

**THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING
PROGRAM: AN ANALYSIS OF GRADUATE PROFILES, SELF-
PERCEPTIONS AND ACADEMIC LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES**

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FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS CON ÉNFASIS EN
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Content

Abstract	6
1. Literature Review	7
2. Statement of the Problem	10
3. Research Question	11
4. Objectives	11
4.1 General	11
4.2 Specific	11
5. Conceptual References	11
5.1 Graduate	12
5.2 Impact	12
5.3 Social impact	13
5.4 Impact measurement	14
5.5 Professional profile.	15
6. Methodology	16
Participants	17
Data Collection Instruments	18
<i>Survey</i>	18
<i>Semi-Structured Interview</i>	19
Ethical considerations	19
7. Results	20
7.1 Characterization of Graduates	21
7.1.1 Gender.	21
7.1.2 Age.	21
7.1.3 Place of Residence.	22
7.1.4 Current Employment Status.	22
7.1.5 Position Held.	22
7.1.6 Salary Range.	23
7.1.7 Advanced Studies.	24
7.2 Professional profiles	24
7.2.1 Academic profile.	24
7.2.2 Social profile.	26
7.2.3 Human profile.	27
7.2.4 Operational and disciplinary profile.	30
7.3 Suggestions for the Program	34

7.4 Positive Aspects	35
8. Conclusions	37
9. References.	39
10. Appendixes	42
10.1 Appendix A. Encuesta, graduados Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras	42
10.2 Appendix B. Entrevista Semi-estructurada	44
10.3 Appendix C. Consent Forms	47

Abstract

This research paper seeks to identify the social impact of graduates from the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* - Foreign Languages Teaching Education Program (this is the name of the program and its equivalence in English, but the Spanish name will be used throughout the paper) at Universidad Católica de Oriente (UCO) in Colombia. The main objectives of the study are to characterize these graduates in order to better understand their features and current status, as well as to explore how they perceive themselves according to their professional profile. Additionally, the study aims to ascertain how academic leaders perceive the performance and impact of these graduates in their workplaces.

A mixed-methods strategy, which included surveys and semi-structured interviews, was used to accomplish these goals. Both academic leaders and graduates were consulted for data. The survey's primary objectives were to learn more about the graduates' educational background, employment situation, level of job satisfaction, and perceptions of their professional development. On the other hand, the goal of the interviews with academic leaders was to learn more about how they evaluated the performance of the graduates and their perceived influence in professional settings.

According to this research, graduates of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* have had a positive social impact in their specific environments, since they have contributed to the learning of the foreign language and have enhanced the use and development of this language using didactic strategies and are very competent people in their field. Even so, aspects to be improved were found to be the level of English and issues such as group management and handling stressful situations.

The study also reveals that graduates and academic leaders have very similar opinions about the performance and impact of the graduates. The graduates expressed confidence in

their skills and the academic leaders supported this assertion while providing suggestions for program improvement based on the graduates' performance.

These results offer useful information for the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* and sheds light on the social impact of graduates in foreign languages from Universidad Católica de Oriente in Colombia. The outcomes help the program and the students as well, since it will allow the university to develop improvements in their curriculum and future graduates will be able to resort to this paper if they want to get to know the current job market for their degree.

1. Literature Review

To understand the social impact of teachers, specifically of foreign language graduates of the Universidad Católica de Oriente, this literature seeks to provide a review of 5 studies that have been conducted giving an inside view of how graduates from different fields and universities have made contributions in the area in which they work. In addition, we seek to characterize them, recognizing their weaknesses and strengths from their professional training within their specific contexts. This study focuses mainly on providing a better understanding on how the UCO's foreign language graduates are performing in their workplaces, how they view their own professional profiles as well as how academic leaders recognize and evaluate their performance in order to influence the development of the foreign languages teaching program at UCO.

Initially, we believe it is important to understand why graduate studies are important. As stated by Jaramillo and Giraldo (2006), graduate studies make it possible to give an account of the quality of the education being provided in a specific place and find possible indicators of professional success.

This type of studies mainly seeks to feed a database of graduates based on the analysis of the socioeconomic characteristics, labor, academic and social trajectories of the professionals.

We also considered that it is relevant to recognize as Urrea et al. (2018) stated: “The development of this type of research generates productive results towards the educational, labor and, of course, social communities.” (p.2). This reinforces the value of this research project, since we can observe that investigating the impact of graduate students influences the UCO educational community but has a social and academic impact on the communities in which graduates work, and we provide valid information that can be used as preferred by those currently studying in educational fields or are planning to do so.

In order to evaluate the true impact of graduates, we must look at the different variables that influence their performance. Ramirez and Smith (2006) indicate that there are four variables: job performance, socioeconomic factors, personal factors, educational factors.

Job Performance

This refers to "the professional practices and professional development of graduates". It helps us to understand the process by which graduates develop their labor, the activities they perform and the functions they fulfill. Its components are: "rates of insertion", "mechanisms of linkage and entry into the labor market", "placement in the labor market", "labor trajectory" and "professional practices".

Socioeconomic Factors

These refer to "the socioeconomic context", "the labor market" and "the competencies (skills, knowledge, values and attitudes) required are those demanded of graduates in their professional practice" (p.7).

Personal Factors

This variable includes individual factors such as "sex, age, marital status and current socioeconomic situation" (p.45). And family factors such as "the socioeconomic conditions in which the graduate developed during the course of his or her professional studies" (p.8).

Educational Factors

This includes the extra-university school career, perception of the institution and the university training received, and student performance.

In Torres (2021) we can also observe some factors that can be useful in the characterization of students, information such as gender, age range, year of graduation, the highest academic level they have reached, years of experience in the field they are performing, since, despite the fact that this study focused on the experience outside Colombia of foreign language graduates in order to improve the experiences of non-graduates, this study follows processes broadly similar to the ones we used to characterize UCO's foreign language program graduates.

Regarding data collection methods, Arbeláez and Narváez (2015) state that in their social impact assessment study of the Bachelor's degree program in special education (UdeA), they used instruments such as: surveys, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, document review, databases, etc. These were the most common and effective collection methods found in the 5 studies mentioned in this literature review. All these processes involved recording, organizing and classifying information. This review of methods and instruments sheds light on trends in types of impact measurement studies at the educational level.

We therefore consider that this literature review sheds some light on the importance of identifying how UCO's graduates have impacted Colombia through the development of their profession, their roles, their tasks and also to understand their perspectives and experiences. In

this way, we understand that the English language program and its graduates have had a great social impact on our contexts and that they are of great importance to expand our horizons, both as future graduates and as inhabitants of Colombia.

2. Statement of the Problem

The *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* at UCO, according to the PEP: "responds to the demands of modernization of the country as far as educational structures and processes are concerned; it is consistent with the new governmental and national laws and decrees, and contributes to solve cognitive, communicative, ethical, and aesthetic problems of the Oriente Antioqueño and the nation." (p.29)

It also mentions that the graduates of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* will be equipped with both the best pedagogical, didactic, and technological tools; as well as diverse teaching and evaluation strategies that shape and inform the teaching practice." (p. 30) With this in mind, we understand that the existence of the *Licenciatura* in itself generates a social impact in Colombia, since the need for it was previously established.

In 2017, The *Licenciatura* obtained a new official registration issued in Colombia by the Ministry of Education (MEN), and from this a "program improvement plan" (plan de mejoramiento) emerged, in which the factor of the follow-up to the graduates is included, and this study seeks to provide some insights into this component. It aims to know the realities and the graduate's current situation, describing their current state and analyzing if the graduate profiles established by the program are being achieved.

