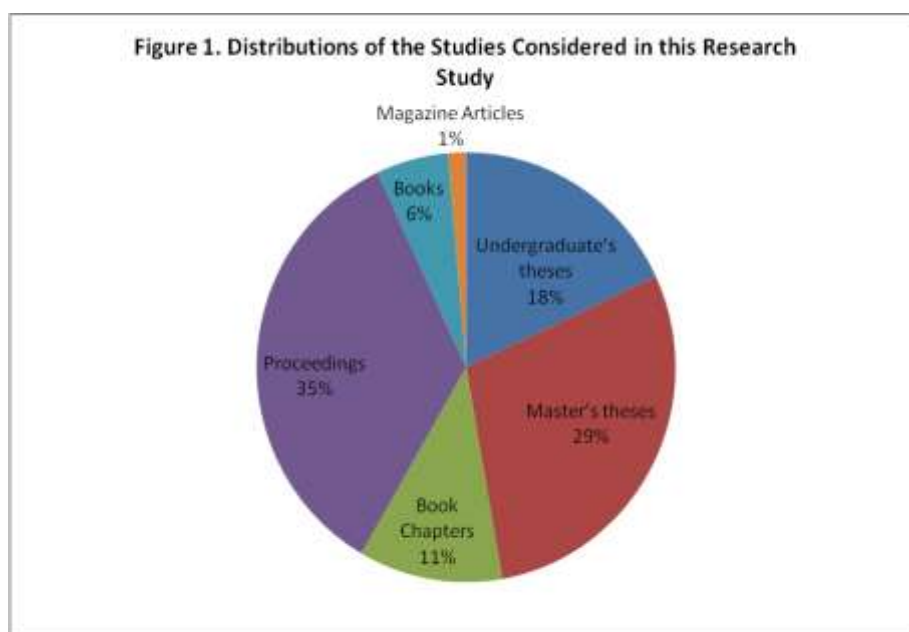


Figure 1 Distributions of the Studies Considered on this Research Study

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<sup>2</sup> *Caso Integrador*: It refers to a project which the student needs to solve an educational problem. Nonetheless, it does not require a meticulous research process. UNID (2011).

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the conferences where the 25 proceedings were obtained. The “*Foro de Estudios de Lenguas Internacional*” had (18) 72%, The “*Foro de Especialistas Universitarios en Lenguas Extranjeras*” had 2 (8 %) and finally 5 (20%) proceedings were classified in the category of others. It was decided to classify certain proceedings in others because there were several conferences that only have one proceeding. These conferences or forums were: *Congreso Nacional de Investigación Educativa*, *Primer Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Sociales en el Sureste Mexicano* and *Jornadas Académicas y de Investigación de Lenguas ELTUX-UNACH*.

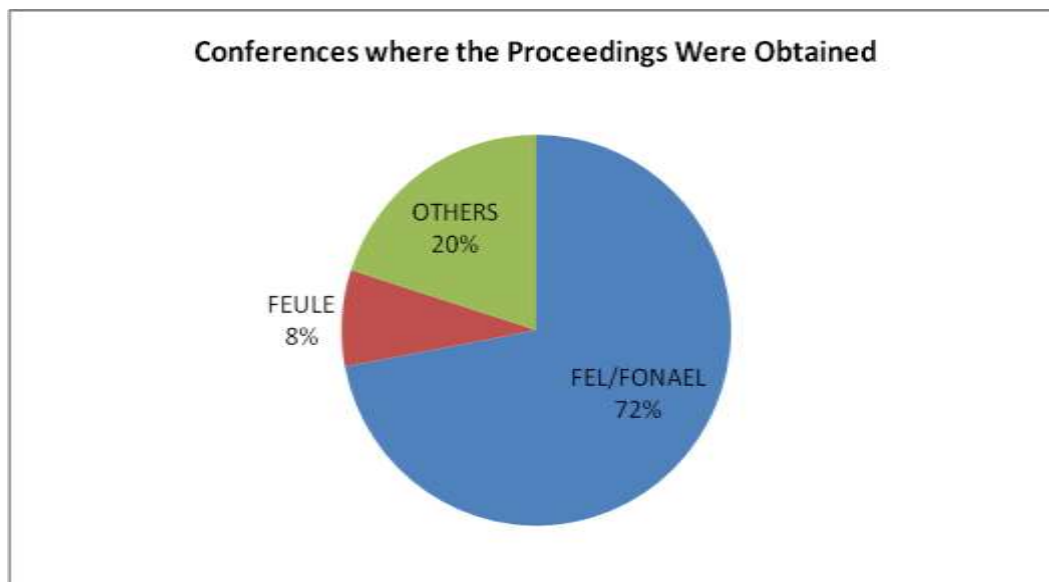


Figure 2 Conferences where the Proceedings were presented

- Which is the language most researched?

Most of the research study the English language followed by other two foreign languages.

In Figure 5, it is shown the distribution of the foreign languages studied after inspecting the 72 research studies.

