

Teaching research methods in foreign language teacher training: Results from expert interviews

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ABSTRACT: The university training departments for foreign language teachers are faced with the central task of training teachers who not only effectively use modern methods of foreign language teaching but are also able to empirically research problems that arise in their lessons and develop evidence-based solutions. In this context, the training of "teacher researchers" has established itself as an international educational goal. Against this background, a case study on teaching research methods in the context of foreign language didactics was carried out at the University of Vienna, which is considered one of the pioneers in the training of teacher researchers. The aim was to gain insights for the data-based development of effective teaching environments for teaching research methods in the context of postgraduate German as a foreign language teaching programs in Türkiye. As part of the study, expert interviews were conducted with eight academics in foreign language didactics. The data collected were subjected to a content analysis evaluation using the MAXQDA software. The analysis results provide valuable impulses and practice-oriented suggestions that can be used as a reference source, especially for the effective teaching of research methods in foreign language teacher training.

Keywords: Foreign language didactics, German as a foreign language, research methods, teacher training, case study.

Métodos de investigación didáctica en la formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras: entrevistas a expertos

RESUMEN: Los departamentos universitarios de formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras se enfrentan a la tarea central de formar profesores que no sólo utilicen eficazmente métodos modernos de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, sino que también sean capaces de investigar empíricamente los problemas que surgen en sus clases y desarrollar soluciones basadas en evidencias. En este contexto, la formación de "docentes investigadores" se ha consolidado como un objetivo educativo internacional. En este contexto, se realizó un estudio de caso sobre métodos de investigación docente en el contexto de la didáctica de lenguas extranjeras en la Universidad de Viena, considerada una de las pioneras en la formación de profesores investigadores. El objetivo era obtener conocimientos para el desarrollo basado en datos de entornos de enseñanza efectivos para la enseñanza de métodos de investigación en el contexto de programas de posgrado de enseñanza de alemán como lengua extranjera en Turquía. Como parte del estudio, se realizaron entrevistas a expertos de ocho académicos de didáctica de lenguas extranjeras. Los datos recolectados fueron sometidos a una evaluación de análisis de contenido utilizando el software MAXQDA. Los resultados del análisis proporcionan valiosos impulsos y sugerencias orientadas a la práctica que pueden utilizarse

como fuente de referencia, especialmente para la enseñanza eficaz de métodos de investigación en la formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: Didáctica de lenguas extranjeras, alemán como lengua extranjera, métodos de investigación, formación de profesores, estudio de casos.

1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign language teaching is gaining increasing importance considering the changing and multifaceted dynamics of the modern world. Rapid access to information, international cooperation, and technological developments emphasize the need for effective foreign language proficiency more than ever (Dörnyei, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Given these evolving and constantly shifting environments, the need for qualified foreign language teachers is growing. Accordingly, teachers are expected not only to effectively apply modern didactic methods in their teaching but also to have the competence to independently research problems in their field and derive practical solutions from them (Mackey & Gass, 2015; Seferoğlu, 2004; Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022). Parallel to these developments, the profile of the so-called “teacher researchers” has established itself as an internationally desirable goal in teacher training (see Burns, 2017; Grünewald et al., 2021; Turkish Council of Higher Education [YÖK], 2018). Achieving this desired teacher profile requires university-based foreign language teacher training that effectively teaches research methods. Against this background, the importance of research-based courses is increasing. They make a significant contribution to the qualification of research-oriented foreign language teachers, foster a research-oriented professional mindset, and thus contribute significantly to the professionalization of teaching (cf. Gerlach, 2022, p. 37).