This study focuses on analyzing the graduates of the first version of this *Licenciatura* and it can also serve as a tool for future program renewals, taking into account the current

position of the graduates and academic leaders' insights, using this information to truly meet the requirements, not only of their specific contexts, but also of the graduates as individuals.

3. Research Question

What is the social impact of UCO's *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* graduates?

4. Objectives

4.1 General

To identify the social impact of Universidad Católica de Oriente's *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* graduates.

4.2 Specific

- To characterize graduates in order to better understand their features and current status.
- To understand how the graduates perceive themselves according to their professional profile.
- To find out how academic leaders' perceive the performance and impact of graduates in their workplaces.

5. Conceptual References

In this section, we will mention some of the concepts and keywords for this research project; always considering that the main objective is to identify the social impact of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* graduates in Colombia, and recognize the results obtained as a tool for the improvement of the program. The most relevant concepts in this

research are: graduate, impact, social impact, impact measurement and professional profile, it is important to take a look at them in order to have a better perspective of what we seek to achieve with this research.

5.1 Graduate

We consider that it is necessary to define Graduate as a first concept in order to establish the bases of who are the people that can participate in the investigation. To start it is important to know that this word comes from the Medieval Latin *graduatus*, which is the past participle of *graduari* that means “to take a degree” and from the Latin *gradus* "a step; a step climbed (on a ladder or stair)".

Graduate is, according to a close definition given by Cambridge Dictionary (n.d) “a person who has finished their school, college, or university education”. But it is necessary to understand that there is a notable difference with the word *alumnus* that is stated in Merriam-webster.com (n.d) as “a person who has attended or has graduated from a particular school, college, or university”.

Considering the foregoing, in the specific case of this investigation, the term graduate can be understood as the *Ministerio de Educación Nacional (2019)* mentions, someone who not only approved and completed a study plan of a higher education institution but also fulfilled all the established degree requirements by the institution of higher education obtaining with this in a legal way the title that is granted.

5.2 Impact

The origin of the word “Impact” is found in the late latin *impactus*, where *im* means inward, and *pactum*, root of the word *pangere*, which means to nail, and according to the Oxford English Dictionary, it could have two definitions, the first one is ‘the action of one

object coming forcibly into contact with another' and the other one is 'a marked effect or influence'.

The word impact has different connotations, since it is not only used in the social and academic sphere, but also in the environmental, geographic and artistic areas. According to the United Nations, impact "implies changes in people's lives. This might include changes in knowledge, skill, behavior, health or living conditions for children, adults, families or communities. Such changes are positive or negative long-term effects on identifiable population groups" meaning that when we talk about impact, we refer to a concept that has an effect on some aspect of society.

Considering the above, there are different types of impact, but for the purpose of this research we will mainly focus on social impact as this is where we can more appropriately consider the repercussions of graduates in their specific contexts.

5.3 Social impact

The U.S. Department of Commerce (1994) provides a definition of social impact as: "the consequences for the human population of any public or private action that alters the ways in which people live, work, enjoy themselves, relate to one another, organize to meet their needs, and generally cope as members of society" (pg. 2) However, this is a concept that is often mentioned, but not well-defined. Nevertheless, we can understand that it refers to a significant improvement in a group of individuals or a specific place, caused by an individual, strategy or situation.

Also, the *Center for Social Impact* refers to social impact as "the net effect of an activity on a community and the well-being of individuals and families".

Social impact also involves the change in norms, values and beliefs that occur as a result of the intervention of an individual or an event, such changes rationalize the impacted context, about themselves and their community.

It is important to consider this concept, since what we seek to find out is how the actions and the presence of the foreign language graduates of the Universidad Católica de Oriente have served to develop a positive change in the community in which they operate and how the conditions have changed since they have been present in this context.

5.4 Impact measurement

Rogers (2012) states that: “Impact evaluation investigates the changes brought about by an intervention. Impact evaluation can be undertaken on interventions at any scale” (pg. 2) in this case, the intervention would be actions that the graduates have developed in their particular contexts and how they have been visualized by their academic leaders and themselves.

Also, Rogers (2014) specifies that: “Impact evaluation is addressed as part of an integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan that generates and makes available evidence to inform decisions” (pg. 1) which defines the process that we followed to achieve the goal to identify the graduate’s impact.

According to the “*Manual de medición de impacto social*”, impact measurement "is useful to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of a project or program, to promote consistent objectives, to showcase a project and to communicate about it" it is important to keep this concept in mind, as it is essentially what this research is about, accurately analyzing this population.

These concepts are of utmost importance for the development and understanding of this research. That's why it was essential to define them beforehand. In the next section, we will discuss the methodology used in this paper. This includes the research paradigm, research method, and how participants were selected.

5.5 Professional profile.

Another aspect that we must consider in our research project is the professional profile, for which it is necessary to explore how some authors interpret this concept. This is a concept that has gained much strength not only in the educational field, so different authors have wanted to approach us to a proper conceptualization of the term as is the case of José Antonio Arnaz (1981) which tells us that: “the professional profile is a description of the characteristics required of the professional to meet and solve social needs. An individual will be constituted as a professional after having participated in the system of instruction.”

Another author who has tried to shed light on the definition of this term is Tobon (2019) who affirms when talking about the economics undergraduate degree and its relationship with the professional profile that, this concept is understood as "the set of professional competencies that characterizes the economist, which are essentially inscribed in the cognitive domain and are developed throughout the student's transit in the economics undergraduate program".

Another author who has also wanted to bring us closer to the proper definition is Frida Diaz-Barriga (1999) who describes a professional profile as a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that define professional practice. The professional profile is developed after establishing the bases of the curricular process and is part of the process; it is a step within the curricular methodology.

On behalf of the Universidad Católica de Oriente in the PEP “*Proyecto Educativo del Programa*” of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* (2010) it is said in relation to the professional profile that at all the levels of education that are provided in this educational institution, it is necessary to achieve a cultural, humanistic, ethical, moral, scientific and technological education, not as individual concepts, but amalgamated, based on the personality and the learner’s integral development. That means to understand and apply

knowledge, which means to develop skills, because "to grow as people and serve as citizens, each of us must develop our full potential, because it is the constant search of learning that enhances our lives" PEP (2010).

From the PEP (2010), the following types of profiles are presented:

- Human Profile: The human profile refers to the being of all students, "so that their own personality flourishes better, and they are in a position to act with a growing capacity for autonomy, critical judgment and personal and social responsibility." (PEP, 2010, p.49).
- Social Profile: The social profile refers to "learning to live together, developing the understanding of the other and the perception of forms of interdependence" (PEP, 2010, p.49).
- Academic Profile: The academic profile makes reference to "learning to know by combining a sufficiently broad general culture with the possibility of deepening knowledge in a small number of subjects." (PEP, 2010, p.50).
- Operational and Disciplinary Profile: The operational and disciplinary profile mentions that "learning to do in order to acquire not only a qualification, but, more generally, a competence that enables people to deal with a large number of situations and to work as a team." (PEP, 2010, p.50).

6. Methodology

This section encompasses various aspects of the methodology employed in this research. It covers the type of research conducted, the approach adopted, the description of the context and the rationale behind its selection, the instruments employed for data collection, the type of analysis performed, and lastly, the ethical considerations associated with the work.