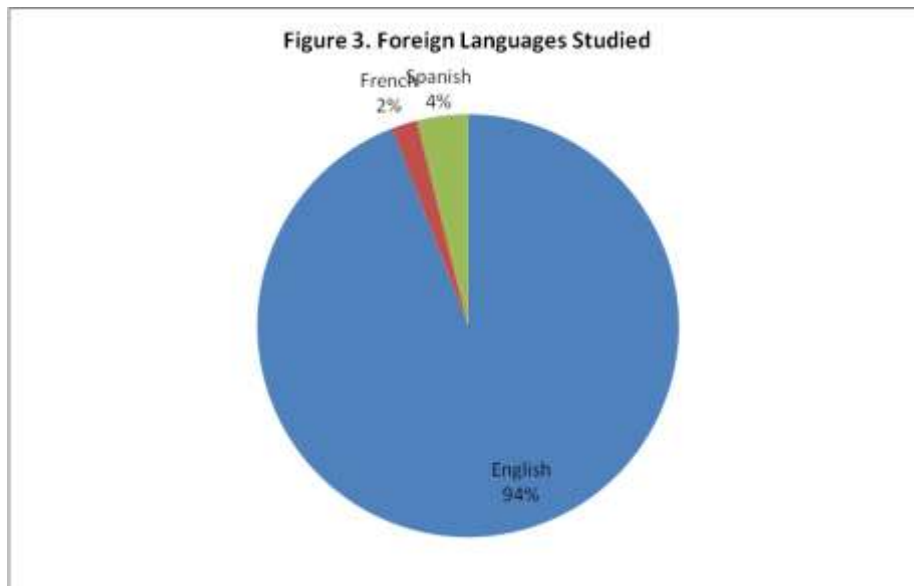


Figure 3 Foreign Languages Studied

- Who are the people doing research in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning?

According to the 72 research studies found, most of the people doing research in the foreign languages field were the research professors. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the people doing research in detail.

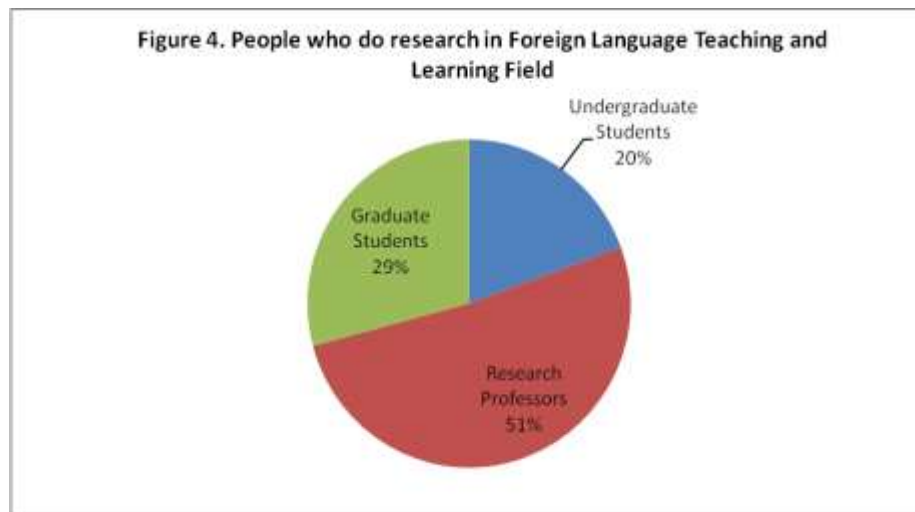


Figure 4 .People who do research in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning Field

- What are the most recurrent topics in research about foreign languages?

It was found that most of the research studies in the Learning and Teaching Foreign Languages Field were about beliefs. After that there were several research studies about the learning and then there was considerable amount of research studies about skills and subskills. In figure 5 the rest of the topics researched can be observed.

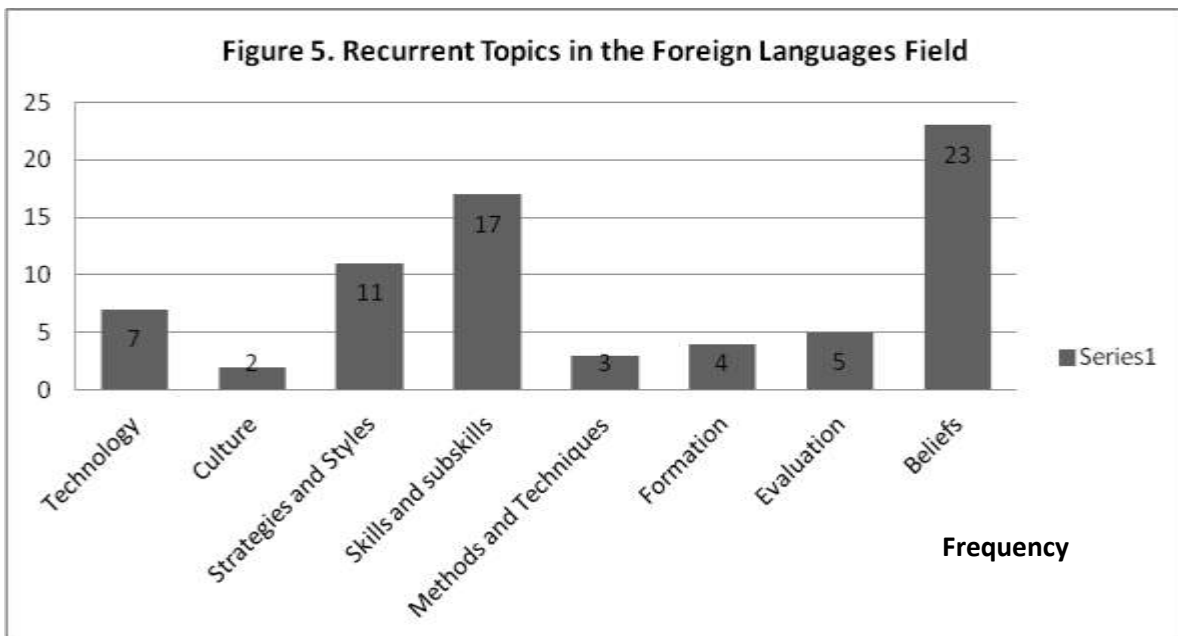


Figure 5 Recurrent Topics in the Foreign Languages Field



- Which are the epistemologies and the methods used in the foreign languages research in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from 2000-2010?