This study is part of an embedded single case study conducted at the University of Vienna, a pioneer in developing teacher researchers in the field of foreign language teaching. Expert interviews with eight higher education lecturers from the University of Vienna were conducted. All of them were actively involved in the teaching of research methods in the fields of German and English language education. The interviews were used to demonstrate how research methods are taught in relevant courses and to explore the implications this has for the design and implementation of research-based courses in postgraduate German as a Foreign Language teacher training programs in Türkiye¹. In light of this, the study addresses the following research questions to present a data-based development basis as described above:

1. What aims should an innovative course that teaches research methods in the context of foreign language teaching pursue?
2. What topic contents should the course include?
3. What teaching strategies should be pursued?
4. What kind of activities and tasks should students carry out?
5. What literature sources should be used for reading?
6. What assessment and evaluation techniques should be used in the assessment process?

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND STATE OF RESEARCH

Promoting research competence is considered a central component of profession-oriented teacher education (Schramm, 2021, p. 215). It is increasingly conceptualized as a developmental process that combines structured engagement with academic literature and the independent exploration of relevant empirical questions (Elsner, 2015). In this context, Feike et al. (2023) emphasize that professionalization in teacher education involves not only the acquisition of pedagogical and subject-specific knowledge but also the ability to critically engage with research and to contribute to the further development of educational practice through reflective inquiry. Developing such competence requires the systematic integration of theoretical instruction and practice-related application (Legutke et al, 2022), which calls for flexible, digitally supported, and scientifically grounded teaching formats that link theoretical foundations with methodological practice (cf. Yıldırım & Karadeniz, 2022).

Given the ever-increasing relevance of research competence, its promotion is not yet adequately implemented in teaching practice. Existing research methods courses are often criticized for largely focusing on teaching theoretical content and not sufficiently considering the practical application of data collection and analysis. Accordingly, Aguado (2015) and Artmann and Herzmann (2025) also emphasize the need for practical relevance and active experience in appropriate course formats, and that learners should be specifically supported to actively engage with research processes.

In response to this need, various research projects have been developed that aim to specifically promote teachers' research skills and, in doing so, counteract the lack of practical orientation. In this sense, Paseka et al. (2022) emphasize that appropriate learning environments must be context intensive. The K2teach project (Know How to Teach, Free University of Berlin, 2015-) takes up this idea and aims to develop subject-specific learning modules that integrate theory and practice. The ReaLiTea project (Research Literacy in Teacher Education, University of Vienna, 2024-) attempts to respond to this need by developing modular courses for the context-intensive and practice-oriented teaching of research methods. Building on these developments, Brooke et al, (2024) stress the importance of aligning research methods with specific instructional contexts and learning goals. Based on a curricular analysis of teacher education programs, Li and Li (2025) call for a more systematic and consistent integration of research components into higher education curricula. Similarly, Anderson (2025), in a qualitative study with experienced teacher educators, shows that practitioners with research experience frequently initiate pedagogical innovations and contribute to institutional development.

Taken together, these studies show that effective development of research competence in language teacher education depends on both theoretical grounding and practical engagement with empirical methods. The present study builds on these insights by examining how foreign language teacher trainees are engaged in learning research methods and practices from the perspective of academic lecturers.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present article presents partial results of an embedded single case study. The study adopts an exploratory qualitative research design. Such a design allows for an in-depth

investigation of specific aspects within a defined research context by focusing on multiple embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2003). In addition to examining these units individually, the comparison between them allows for a more comprehensive understanding and deeper insights into the case under investigation (Borchardt & Göthlich, 2009; Lamker, 2014). In this context, the teaching of research methods in postgraduate foreign language teacher education programs at the University of Vienna serves as the research setting. To examine the case under investigation, six units of analysis were defined. These are based on standard didactic models of course planning, in which teaching methods are structured action frameworks aimed at achieving specific learning objectives (see Branch, 2016; Kıyak et al., 2020). These models include components such as objectives, content, strategies, activities, materials, and performance assessments. Based on this framework, six central units of analysis were defined: (1) Aims, (2) Topic Content, (3) Teaching Strategy, (4) Activities and Tasks, (5) Literature Sources and (6) Assessment and Evaluation Tools. These categories formed the basis for both the interview guide and the content analysis, allowing for the systematic documentation of the didactic design of research methodology courses.