Looking at the main objective of this research project, which is to identify the social impact of the graduates of *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* of *Universidad Católica de Oriente*, this research followed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact. For the quantitative data we used a type of research design called “survey design” which according to Cresswell (2012) “are procedures in quantitative research in which you administer a survey or questionnaire to a small group of people (called the *sample*) to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a large group of people (called the *population*)” (p.21). As we will mention below, the closed-ended questions in the survey provided quantitative data, while some open-ended questions to the graduates and to their academic leaders elicited qualitative responses that captured rich and detailed insights, allowing respondents to provide nuanced perspectives and share their beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and interactions (Pathak, Jena, and Kalra, 2013).

This mixed-method approach allowed for triangulation, where quantitative and qualitative data could be compared and integrated to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the social impact of the graduates capturing both quantitative trends and qualitative narratives.

Participants

The participants who were part of this research were the graduates of the *Universidad Católica de Oriente* from the first version of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras*, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the graduates of this degree program who have been employed in Colombia, as well as some semi-structured interviews with their respective academic leaders. The sample for this study were 84 graduates, 51 women and 33 men, out of a population of approximately 340 graduates from the *Licenciatura*. They answered the

survey in a timely manner, and they were between 20 and 45 years old. This process was carried out with the support of the program's coordinator, who has extensive experience in dealing with graduates of the *Licenciatura*.

These graduates do not only work in educational facilities, their field of action is wide and varied, it is not only limited to teaching and learning environments, but all options were explored and all those graduates who worked professionally in contexts other than education were contemplated.

Data Collection Instruments

We used these instruments to collect all of our information. The survey was very appropriate since the graduates are located in different parts of the world, and so we were able to reach more of them. The semi-structured interview allowed us to generate more closeness with the academic leaders, and thus collect valid and reliable data.

Survey

Mathers, Fox & Hunn (2007) define the survey as “a flexible research approach used to investigate a wide range of topics. Surveys often employ the questionnaire as a tool for data collection.” (p. 5). This research was carried out with a survey that consists of two large sections, the first is related to the graduates' personal information in order to characterize and learn more about them, and the second part is intended to ask questions related to the different profiles established for the graduates of the program (human, social, academic, operational and disciplinary), in total this survey has 36 affirmations. In the first section there are 12 questions related to the personal and employment information, the second section has the remaining statements that correspond to the professional profile, which the graduate answered on a scale from zero to four, being 4 “total existence”, 3 “existence”, 2 “medium existence”, 1

“little existence”, 0 “total non-existence”. This survey was implemented between November of 2022 and March of 2023. (See appendix A).

Semi-Structured Interview

A semi-structured interview can be understood as a way of collecting qualitative data in which the participant or participants can be asked questions, taking a guiding list and formulating others as the interview is undertaken (Mertler, 2017). This tool was very useful to us after concluding the characterization of the program graduates, since, from the recognition of the areas of work of each graduate, we were able to move to a second stage in which, through semi-structured interviews, we talked to some academic leaders to have their perspectives in relation to the fulfillment or not of certain characteristics of the graduates' profiles, these interviews were carried out between February and April (2023), obtaining with this 9 responses from academic leaders of different education institutions, which helped us understand their perspective and, through their voices, identify the social impact of the graduates (See Appendix B).

Ethical considerations

From our ethical duties, we must emphasize that all information obtained, whether through surveys or interviews, was treated with extreme care, protecting the confidentiality and identity of those involved. Before each survey or interview, an informed consent form was previously presented to the participants in which they could understand the purpose of each moment of this research, that all the information obtained would be used as evidence in this paper, that their identities will be safeguarded at all times, and that there was no economic retribution for any of the parties, everything was done only for academic purposes. (See Appendix C)

7. Results

Since the objective of our research is to identify the social impact of Universidad Católica de Oriente's foreign language graduates, we conducted a survey addressed to graduates, and semi-structured interviews for some employers of the different institutions.

In the survey, the graduates answered some questions that allowed us, firstly, to characterize them and learn more about their personal information, and subsequently, to know how they visualize their professional profile (academic, social, human, operational and disciplinary) and the possible impact they have in the context in where they are currently employed as teachers. With this survey we were able to obtain 84 answers from graduates who are not only in different parts of the country, but also outside of it, some of these graduates even fulfilling roles other than teaching. After this, interviews were conducted with some academic leaders and employers at institutions where there was a significant sample of graduates in order to contrast the information obtained in the survey, in addition to the fact that these interviews allowed us to obtain more information related to the graduates' performance.

The following sections show the results under seven main categories. The first category is related to the characterization of the graduates, the second category with the academic profile, the third category to the social profile, the fourth category to the human profile and the fifth category to the operational and disciplinary profile, and emerging categories six and seven are related to positive aspects of the graduate's performance and suggestions for improvement in the teaching program.

7.1 Characterization of Graduates

In this first category, we will account for all those aspects that pertain to the general and personal information of the graduates, in order to identify them and know their background.

7.1.1 Gender.

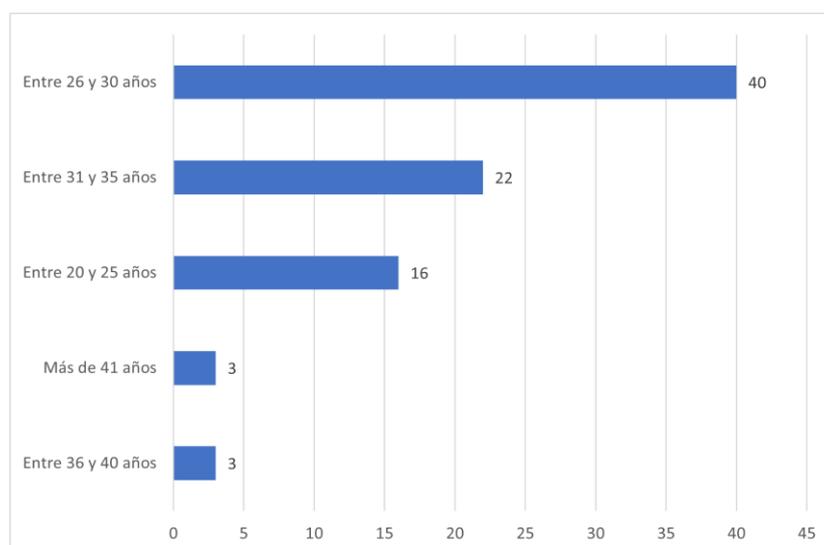
61% (51 people) of the respondents are female and the remaining 39% (33 people) are male. Here, we can clearly see that the majority of the graduates are women, which can indicate to us that teaching is still a profession dominated by this gender.

7.1.2 Age.

We found out that 47.6% (40 people) of the graduates are between 26 and 30 years old. 26.2% (22 people) of the graduates are between 31 and 35 years old. 19% (16 people) are between 20 and 25 years old. 3.6% (3 people) are between 36 and 40 years old, and the remaining 3.6% (3 people) are more than 40 years old. It also generated graphs that will be shown in the following paragraphs of this section.

Figure 1.