In order to answer this question, the research studies presented as undergraduate theses, master theses, proceedings, journal articles and chapters were taken into account only. Books are not included because they were integrated with different research studies using different methodologies and instruments; nevertheless, the chapters presented in the books are included.

The methodology most used in the research studies in the Learning and Teaching Foreign Languages Field was quantitative with 70%. Figure 6 shows the distribution of the rest of the methodologies used.

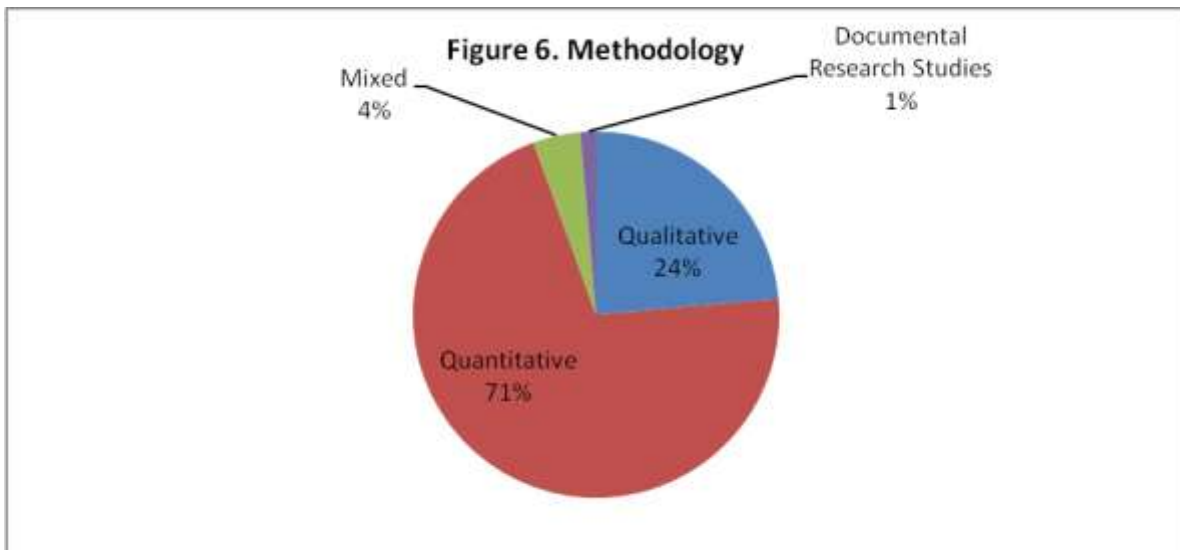


Figure 6. Methodology.

Figure 7 shows the percentages of the research studies divided according to their designs. Most of the qualitative research studies found were narrative research studies, then phenomenological research studies, followed by cases studies.

Some of the qualitative research found are; Murrieta (2010) “*Creencias epistemológicas y sobre aprendizaje del inglés de estudiantes mayas de la Universidad de Quintana Roo*”, Reyes (2010) “*Aprender en la diversidad. Creencias de estudiantes taiwaneses radicados en México*”, Hernández y Murrieta (2008) “*Perspectivas y experiencia docente en la enseñanza de la pronunciación*”. Also it was found a mixed research study by Heffington and Marin (2008) “*Grado de retención de vocabulario mediante el uso de estrategias de aprendizaje superficiales y profundas*” applied to English language undergraduate students at UQROO.

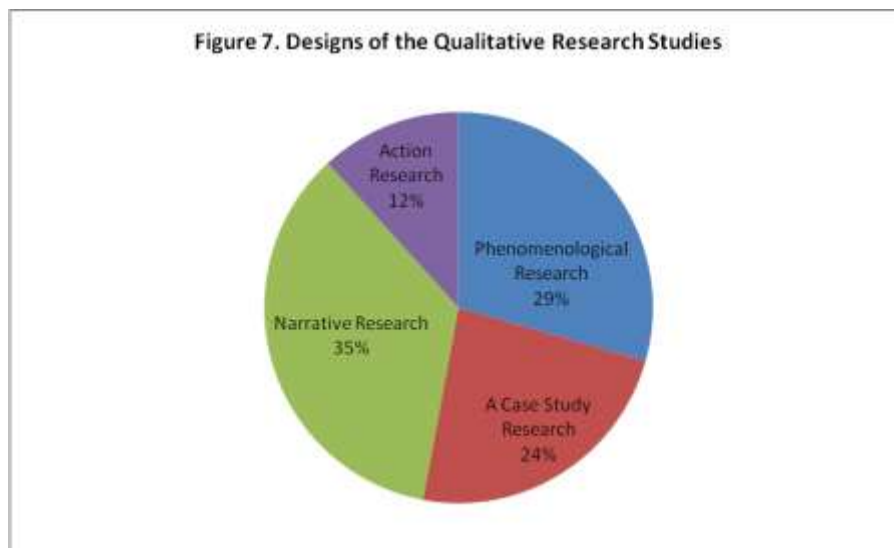


Figure 7 Designs of the Qualitative Research Studies

It was found that most of the quantitative research studies, according to their designs, were no experimental with 80%, subsequent to experimental. Figure 8 shows the percentages of the research studies divided according to their designs.