3.1. Expert interviews

As part of the data collection phase of this study, eight expert interviews were conducted in the academic year 2023-2024 with academics working in the Departments of German as a Foreign and Second Language and English and American Studies at the University of Vienna. The interviewees were selected as experts whose professional activities have a direct impact on the design and implementation of research-oriented courses in foreign language teacher education (cf. Bogner & Menz, 2009; Lenz, 2012). All participants are experienced university lectures and researchers in applied linguistic or foreign language didactics, with professional backgrounds in the design and delivery of research methodology courses. They have many years of university teaching experience, ranging from approximately seven to over thirty years. The experts represent both German and English language teacher education programs and are actively engaged in curriculum design, research-oriented course development, and teacher training. Their professional responsibilities include coordinating research methodology courses, supervising student research projects, and integrating empirical perspectives into their teaching practice. After defining the expert profile, ten academics were contacted by email; and eight agreed to be participate. The institutes, gender and teaching experience of the interviewees are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Basic Information About Participants*

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8
Institute for	German Studies	German Studies	German Studies	German Studies	German Studies	English and American Studies	English and American Studies	English and American Studies
Gender	F	F	F	M	F	F	F	F
Teaching Experience	Approx. 7 years	Over 25 years	Approx. 8 years	Over 20 years	Approx. 10 years	Over 15 years	Over 30 years	Over 20 years

E1: Expert 1

All eight expert interviews were carried out personally by the researcher in the academics' offices as face-to-face conversations. They followed a semi-structured interview framework, which had been specifically designed based on the six analytical units to ensure a systematic and comparable data collection. For each analytical unit, a central guiding question was formulated and complemented by follow-up prompts. The set of central guiding questions used in the interviews was as follows: "What aims should an innovative course for teaching research methodology in the context of foreign language teacher training pursue?" (Aims), "Which content is particularly important in this context?" (Topic Content), "Which teaching strategy should be followed in the context of a corresponding course?" (Teaching Strategies), "Which activities and tasks are suitable for promoting research competence?" (Activities and Tasks), "Which current literature sources should definitely be covered or made available in a related course?" (Literature Sources), and "What kinds of evaluation or assessment instruments should be used to check the learning outcome?" (Assessment and Evaluation Techniques). This structured approach enabled the expert statements to be systematically coded based on the analytical units. Before the interviews, the purpose and procedure of the study were explained, and written consent was obtained from all the participants. The interviews, which lasted between 39 and 57 minutes, were digitally recorded and transcribed following the guidelines of Rädiker and Kuckartz (2020). The qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA (VERBI Software, 2024) was used to organize, code, and manage the data material. The analysis followed the seven phases of content analysis according to Kuckartz (2016) and aimed to systematically identify, categorize, and describe relevant aspects (Schreier, 2014). The seven phases include familiarization with data, category formation and refinement, coding and interpretative analysis. The coding procedure combined deductive and inductive elements. In a first step, the six predefined analytical units were used as main categories. In a second step, inductive subcategories were developed during coding whenever the data revealed additional or more specific aspects.

A coding guide was created to define each category, providing short explanations and sample quotations that clarified their meaning and ensured consistent interpretation across the material. The guide served as a reference throughout the entire coding process. During the analysis, the transcripts were read several times, and relevant passages were assigned to the respective categories. For instance, statements describing the goals and intended learning outcomes of the course were coded under Aims, whereas statements in which experts specified how student performance should be measured in newly designed research-methods course (for example through research diaries) were coded under Assessment and Evaluation Techniques. To ensure reliability, the category system was reviewed together with an experienced researcher in qualitative data analysis and language teacher education. Intracoder reliability was determined by recoding four weeks later. The kappa coefficient according to Brennan and Prediger (1981) was .75 and, according to Rädiker and Kuckartz (2019), indicates good agreement.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Findings of the expert interviews