Rango de Edad

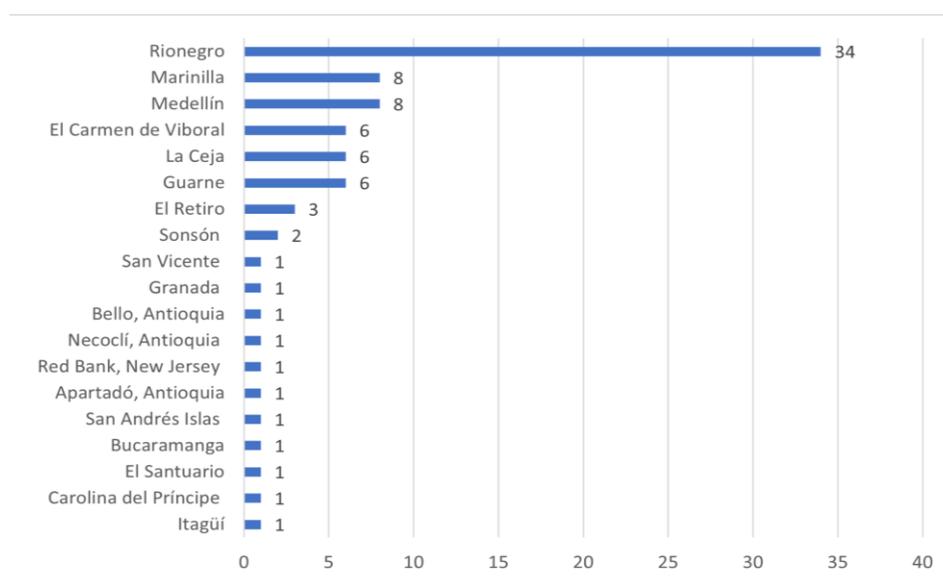


7.1.3 Place of Residence.

Respondents indicated the place where they currently live, from the answers obtained we can conclude that most of the graduates live in the municipality of Rionegro and surrounding areas such as Medellín, Marinilla, El Carmen de Viboral and La Ceja. 3 graduates live outside of Antioquia, these places being Bucaramanga, San Andres Islands, and Red Bank, New Jersey. These results can be seen in the following graph.

Figure 2.

Lugar de residencia.



7.1.4 Current Employment Status.

98% (82 people) responded positively, and the other 2% (2 people) responded negatively. Therefore, it is evident that there is a high employment rate of foreign language graduates.

7.1.5 Position Held.

Out of the 82 graduates that were employed, about 85,4% (70 people) work as teachers, and 14,6% (12 people) have non-teaching positions in their work. Also, 9,7% (8

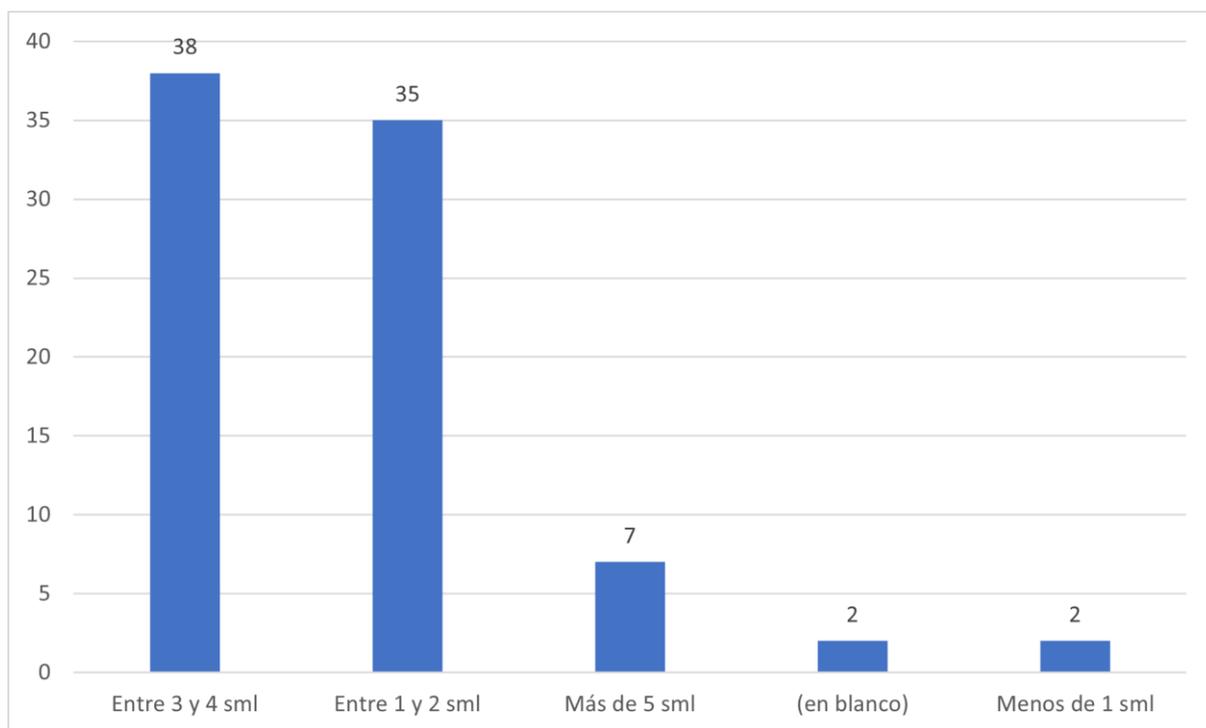
people) do not have jobs related to education, some examples are: call center agent, library tutor, air traffic controller, photographer, travel consultant, among others.

7.1.6 Salary Range.

In this one we can see that in the case of being unemployed the answer was blank. 2.5% (2 people) graduates answered less than 1 smlv¹. 45% (38 people) graduates answered between 3 and 4 smlv. 42% (35 people) answered between 1 and 2 smlv. 8% (7 people) answered more than 5 smlv and the 2,5% remaining belong to those surveyed who are unemployed. These results are shown in the following graph.

Figure 3.

Rango salarial.



¹ Spanish acronym that refers to the current legal minimum wage.

7.1.7 Advanced Studies.

We wanted to know if the graduates had furthered their studies. 63% (53 people) answered positively and the rest of them, 37% (31 people) answered negatively, understanding that a large majority of them have advanced in their higher studies. Some of the most common studies they have done are Specialization in pedagogy and didactics, master in education, master in teaching and learning of foreign languages, master in Neuropsychology (neuropegadogy).

7.2 Professional Profiles

In the following sections, we will compare the results of the different profiles, both from the interviews with academic leaders and the survey with graduates. In both cases we asked the participants to read the statements and, according to the graduate's performance, to assign a number from 0 to 4, being the sum of 4 and 3 existence, 2 slight/medium existence, 1 little existence, 0 total non-existence.

7.2.1 Academic Profile.

The academic profile refers to the capacity for epistemological appropriation of knowledge, facts, concepts, principles and laws of the different disciplines of knowledge. In this profile, we had the following variables: "From my educational practice, I am able to reflect and reconstruct my pedagogical knowledge", "I make use of my research capacity to enhance my intellectual and professional skills", "I epistemologically appropriate knowledge in my discipline of knowledge", "I have good creative thinking". We will begin by approaching the analysis one by one.

7.2.1.1 From my Educational Practice, I am able to Reflect and Reconstruct my Pedagogical Skills. In this variable, of the graduates surveyed, 2.38% responded that they have a slight/medium existence of this matter, and 97.62% responded that there is an existence. Academic leaders corroborate this information since 100% responded that the graduates exhibit outstanding reflection of their pedagogical skills. We can therefore notice that there is a great similarity in the answers, both groups of respondents agreeing with the main statement.

7.2.1.2 I make use of my Research Capacity to Enhance my Intellectual and Professional Skills. In this, 100% of the graduates responded that they have an existence in relation to this variable. For their part also, 100% of the academic leaders responded that there is an existence. The percentages are similar, but we can see that the graduates are more aware of the research they do to strengthen their educational practices, and perhaps it is not as evident to their academic leaders.

7.2.1.3 I Epistemologically Appropriate the Knowledge in my Discipline of Knowledge. In this variable, 1.19% of the graduates responded that there is a slight/medium existence, and the remaining 98.81% consider that it exists. On the other hand, the academic leaders confirmed this information, obtaining 100% of existence. These results are well-balanced, unlike a very small percentage of graduates who feel that this statement is slightly applied to their practice.