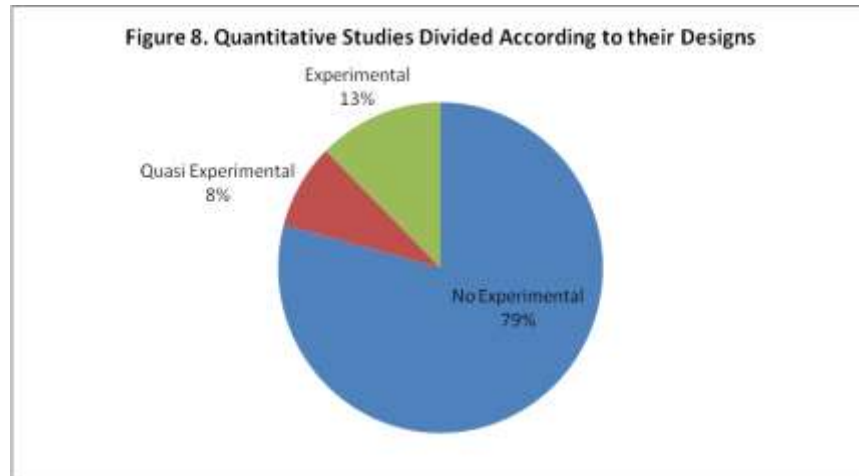


Figure 8 Quantitative Studies Divided According to their Designs.

It was found a high percentage of no experimental descriptive research studies. In figure 9 the percentages of the explorative, correlational research studies and survey research studies can be observed.

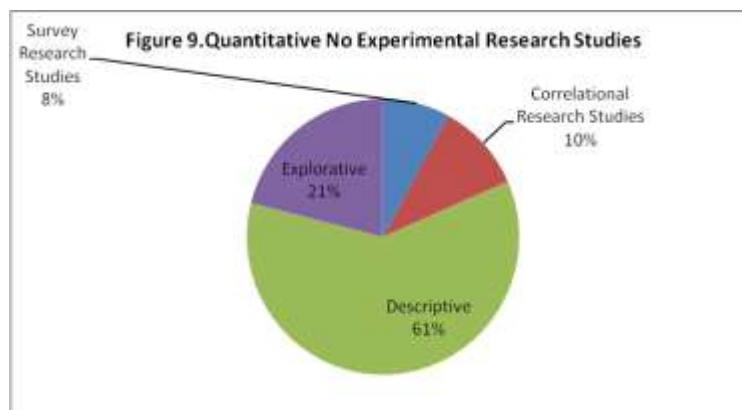


Figure 9 Quantitative No Experimental Research Studies.

Figure 10 shows the distribution of the instruments used in all research studies. It is really important to state that some research studies used more than one. The instruments more used in the research were questionnaires, interviews and exams.

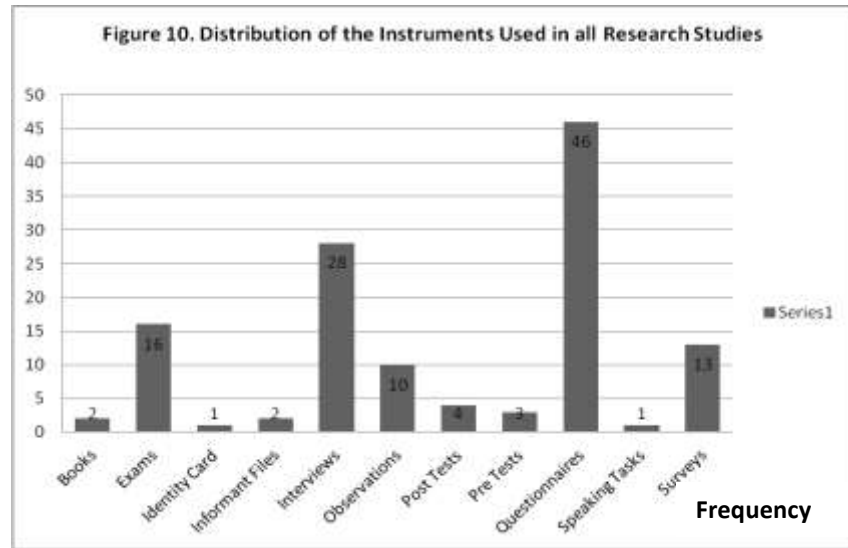


Figure 10 Distribution of the Instruments Used in all Research Studies

In the figure 10 it was seen that the interview was often used an instrument., Figure 11 shows what types of interviews were those. For instance, most of the interviews were structured followed by free interviews and semi-structured interviews.