The content analysis of the eight expert interviews resulted in a total of 316 coding segments, which can be divided into 80 subcodes. These subcodes are in turn divided into

the six main codes: 1. Aims; 2. Topic content; 3. Teaching strategies; 4. Activities & tasks; 5. Literature sources; 6. Assessment and evaluation techniques. To visualize analysis results, so-called code matrix browsers (CMB) were created using the MAXQDA software, as this form of data visualization makes it easier to compare the individual expert interviews in terms of their coding. The CMB visualizes the coding per subcode and interview, and the findings for the six analysis units are illustrated with CMB results and interview excerpts. It should be emphasized that the interviews were originally conducted in German and the excerpts presented were translated into English and anonymized for this article.

4.1.1. *Aims of an innovative research methods course*

To determine the objectives recommended by the experts, which should be pursued as part of an innovative course for teaching research methods, the interviews were coded regarding the main code “Aims”. Consequently, the analysis of the main code “Aims” resulted in a total of 58 coding segments, which are distributed across 10 subcodes (see Fig. 1).

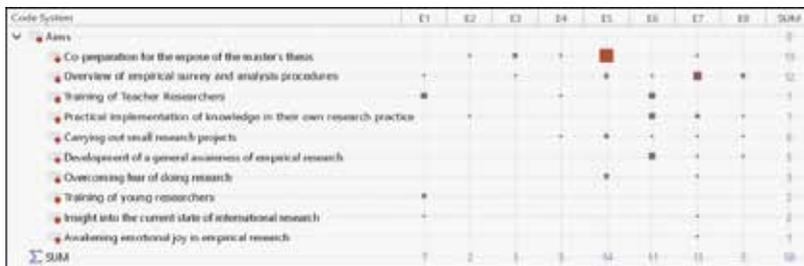


Figure 1. CMB of the 1st analysis unit “Aims”

Table 2. *Example interview statements for the first analysis unit “Aims”*

SUBCODE	CODING SEGMENT
Co-preparation for the expose of the master’s thesis	“You really should write this expose at the end [...], which ideally is then presented to a supervisor so that you can then get started straight away. [...] So that’s why I brought it forward a bit and also this focus on the master’s thesis, which I mentioned earlier, where Corinna and I did it at the very end of Martin’s seminar, I put that right at the beginning, because that way you have an idea of what the seminar should bring out or what I can expect from the master’s thesis (.) in terms of finding a topic and the whole process has already been reflected upon by two people who have already gone through it.” (E5, Pos. 40)
Overview of empirical survey and analysis procedures	“Students should be given an overview of the types of data collection, data processing and data analysis options available. And what types of questions can be investigated and hopefully answered with them.” (E1, Pos. 12)
Training of Teacher Researchers	“[...] it seems to me that teaching research methods is relevant in many ways, because students are not only specifically prepared to produce academic theses, such as master’s and doctoral theses, but they also gain a new perspective on teaching research. They can perhaps perceive and research their own teaching more specifically. They can also motivate students to have an open and, yes, research-based view of their teaching and their learning progress.“ (E1, Pos. 48)
Practical implementation of knowledge in their own research practice	“Well, in this case, in my view, one objective would be to enable students to translate their research interests into research practice. So, in my view, interest is never the problem, they are always interested in something. They just don’t know how to turn it into research. Ideally, the objective of such a course would be to support them in implementing it. That they can develop a design that corresponds to their research interests. That they are given the tools, so to speak, with which they can pursue the question that concerns them.” (E2, Pos. 20)