7.2.1.4 I have a Good Creative Thinking. To conclude with the academic profile variables, here we found that 2.38% of the graduates consider that they have a slight/medium existence and the remaining 97.62% consider that it exists. On the other hand, 100% of the academic leaders responded that it exists in the graduates. We realize that the participants generally consider that the creative thinking of the graduates is satisfactory.

7.2.2 Social Profile.

This profile refers to developing the understanding of the other while respecting the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace. And the variables were: “I actively participate in the democratic processes of our society”, “I respect differences and social relationships” and “I follow the basic principles of social coexistence related to the basic norms”.

7.2.2.1 I Actively Participate in the Democratic Processes of our Society. Talking about this variable 2.38% of the graduates responded that for them there is a total non-existence when talking about this, 5.95% responded that there is a slight/medium existence, and the remaining 91.67% responded that there is an existence. In this variable we can observe that there is a significant change in the percentages because in the case of the academic leaders as a whole (100%) responded that this is existent. Thus, it is evident that academic leaders are not aware of whether graduates participate in democratic processes, since it could be considered more personal information and that the percentages of graduates as such show that there are several who do not actively participate in the democratic process of this society.

7.2.2.2 I Respect Differences and Social Relationships. In this variable, both the graduates and the academic leaders consider that 100% of the people consider it to exist, so we can clearly identify that this is a strong feature of the graduates and that in their specific contexts they have an excellent command of social relationships.

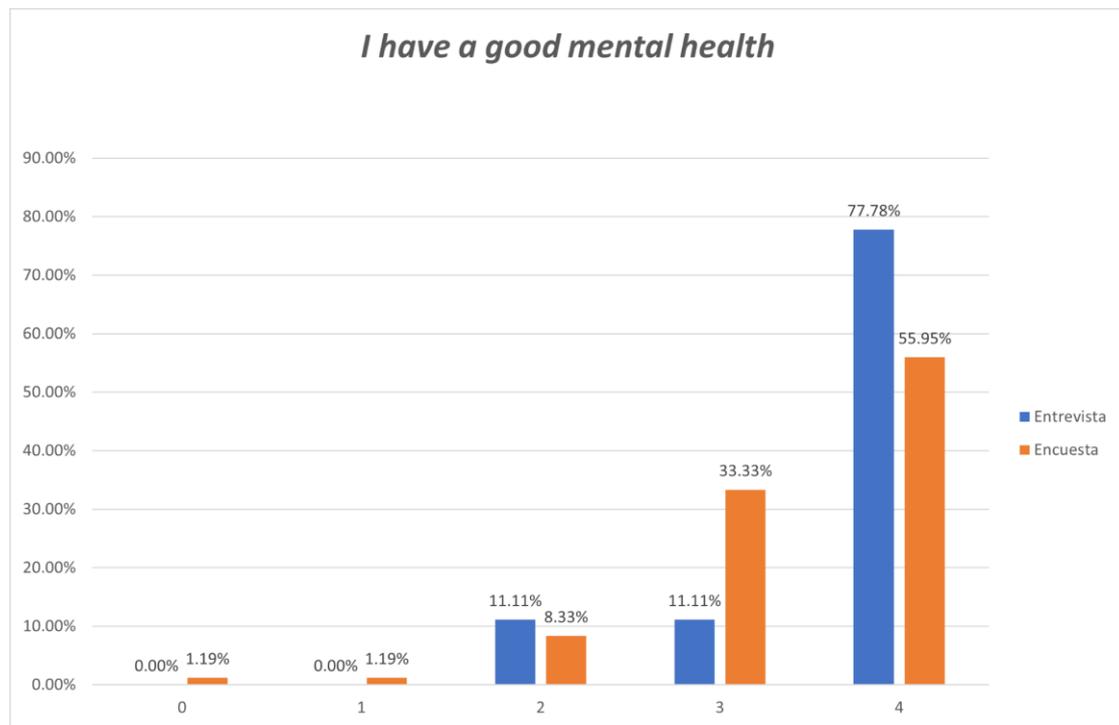
7.2.2.3 I Follow the Basic Principles of Social Coexistence Related to the Basic

Norms. Once again, 100% of the graduates and academic leaders responded that this variable is existent. Thus, concluding that the academic leaders consider that the graduates have a great development in their social profile, and conversely, the graduates also show high recognition of this profile in their practices.

7.2.3 Human Profile.

This profile concerns the scale of human, moral, ethical, social, cultural and political values that present us as citizens who make community coexistence a condition of their existence in harmony and peace. The variables that belong to this profile are: "I have a good mental health", "I have a good attitude of respect and acceptance of community life", "I am good at finding solutions to problems", "I have a good recognition of my own dignity and that of others", "I have a good reflective and critical capacity", "I have a great capacity for leadership".

7.2.3.1 I Have a Good Mental Health. In the survey, 1.19% of graduates responded that there is total non-existence, 1.19% considered that there is little existence, 8.33% responded that there is slight/medium existence, and the remaining 89.25% responded that there is existence. On the other hand, the academic leaders consider that there is 100% existence. It is clear that mental health is often not a matter that can be made evident in the workplace, here we can see how the percentages differ slightly, which may indicate that academic leaders should be more aware of the graduates' mental health and that the program should promote emotional intelligence. The comparison between the two responses from both academic leaders and graduates can be seen in the following graph.

Figure 4.*Mental health.*

7.2.3.2 I Have a Good Attitude of Respect and Acceptance of Community Life. In

this variable, 100% of the participants in the survey responded that they had an existence, together with the responses of the academic leaders who also responded in their totality that there was an existence. Here we can see how the graduate has a great recognition of community life and respects it from his job.

7.2.3.3 I am Good at Finding Solutions to Problems. Here we can see that 2.38% of the graduates responded in the survey that there is a slight/medium existence in them, and 97.62% of the remaining participants responded that there is an existence in terms of this variable in them. On the other hand, 100 % of the academic leaders interviewed responded that there is an existence of this variable in the graduates. From this we can conclude that the ability to find solutions to problems is something that may depend on whether you ask the

person directly or the employer in a substantial way, and that despite this difference, this part of the human profile of most graduates is still very positive.

7.2.3.4 I Have a Good Recognition of my own Dignity and of Others. In this variable, 100% of the graduates responded that there is an existence, and the academic leaders validated this information by also responding that there is 100% existence in this variable. This shows how the formation of values related to dignity in the university allows a good development of the graduates in their communities.

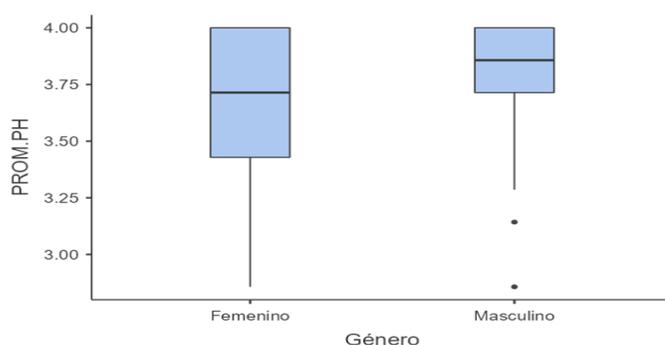
7.2.3.5 I Have a Good Reflective and Critical Capacity. In the survey, we can observe that 2.38% of the graduates responded that they had a slight/medium existence in relation to this variable, and the remaining 97.62% responded that they had an existence. On the other hand, in the interview, there is a small variation, since 100% of the academic leaders responded that there is an existence in relation to the good reflective and critical capacity. In this variable it can be observed that despite the fact that the graduates say they have a great reflective and critical capacity, some still need to improve in this aspect.