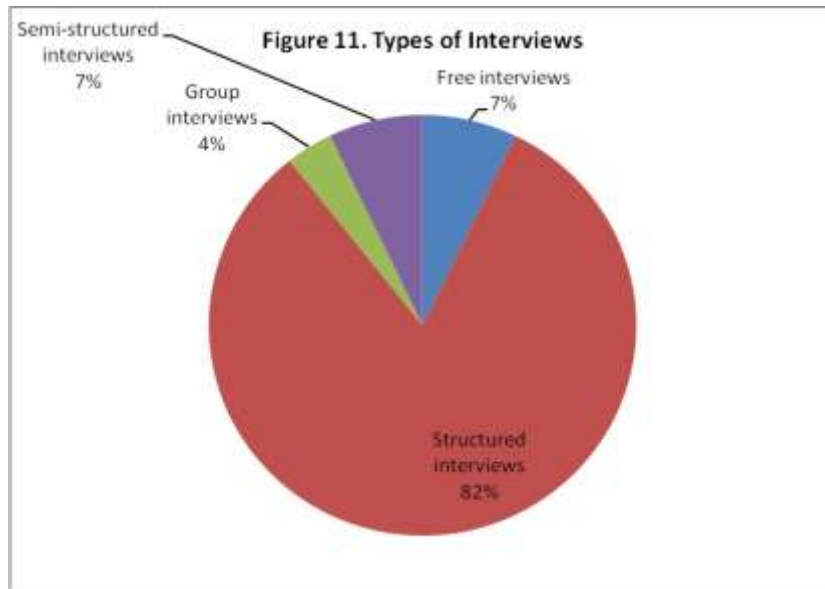


Figure 11 Types of Interviews

It was found that most of the research studies have as an objective either to identify or to describe. In Figure 12 it can be observed the different objectives with their percentages.

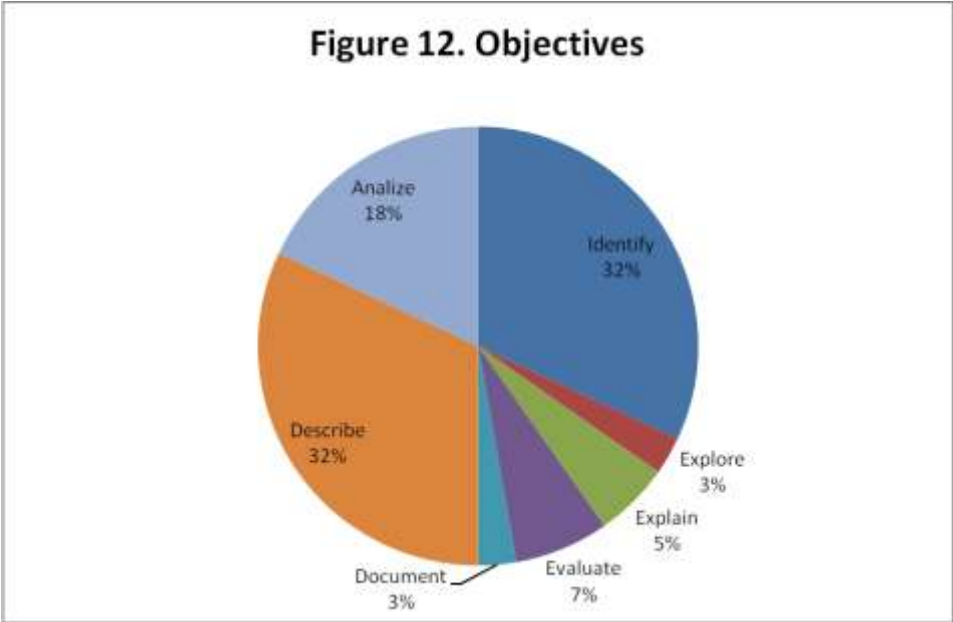


Figure 12 Objectives

- What are the institutions that produce foreign languages research in Chetumal?

Figure 13 shows the distribution of all the research studies found, divided in two main categories. The percentages of the research studies produced by public institutions and private institutions are included.

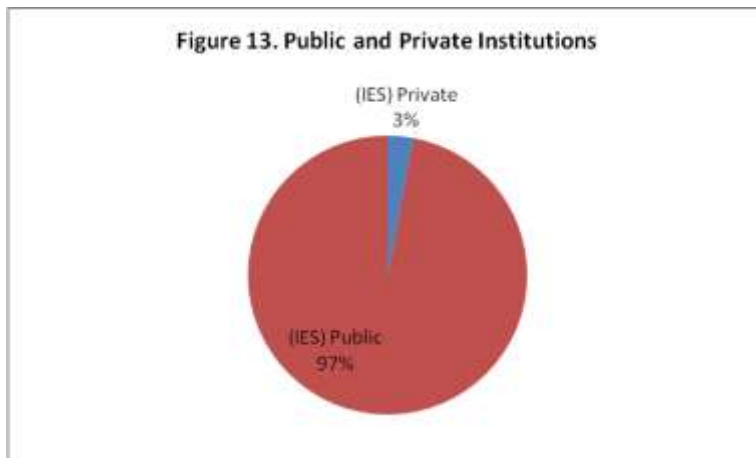


Figure 13 Public and Private Institutions

Figure 14 shows the producer institutions of the research studies found in Chetumal. In “*Universidad de Quintana Roo*” was found 92 % of research studies, “*Universidad Pedagógica Nacional*” obtained the second place with a 3 %, “*Universidad Nacional Iberoamericana para el Desarrollo*” obtained a 3% and finally the “*Instituto de Estudios Universitarios*” obtained a 2%.