The analysis of the CMB and the coding segments shows that the preparation of the exposé for the master’s thesis, which is integrated into the course, is mentioned by the experts as an important aim (see Fig. 1 and Table 2). Five experts (E2, E3, E4, E5, E7) emphasize that students should have an exposé at the end of the course that they can use as a working basis for their master’s thesis. In addition, it becomes clear that the subcode “Overview of the empirical survey and analysis procedures” is mentioned by six experts (E1, E3, E5, E6, E7, E8) as an important aim of a corresponding course. Accordingly, there is a strong consensus among the experts that students must be offered a comprehensive overview of the variety of processes involved in data collection and data analysis procedures during the course. In addition, three experts share the view (E1, E4, E6) that the training of teacher researchers is an important aim. There is also broad agreement among the experts (E4, E5, E5, E6, E8) regarding the implementation of small research projects. Additionally, the experts also name the development of a general understanding of empirical research (E6, E7, E8), overcoming the fear of conducting research (E5, E7), training young researchers (E1), creating an insight into the current and international research situation (E7) and awakening a joy in research (E7) as the desired aims of such a course.

4.1.2. Topic contents of an innovative research methods course

The analysis of the expert interviews regarding the main code “Topic Content” resulted in a total of 73 coding segments, which are distributed across 17 subcodes (see Fig. 2 and Table 3).

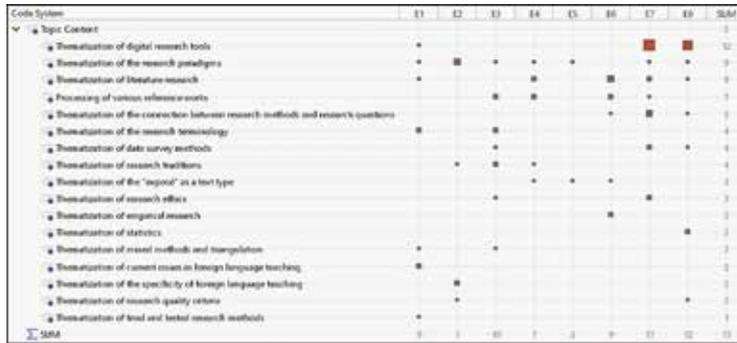


Figure 2. CMB of the 2nd analysis unit “Topic Content”

Table 3. Example interview statements for the 2nd analysis unit “Topic Content”

SUBCODE	CODING SEGMENT
Thematization of digital research tools	“I also think that something very attractive about all these programs is that I can also import non-verbal data. (I: Yes) I can import videos or images or whatever. I think that’s, I would like to introduce that to you, because I find them very intuitive these days. But not all students ((laughs)) are intuitive. So, it’s quite good if you practice a bit with it and (.) I would definitely show the tool.” (E8, Pos.71)
Thematization of the research paradigms	“So, as I said, research fields, topic finding, where do I locate myself, I have condensed that a bit, so research paradigms [...]” (E5, Pos. 40)
Thematization of literature reviews	“So, research is a really important point. That’s something that has become a bit of a problem in the last, I don’t know, I’d say six or seven years, because I get the impression that students can’t do research. They can’t tell which sources are good and which aren’t so good. And they don’t know a lot of the sources, right? And that means that students need a good overview of the research options, that would be a fixed part of a course.” (E4, Pos. 12)
Processing of various reference works	“I think reference works are very, very important [...] And there is also a lack of justification as to why a method is suitable or less suitable. And of course there are often very many approaches. Many questions can be dealt with both qualitatively and qualitatively or mixed methods design is also possible, and the students don’t know that, or they don’t dare to approach it in that direction because they don’t know it at all, right? And if you have a reference work or I would say if you have read 10 reference works during the course and discussed them in detail, then you already have a more concrete idea of how research in the German as a foreign language and German as a second language area works.” (E4, Pos. 10)