7.2.3.6 I Have a Great Capacity for Leadership. Finally, to conclude this profile, 2.38% of the graduates responded that there is little existence in them in terms of leadership capacity, 5.95% responded that there is a slight/medium existence, and the remaining 91.66% responded that there is an existence. For their part, the academic leaders consider that the graduates have in general a good leadership capacity, obtaining 100% of existence. From this variation, we can see the lack of leadership on the part of some graduates, in spite of the good concept that the academic leaders have from them.

7.2.3.7 Relationship Between Gender and Human Profile. As we can see in the following graph, although there are no differences between the means of the female (3.67, $SD^2=0.315$) and male (3.78, $SD=0.284$) genders, it is observed that women have lower scores compared to men when it concerns the human profile.

Figure 5.

Relationship between gender and human profile.



7.2.4 Operational and Disciplinary Profile.

This profile relates to learning to do in order to acquire a competence that enables people to cope with a large number of situations and to work in a team. The variables that concern this profile are: "I apply my knowledge of foreign languages to different contexts and social situations", "I contribute scientifically to pedagogy and didactics through research and reflection", "I understand the social, cultural, political and economic realities of the environment in which I work", "I enrich my pedagogical and didactic level by participating in academic meetings", "I keep myself updated in the field of foreign languages", "I am able to work as part of a team".

² Acronym referring to the Standard Deviation.

7.2.4.1 I Apply my Knowledge of Foreign Languages to Different Contexts and Social Situations. In this first variable of the operational and disciplinary profile, we could observe that 2.38% of the graduates responded that there is little existence, 5.95% responded that there is a slight/medium existence and the remaining 91.67% responded that there is an existence. In contrast to this variation in the survey results, in the case of academic leaders, 100% responded that there is an existence. With this, we can see the direct relationship between graduates and how they apply their knowledge from their workplace based on the response of the academic leaders, and how the graduate can think otherwise from his position as an employee.

7.2.4.2 I Contribute Scientifically to Pedagogy and Didactics through Research and Reflection. In this variable, 7.14% of the graduates responded that there is total non-existence, 3.57% that there is little existence, 15.48% responded that there is slight/medium existence and the remaining 73.81% that there is existence. For their part, the academic leaders responded that 11.11% responded that there is a total non-existence, 11.11% also responded that there is a slight/medium existence and the remaining 77.78% responded that there is an existence. Here we can see how the graduates participate less in processes related to research, being even the degree work the only opportunity in which they do research, allowing us to think that it is something to be strengthened by the graduate.

7.2.4.3 I Understand the Social, Cultural, Political and Economic Realities of the Environment in which I Work. Talking about this variable 1.19% of the graduates responded that they have a slight/medium existence in this variable, and the remaining 98.81% that there is an existence. For their part, the academic leaders responded in their totality that there is an existence in relation to this variable. Here we can highlight the work of the graduates in terms of recognition of their context and the different social aspects that influence their workplace.

7.2.4.4 I Enrich my Pedagogical and Didactic Level by Participating in Academic Meetings. In the survey, the graduates responded in relation to this, that 7.14% have a total non-existence, 4.76% that they have little existence, 17.86% responded that they have a slight/medium existence in relation to this variable and the remaining 70.24% that there is an existence. On the other hand, in the response of the academic leaders, there was not as much variety, 22.22% of respondents said they had a slight/medium existence, and the remaining 77.77% responded that there was an existence. In conclusion, a considerable number of the graduates consider that in relation to this variable in their professional profile it is necessary to continue improving, showing us how important it is to continue working on this subject from the university in order to work at academic meetings.

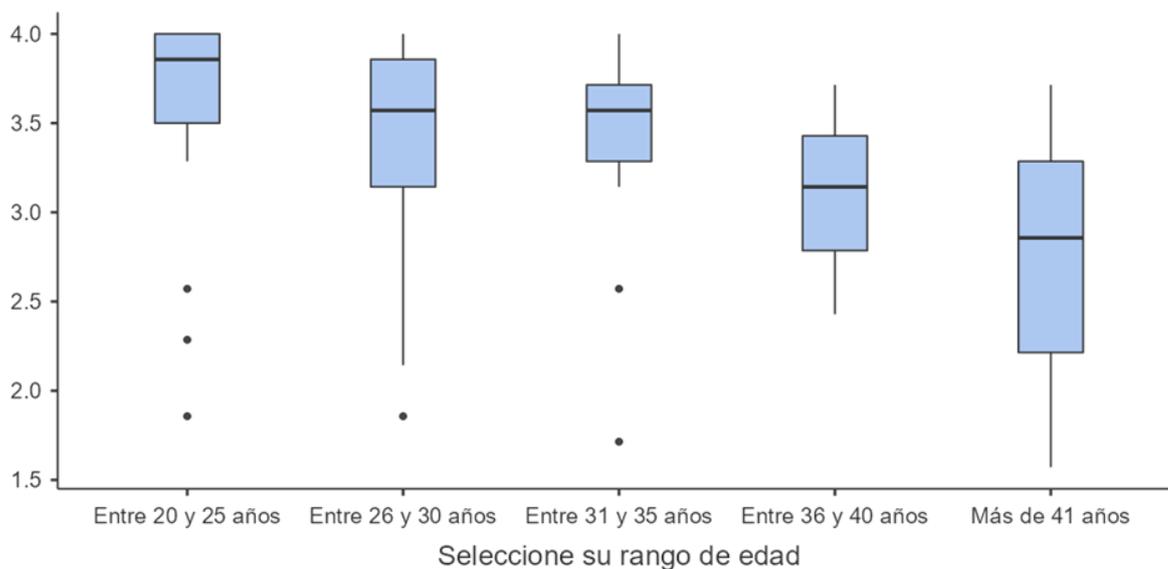
7.2.4.5 I Keep Myself Updated in the Field of Foreign Languages. In this variable, 2.38% of the graduates responded that there is little existence, 13.10% responded that there is a slight/medium existence, and the remaining 84.52% responded that there is existence. On the other hand, 11.11% of the academic leaders responded that there is a slight/medium existence and the remaining 88.89% that there is an existence. This evidence shows that some graduates do not have the ability to keep themselves up to date in the field of foreign languages.

7.2.4.6 I am able to Work as Part of a Team. In this variable we can see that 2.38% of the graduates responded that they had a slight/medium existence, and the remaining 97.62% that they had this variable in existence. For their part, the academic leaders corroborate this with their 100% response in existence. In general terms, we could say that the graduates have a good ability to work in a team, although in smaller numbers, some may find this difficult.

7.2.4.7 Relationship Between Age Range and Average Response Rate on the Operational and Disciplinary Profile. In relation to age and the operational and disciplinary profile, it is observed that as age increases, the average operational and disciplinary profile decreases significantly. This may mean that perceptions of the operational profile are lower as age increases. The following graph illustrates this relationship.

Figure 6.

Relationship between age and operational and disciplinary profile.