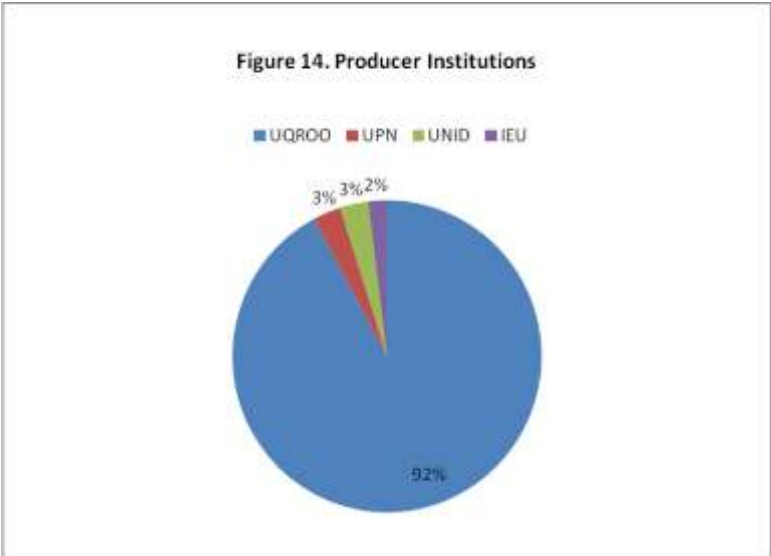


Figure 14 Producer Institutions



- What are the means of dissemination of foreign languages research in Chetumal?

Figure 15 shows the percentages of the research studies published and not published, most of the research studies were not published because they were undergraduate's theses and master's theses.

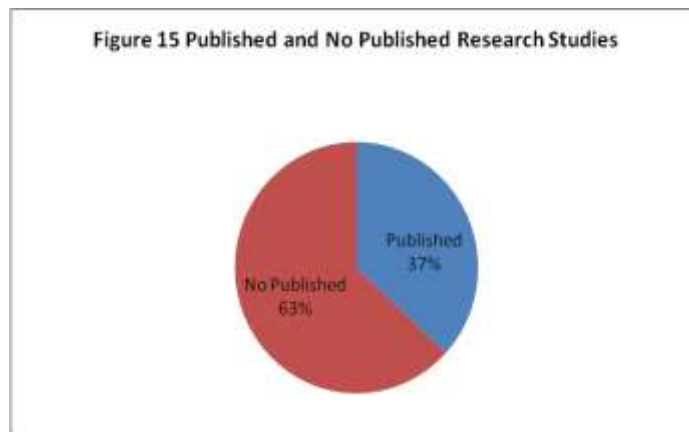


Figure 15 Published and No Published Research Studies

Figure 16 shows the means of dissemination of the research studies published. It can be seen that most of the research studies were published in proceedings.

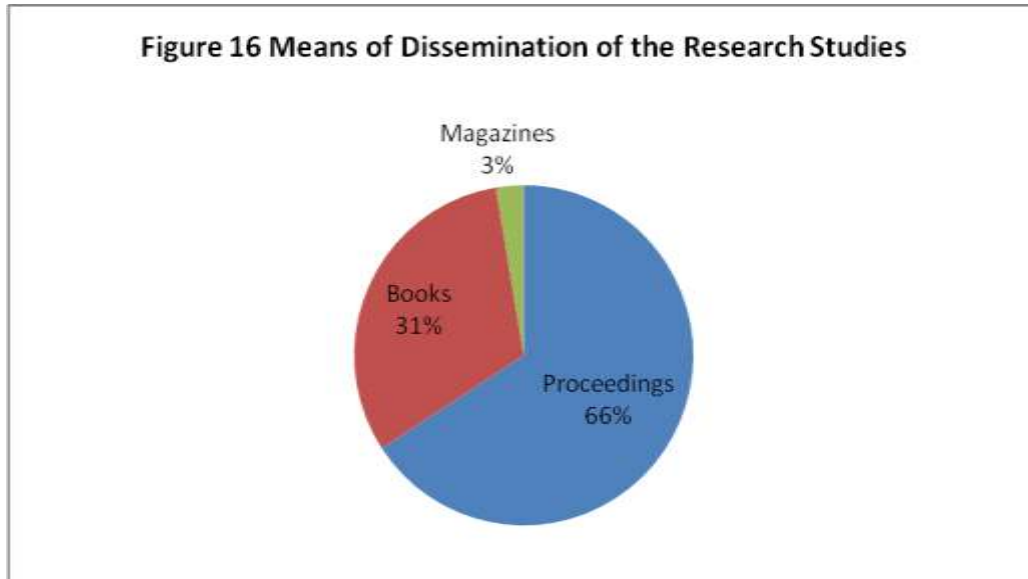


Figure 16 Means of Dissemination of the Research Studies

- What are the weaknesses and strengths of these research studies?

When the review of all the research studies was over, it can be said without hesitation that the research in the Learning and Teaching Foreign Languages Field is growing up. Even if the amount of research studies is still scarce, the interest in doing research has increased significantly.

Figure 17 shows the year in which the research studies considered in this research were found. For instance, 3 research studies in 2000, 1 research studies in 2001, 5 research studies in 2002, 2 research studies in 2003, 1 research studies in 2004, 2 research studies in 2005, 2 research studies in 2006, 5 research studies in 2007, 11 research studies in 2008, 29 research studies in 2009 and 21 research studies in 2010.