The analysis shows that the discussion of digital research tools is the most frequently coded subcode. Several experts (E1, E2, E3) emphasize that their introduction and practical testing should be a central component of the course. Different tools are mentioned depending on the work focus: MAXQDA, ATLAS.ti, Nvivo, and Quirkos for content analysis; SPSS, Python, and R for statistical analysis; and Sketch Engine, WordSmith, AntConc, and AntWordProfiler for corpus linguistic studies. The CMB analysis shows broad agreement among experts that research paradigms (such as qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches) should be an integral part of relevant courses (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E7, E8). Likewise, conducting literature reviews is highlighted as a central topic (E1, E4, E6, E7, E8). There is also agreement on the importance of working with reference works (E3, E4, E6, E7). Other topics are highlighted by smaller expert groups, including the consideration of the relationship between research questions and methods (E6, E7, E8), forms of data collection (E3, E7, E8), research terminology (E1, E3), the exposé text type (E4, E5, E6), research ethics (E3, E7), and quality criteria (E2, E8). Although there is no complete consensus, these topics provide important guidance for the development of research-based courses in foreign language teaching.

4.1.3. Teaching strategies of an innovative research methods course

The analysis of the main code “Teaching Strategy” resulted in 90 coding segments, which are distributed across 16 subcodes (see Fig. 3 and Table 4).

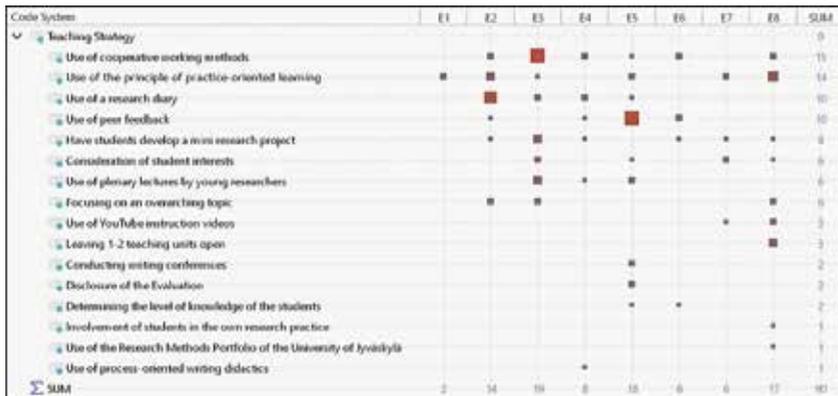


Figure 3. CMB of the 3rd Analysis Unit “Teaching Strategy”

Table 4. *Example interview statements for the 3rd analysis unit “Teaching Strategy”*

SUBCODE	CODING SEGMENT
Use of cooperative work methods	<p>“Then of course they need a lot of cooperative work. So, with that. So, my experience is that different ideas emerge in groups, in group discussions, than in a plenary lecture. So, lots of small group work, in which the reference works are worked on, in which one’s own research, one’s own research plans are discussed. I think that’s very, very important, essential.” (E4, Pos. 40)</p>
Use of the principle of practice-oriented learning	<p>“I think that in terms of teaching strategies and teaching methods, practice-oriented work with research methods, in the sense of a hands-on principle, is very important. So, what I mean by that is that students should really work independently with research data. They should deal with how data is collected. That means, for example, they should videotape their own lessons as part of an internship. They should create lesson videos. They can interview peers on a variety of topics during their studies. They should create small transcripts. They should then also be confronted with transcripts and analyse transcripts with a view to specific questions, discuss them in plenary sessions and in peer groups.” (E1, Pos. 16)</p>
Use of a research diary	<p>“Research journal, no matter what you call it. Simply in, well, that’s the type of text that I used in the course, I called it a research diary. And then they had to think about the texts, in writing, that is, texts that they, the reference works that we discussed earlier, from a methodological point of view, i.e. what happens methodically.” (E4, Pos. 22)</p>
Use of peer feedback	<p>“So, number one is peer feedback, peer exchange, peer feedback is something that is relevant in every situation in life. Now not only for writing a seminar paper or master’s thesis or an exposé, but also later in my working life, it is important that I can exchange ideas (I: Yes) and that I am open to being able to accept criticism about my own professionalization and to be able to develop myself further, yes. (I: Okay) So I think that this is a form of work that is (.) absolutely relevant. And absolutely important.” (E5, Pos. 70)</p>