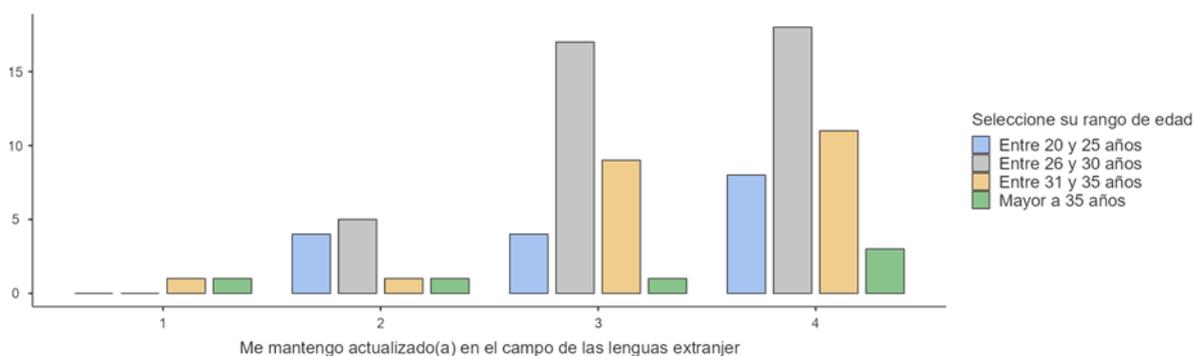


7.2.4.8 Relationship between Age Range and Operational and Disciplinary

Profile. To conclude, not only with the operational and disciplinary profile but also with what is related to the theme of the different profiles, a clear example of the relationship between age and the occupational and disciplinary profile occurs in the variable related to the ability to keep updated in the field of foreign languages, in which we can see, as the following graph shows, that the older the person is, the lower the ability to keep updated.

Figure 7.

Relationship between age and capacity to keep updated in the field of foreign languages.



7.3 Suggestions for the Program

This category emerged from the interviews with employers, in which suggestions are made based on their experience as employers, coordinators and in some cases as graduates of the degree program itself, these have been able to observe from the role they have in their workplace some suggestions for the improvement of the university program because they have a great knowledge and approach to it.

Some of the participants mentioned that it is important to remind the student what the real objective of the undergraduate program they are entering is, as evidenced in the response of participant Diana: "then the invitation is that when the promotion of the program is done, also remind the students what the objective of the degree in foreign languages is, because to

strengthen the language level there are other programs". Here we can see the importance of this, since not only is English being taught in this undergraduate program, but also people are being trained to be teachers.

Another factor mentioned by some of the participants is related to improving the level of English, as participant Carolina said: "I think that English should be reinforced a little, because that is really what they teach". This is due to the fact that in many occasions the standardized test is not consistent with what the graduate demonstrates in an interview or in the workplace.

We could also observe as another factor to be improved by the program, things related to teacher training and group management, as the participant Valeria said: "I would say that as a shortcoming is that, to work a lot on that part of group management with the English teachers". This shows not only the need to improve training in factors related to group management, time management and the different situations that arise in the institutions.

On the other hand, we could also evidence the need for the program to have more and better monitoring of the students' practicum processes, since, as participant Kelly said: "What is missing? More monitoring, of course, because many times there is a lot of filling out of forms, but they are not coming to see their processes, that is a little bit missing with the issue of internship advisors". This shows the need to continue improving the program's practicum processes for a better training of future teachers.

7.4 Positive Aspects

In this category we intend to expose all those positive aspects that, from the interviews with academic leaders and employers that we were able to retrieve, those aspects in which graduates are able to stand out and distinguish themselves in their workplaces, all contributing to a good professional practice.

Firstly, we consider that the graduates are people who, as professionals, fulfill their tasks and are outstanding in the institutions for the reliability with which they do their work, as the participant Andrea mentioned "they are responsible people, with integrity and who have a sense of belonging to their profession and also to the institutions". Clearly, they have assets that allow them to give more validity and veracity to their work as teachers.

We could also highlight as a strength the innovative spirit and the ability to lead that the graduates have, as Pedro said, "The ability to lead, to envision innovative projects that are contextualized and that meet the needs of the students". Manuela also mentioned "they have a high level of commitment and creativity, in terms of didactics, responsibility, order, logic, sequence in the teaching process, and coherence". Thus, we can say that graduates manage their teaching practice with a lot of discipline, that they are well-rounded in various aspects, which allows them to have a very positive social impact on the lives of students and on the institutions, and they are able to take advantage of their creative abilities to contribute to the needs they may have.

On the other hand, we must highlight the capacity graduates have to reinvent themselves and always bet on contributing in a positive way to their community or institution, as Pedro mentioned "(they) have contributed positively to the school in that they have strengthened, let us say, the bonds between teachers, leadership, and the culture of cooperative work. They have brought new ideas that ultimately have an impact on the adoption of new educational practices."

From a more academic standpoint, it is evident that the graduates benefit well from their academic training, and that the university provides good pedagogical foundations so that, as teachers, they can incorporate useful strategies that can be implemented in the classroom, as Luis mentioned: "They come here with a very broad background in methodological aspects, in didactic aspects. They have very good classroom management; they have many

strategies to impart knowledge”. We can conclude then that the graduates are integral people, who have human, social and academic skills to perform their role as educators.

8. Conclusions

This research invites us as an academic community to acknowledge the social impact of UCO’s foreign language graduates in their respective contexts. Recognizing their strengths and at the same time shedding light on all those aspects that need to be improved, specifically from the program itself within the university.

According to the data obtained from this research, we can conclude that the graduates are people with high employability, who are usually devoted to teaching and do a great job in their workplaces. They are creative, responsible and committed people, qualities that are a common denominator in all of them and that their influence as teachers has marked a very positive shift in their contexts.

Several aspects can be identified that need to be improved from the program, which, when identified, contribute to the process of all the people who seek to study foreign languages at UCO. This research aspires to be considered in the program improvement plan and that the voices of all those who participated here are heard and useful in the educational process of all those who are and will be part of this degree.

Graduates have a high level of self-recognition and are able to analyze their educational practice and also make evident those aspects in which they do not feel so strong. Likewise, the academic leaders denote a great commitment with the teachers/graduates and with the educational processes of the region, and they are willing to be part of the change in the foreign language dynamics and also highlight the work that is done in the training of better teachers in this particular degree.

Finally, with this research project, we could notice that the graduates of the first version of the *Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras* have contributed immensely to language learning in Colombia. Positively impacting their own context, generating in us as future graduates of the second version of the program a greater recognition of the importance of our profession and how this can contribute to the improvement of society from our knowledge and our professional training.

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10. Appendixes

10.1 Appendix A. Encuesta, graduados Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras

Caracterización:

- Nombre Completo
- Género
- Seleccione su rango de edad (Entre 20 y 25 años – entre 26 y 30 años – entre 31 y 35 años – entre 36 y 40 años – Más de 41 años)
- Correo electrónico
- Número de contacto (celular)
- Ciudad/municipio en el que reside actualmente
- ¿Se encuentra laborando actualmente?
- Por favor escriba el/los lugares(es) en el(los) que labora en la actualidad y cargo que desempeña (docente, directivo, administrativo, etc.)
- Ciudad(es)/municipio(s) donde labora
- Seleccione su rango salarial (menos de 1 sml, entre 1 y 2 sml, entre 3 y 4 sml, más de 5 sml)
- ¿Ha adelantado otros estudios a la fecha?
- Por favor escriba el nombre de los estudios en curso o finalizados

Perfil profesional (afirmaciones):