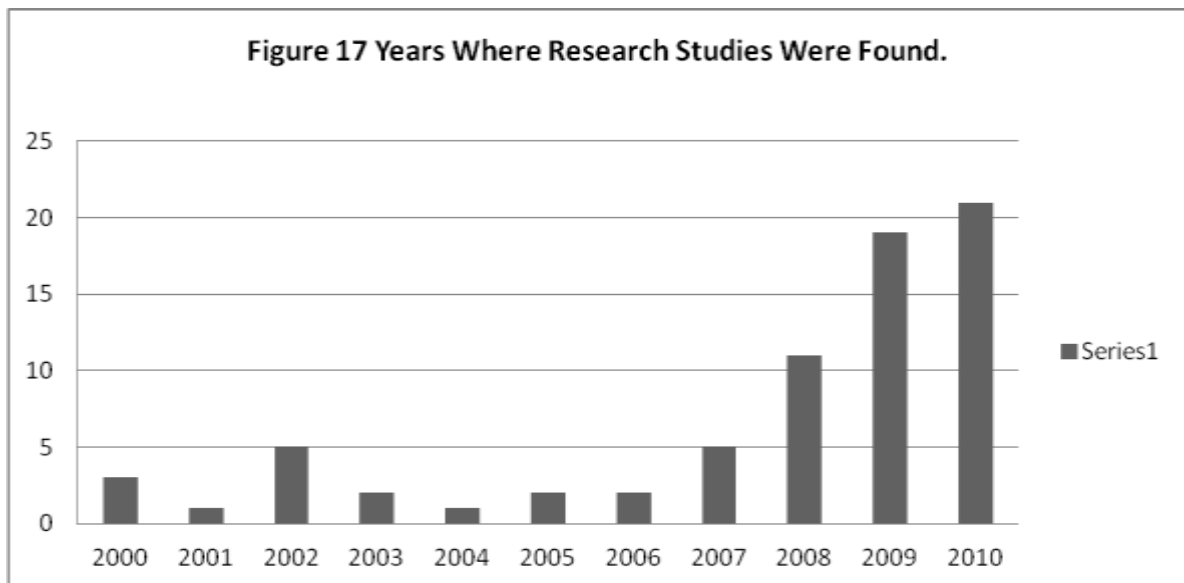


Figure 17 Years Where Research Studies Were Found.

The weaknesses found in the research studies are the lack of literature review, and probably this occurs because some of the research studies were done by novice researchers. Besides it could be that the authors of those reports are not only into research but also other activities like teaching, which requires a considerable amount of time as well as doing research.

Another weakness found is the lack of dissemination of the research studies, as it was stated before only 37% of research studies are published. While 63 % is unpublished and it is more difficult to find their research studies.

Moreover, another weakness that we found is that few undergraduate students are doing research studies. Probably this could happen because they do not have the enough numbers of subjects for preparing them to do research. And they better decide to get their degree by doing a monograph, translation, or by achieving a grade point average (GPA) equal or above 9.

Another weakness is the lack of presenting the research projects in different conferences because most of the research projects are presented only in FEL and FEULE. Even if there are more conferences related to the Foreign Languages Field in Mexico.

Some of the strengths of the research studies were the variety of the topics studies. For instance, research studies about culture, individual differences, evaluation, linguistics and didactics, methods and techniques, about how to use technology in the education, strategies and styles, formation, processes of learning, skills or sub skills and finally, beliefs were distinguished.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. -DISCUSSION

This chapter presents a report and analysis of the state of the art in research on Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in Chetumal, Quintana Roo from 2000 to 2010. The questions previously stated are answered and analyzed.

The first question stated on this research study was about the number of research projects done in the field of foreign languages from 2000 to 2010, it was found 72 research studies. In Reyes and Murrieta (2007) research study, it was found 11 research studies from 2000 to 2005; therefore, 61 new research studies were found from 2000 to 2010. These numbers indicate that the number of research studies done have increased significantly.

Other results that were obtained during the process of this research study were how the research study were divided according to how they were presented. From all the 72 research studies considered in this study, most of the research studies were reported as proceedings and master's theses. Reyes and Murrieta (2007) found 11 research studies divided in 6 graduate theses, 3 undergraduate theses, and 1 was a Ph.D. thesis research, 2 a chapter of a book and finally 1 from a journal.

As it can be seen the numbers have increased, there is a great percentage of proceedings from 2000 to 2010, followed by the percentage of master's theses, after that the percentage of undergraduate's theses is placed, book chapters are next, and, finally, books. Therefore, it could be said that the people doing research studies in the Teaching and Learning Foreign

Languages Field tend to present their work in conferences and publish them rather than present in other means of disseminations. In other words, some of them do not publish, and some either publish in means of disseminations that are not spread or those means of disseminations require a low demanding level.

The number of graduate's theses increased significantly, and this basically happens because of the new graduate programs offered in Chetumal. For instance, *Maestría en Educación con mención en Tecnología Educativa o Didáctica del Inglés* offered by UQROO and *Maestría en Educación* offered by UNID and UPN. The number of undergraduate's theses also obviously had to increase because of the new generations which decided to get their diploma by this modality. Notwithstanding, the number of undergraduate's theses is still scarce.

Another category is the book chapters, which increased too, from 3 chapters to 9. Finally, in the category of books, it was found 4 books, which were published by 3 three research professors. The three research professors, who have in common a PhD degree, were the authors or coordinators of the books, and they are more capable of doing more complex research studies because of all the education and training they have had, in other words the institutionalized state that, according to Bourdieu (1986), is about the academic titles that confer recognition to the institutionalized cultural capital.

Other results that were obtained during the analysis of the research studies were the names of the conferences where the proceedings were presented. As it has already been stated before in the review of related literature, some conferences and events in the foreign languages field emerged in order to create seminars and share instruments and techniques

about the languages they are specialized, and due to new educational policies, the research studies should be spread. For instance, one of the national and UQROO educational policies is “It is considered as a priority to strengthen the spreading of the research results inside and outside the universities” consequently, several researchers are following this rule by spreading their works in all the different conferences in Mexico like FEL, MEXTESOL, AMIFRAN, AMIR, AMIT, AMLA, AMMLEX, AMPAL, CIPLE and FEULE.

On this research study most of the proceedings found were presented in the “*Foro de Estudios de Lenguas Internacional*”. It is understandable that FEL is the conference where most of the proceedings are presented because most of the time it takes place in Chetumal. If the conferences take place in a near area, researchers will participate either by attending or presenting research studies strengthening their cultural capital (Ramírez, Reyes and Cota, 2010.) It can be said, that most of the people doing research in the foreign languages field do not have a strong cultural capital.

Another conference is *Foro de Especialistas Universitarios en Lenguas Extranjeras*, and most of the people who presented their research studies were from the *Universidad de Quintana Roo*, which indicates that just after FEL most of the researcher- professors tend to attend and present their research studies at FEULE. By presenting different research studies in all these conferences the research professors will strengthen their symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Another question stated was about the language most research. It was expected that the English language would have the major amount of percentage in research studies. In Reyes and Murrieta (2007) research study only one research study studied the French language

(Reyes, 2002) and the rest of the research studies were about the English language. In Chetumal, as it has been stated before there is an undergraduate program in English language and a graduate program called “*Maestría en Educación con mención en Didáctica del Inglés*”; consequently, it is logical that the English language is still the language most researched in Chetumal.

After analyzing the data of all the research studies we could answer another question, which was about the people doing research in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. It is really surprising that even though the students are not taking appropriate subjects for doing research, they started to do it for the first time. Also we could observe that there is a great percentage of teachers who want to increase their institutionalized cultural capital, Bourdieu (1986) by studying a master’s program.

The results found about the most recurrent topics in research about foreign languages are really interesting; from the 72 research studies the most popular topic was about beliefs. For instance, Montalvo (2009), which was about beliefs about language learning and their relationship with academic achievement; Yeladaqui (2010), about the high school teachers epistemological beliefs, and also it was found a book exclusively about the beliefs “*Creencias, estrategias y pronunciación en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras*” by Reyes (2009). Therefore, it can be seen there is a significant tendency to the study of this topic. In other words, a new line of research has started to consolidate. Besides the *habitus* of this research professors have changed, as it has been stated before the *habitus* refers to the actions that certain person is used to do, in the case of Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages Field, the professors are more used to teach rather than doing research.



The following research question on this research study was about the epistemologies and the methods used. It is common that most of the research studies are quantitative because it could be done by an undergraduate student with the help of her advisor. On the other hand, the qualitative studies are more complex to do, and most of the time, this kind of research studies are done by research professors with experience and a consolidated objectified cultural capital. This capital is directly related with the production of qualitative research studies because they are done by research professors with a high institutionalized cultural capital; academic titles, so they are more capable of doing this kind of research.

The results of this research study were not the exception, as it was stated before most of the research studies were quantitative and subsequent qualitative research studies. It was found that authors of the qualitative research were experienced research professors with a high cultural capital, objectified cultural capital and of course the institutionalized state. The research professors who have several research studies published in different means of disseminations were Reyes, Murrieta, Hernández, and Marín. The three out of four of these research professors count with a PhD degree, which allows them to be capable of doing several research studies in the area they work.

The next question stated before was about the producer institutions of the research that foreign languages research. The results were that the UQROO has the percentage most elevated and, as it was already stated, it is because UQROO has more professional research with master's and PhD degrees than other institutions. Furthermore another reason may be because of the undergraduate program *Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa* and also the

graduate program *Maestría en Educación con Mención en Didáctica Del Inglés*, after that there is a tie between UNID and UPN which both offer a graduate program in Education.

The means of dissemination of foreign languages research in Chetumal were proceedings, books and journals. The proceedings occupied the first place and it indicates that many students and teachers attend these conferences for presenting their research. Besides they also have the opportunity of publishing their research projects in the journals. For instance, The MEXTESOL Journal.

Another means of dissemination was the publishing of the research in books, something peculiar about the authors and coordinators of the books is that they possess a high institutionalized state (Bourdieu, 1986).

Finally there is a low percentage of publishing in journals. It was found an article by Marin (2006) research “The use of dictionaries by EFL learners at the Universidad de Quintana Roo” published in *Coincidencias*. This journal is not peer reviewed or included in an index; however, it is still considered as part of the objectified cultural capital Ramírez, Reyes and Cota, (2010).

## CONCLUSION

This documentary research study about the state of the art in research on Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages in Chetumal leads to concluding that even if the amount of the research studies done in the decade from 2000 to 2010 is scarce, the number of research studies is increasing with time. Also, it will be helpful that the researchers, who are novice, should ask for help to people who are really into the research and also to self-prepare by attending research courses. On this way the different research projects of the undergraduate and graduate programs in Chetumal would count with a solid review of related literature, methodologies and epistemologies. Moreover, it is indispensable the financial support for the research on Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages field.

It is really vital to offer opportunities to the foreign languages professors who are in disadvantage because of their lack of research formation, so that they can still be in the game and have access to the financial resources. In this way the research production of foreign languages could increase and they could find a good position in the game.

It is hoped that due to this documentary research study, more research studies can be developed to increase the research production. At the same it is contributing to the consolidation of this promising field.

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