- Tengo un buen reconocimiento de mi dignidad y la de los demás
- Tengo una gran capacidad de liderazgo
- Soy bueno(a) a la hora de buscar soluciones a los problemas
- Tengo una buena capacidad reflexiva y crítica
- Considero que tengo una buena salud mental
- Poseo una actitud de respeto y acogida a la vida comunitaria
- Participo de manera activa en los procesos democráticos de mi sociedad
- Respeto las diferencias y las relaciones sociales
- Sigo los principios de convivencia social relacionados a las normas básicas
- Me apropio epistemológicamente del conocimiento en mi disciplina del saber
- Hago uso de mi capacidad de búsqueda para potenciar mis habilidades

intelectuales y profesionales

- Tengo un buen pensamiento creativo
- Comprendo las realidades sociales, culturales, políticas y económicas del entorno

en el que me desempeño

- Soy capaz de trabajar en equipo
- Aporto científicamente a la pedagogía y didáctica a través de la investigación y la

reflexión

- Aplico mi conocimiento de las lenguas extranjeras a diferentes contextos y situaciones sociales
- Enriquezco mi nivel pedagógico y didáctico participando en mesas de trabajo
- Me mantengo actualizado(a) en el campo de las lenguas extranjeras
- Tengo un buen sentido del respeto por mí mismo y por los demás
- Obedezco las normas básicas relacionadas con los principios de la convivencia social
- Potencio mis capacidades intelectuales y profesionales a través de la investigación
- Aprovecho los espacios colectivos con demás maestros para mejorar mi práctica docente
- Por favor indique otras posibles contribuciones que usted considera ha hecho a su contexto

10.2 Appendix B. Entrevista Semi-estructurada

1. ¿Qué cargo desempeña en este lugar?
2. ¿Cuántos graduados de Lenguas de la UCO laboran actualmente en esta institución? (Claridad de grupo de docentes o si tienen elementos de individuos)
3. En términos generales, ¿Cuáles cree que han sido los impactos que han tenido los graduados de la UCO en esta institución?
 - 4.1 ¿Cuáles considera que han sido las contribuciones más notables de los graduados de la UCO a esta institución?

4. ¿Cuáles piensa que son las mayores fortalezas de los graduados de la UCO?
5. ¿Cuáles piensa que son los aspectos a mejorar de los graduados de la UCO?
6. ¿Me podría decir por qué optó por contratar graduados de la UCO para su institución?

A continuación, le leeré una serie de afirmaciones, por favor califique cada una de acuerdo a los desempeños de los graduados, siendo 0 inexistente y 4 existente.

Pregunta	0	1	2	3	4
• Tienen un buen reconocimiento de su dignidad y la de los demás					
• Tienen una gran capacidad de liderazgo					
• Son buenos(as) a la hora de buscar solución a los problemas					
• Tienen una buena capacidad reflexiva y crítica					
• Tienen una buena salud mental					
• Poseen una buena actitud de respeto y					

acogida a la vida comunitaria					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participan de manera activa en los procesos democráticos de nuestra sociedad 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Respetan las diferencias y las relaciones sociales 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Siguen los principios básicos de convivencia social relacionados a las normas básicas 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Se apropian epistemológicamente del conocimiento en su disciplina del saber 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hacen uso de su capacidad de búsqueda para potenciar sus habilidades intelectuales y profesionales 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tienen un buen pensamiento creativo 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Desde su práctica educativa, son capaz de reflexionar y reconstruir su saber pedagógico 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comprenden las realidades sociales, culturales, políticas y económicas del entorno en el que se desempeñan 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Son capaces de trabajar en equipo 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aportan científicamente a la pedagogía y 					

didáctica a través de la investigación y la reflexión					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aplican su conocimiento de las lenguas extranjeras a diferentes contextos y situaciones sociales 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enriquecen su nivel pedagógico y didáctico participando en mesas de trabajo 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Se mantienen actualizados(as) en el campo de las lenguas extranjeras 					

7. ¿Hay algo más que desee contarnos sobre los graduados?

10.3 Appendix C. Consent Forms

Entrevista

Formato de consentimiento informado

Apreciado(a) participante:

Este formato tiene como objetivo aclarar los propósitos del estudio “THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM: AN ANALYSIS OF GRADUATE PROFILES, SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ACADEMIC LEADERS’ PERSPECTIVES” (El impacto social del programa de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras: un análisis de los perfiles de los graduados, autopercepciones y perspectivas de los líderes académicos), al cual usted ha sido invitado a participar.

Por favor lea con atención la siguiente información.

Identificación de la investigación

- **Título:** THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM: AN ANALYSIS OF GRADUATE PROFILES, SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ACADEMIC LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES

- **Investigadores:** Estudiantes de décimo semestre de la misma Licenciatura, Jose Alejandro Correa Llano y Laura Isabel Ruda Villa

- **Asesor:** Carlos Mario Gómez Benavidez

- **Instituciones involucradas:** Este proyecto hace parte de las apuestas investigativas de los estudiantes del pregrado Lic. en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en inglés de la Universidad Católica de Oriente.

Este estudio busca averiguar cuál es el impacto social de los graduados de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras (INP 1) en Colombia. Hacer parte de este estudio le implicará participar en una entrevista donde se indagará sobre su experiencia como empleador de los estudiantes graduados de esta licenciatura.

No existe ningún beneficio directo de su participación en el presente proyecto. Sin embargo, su participación permitirá un mejor conocimiento de cómo se han desempeñado y cómo han influido los graduados en esta institución. Los hallazgos de este estudio podrían permitir implementar acciones de mejora continua para el programa. No recibirá ningún tipo de compensación financiera ni ningún material por participar en esta investigación.

Toda la información recogida durante este proyecto será tratada con total confidencialidad. Al firmar el presente consentimiento, autoriza el uso de los datos recogidos por medio de la grabación de la entrevista. Los datos recogidos serán utilizados para los objetivos de la investigación.

Toda referencia a los datos durante la etapa de divulgación de resultados (presentaciones y

artículos derivados del estudio) se hará guardando el anonimato y protegiendo la identidad de los participantes.

En cualquier momento durante el periodo de investigación, usted podrá retirarse del proyecto sin perjuicio alguno.

En caso de requerir información adicional sobre el proyecto o alguna aclaración, puede contactar:

Investigadores: Jose Alejandro Correa Llano / Laura Isabel Ruda Villa

Correo electrónico: jose.correa1507@uco.net.co / laura.ruda7466@uco.net.co

Teléfono: 3128138420 / 3103719585

Confirmando que he leído y comprendido toda la información relacionada con la presente investigación, estoy totalmente de acuerdo con mi participación libre y voluntaria en la misma y soy consciente de que me puedo retirar en cualquier momento.

Nombre del participante

Firma del participante

Nombre del investigador

Firma del investigador

Nombre del investigador

Firma del investigador

Encuesta

Apreciado(a) graduado(a), le pedimos leer el siguiente consentimiento como parte de su participación en esta encuesta:

CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Objetivo: La presente encuesta se realiza con el objetivo de recolectar datos que serán utilizados en una investigación que busca identificar los impactos sociales de los graduados de la Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Católica de Oriente. Esta encuesta busca conocer y hacer seguimiento al impacto de los graduados a nivel laboral en sus propios contextos. Adicionalmente, se pretende hacer una caracterización del graduado del programa en relación con los perfiles que propone la Universidad.

Encargados: Esta investigación está a cargo de los estudiantes Jose Alejandro Correa Llano (jose.correa1507@uco.net.co) y Laura Isabel Ruda Villa (laura.ruda7466@uco.net.co) de último semestre de la misma licenciatura, asesorados por el coordinador del programa Carlos Mario Gómez Benavidez (cmgomez@uco.edu.co).

Manejo de datos: Los datos obtenidos en esta encuesta serán utilizados sólo con fines investigativos. Se garantiza su confidencialidad y anonimato. Su participación en esta encuesta es voluntaria, solo le tomará unos minutos.

Con su participación usted aportará al mejoramiento del programa.

Si desea participar, por favor continúe, de lo contrario, por favor cierre esta encuesta.