The analysis of teaching strategies shows a strong consensus among the experts (E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E8) on the importance of cooperative working methods and the central role of working styles in teaching research methods. In addition, the experts (E1, E2, E3, E5, E7, E8) share the view that practice-oriented learning is essential, whereby students should experience research through independent and practical action. Four experts (E2, E3, E4, E5) emphasize the importance of a process-oriented research diary for reflecting on and tracking individual research processes. Peer feedback (E2, E4, E5, E6) and small research projects (E2, E3, E4, E6, E7, E8) are also highlighted as key strategies. Other recommendations include aligning teaching with students’ interests (E3, E5, E7, E8) and inviting younger researchers to share their experiences (E3, E4, E5). Individual strategies include teaching methods with an emphasis on a thematic focus (e.g. reading in a foreign language) or deliberately skipping sessions to clarify open questions. Overall, there is agreement on the use of research-based and student-centered strategies that promote cooperation and active participation.

4.1.4. Activities & Tasks of an innovative research methods course

The analysis of the expert interviews regarding the main code “Activities & Tasks” resulted in 46 coding segments, which are distributed across 19 subcodes (see Fig. 4).

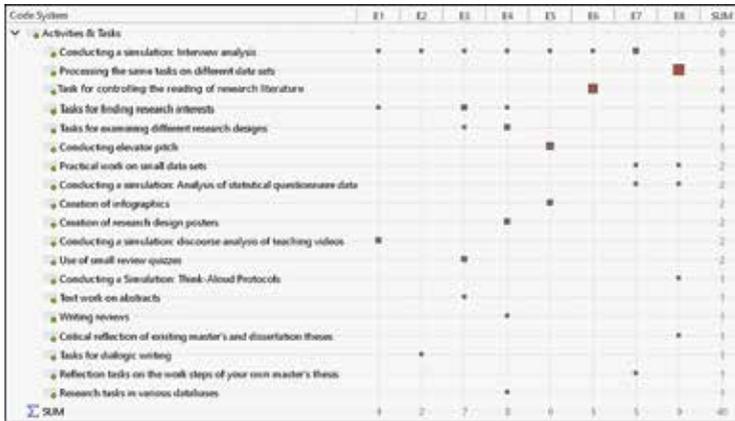


Figure 4. CMB of the 4th analysis unit “Activities and Tasks”

Table 5. Example interview statements for the 4th analysis unit “Activities and Tasks”

SUBCODE	CODING SEGMENT
Conducting a simulation: interview analysis	“How can you evaluate interviews? Qualitatively? Quantitatively? How can you then evaluate and process transcribed content, for example using content analysis. That means, I think it is very important, just as it is in the context of the entire training, that there is a practical relevance and that the students really try out the research methods on their own, that we do not just convey and show theoretical content on a meta-level.” (E1, Pos. 16)
Processing the same tasks on different data sets	“So, what I often do is a bit nasty. It is basically the same task, but with different data sets.” (E8, Pos. 116)
Task for controlling the reading of research literature	“What we do very often, is that, and this was also a result of the pandemic for us, we create reading guidelines for reading tasks. Although these are not just guidelines, they are also a way of checking whether a. it has been read and b. understood, yes? That they then read texts and are also given reading guidelines which they then must answer or questions about them and which also contain small tasks [...]” (E6, Pos. 38)
Tasks for finding research interests	“Yes, of course we also had activities to find our own research interests and knowledge. So, we also had group work where we talked about what we could do and what we wanted to do thematically.” (E3, Pos. 45)

The interviews show broad agreement among experts (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, and E7) regarding practice-oriented tasks that guide students step by step in conducting an interview analysis. In contrast, E8 recommends tasks involving statistical surveys and think-aloud pro-

ocols, as well as the use of diverse datasets to encourage independent work and stimulate plenary discussions. There is no consensus regarding the other subcodes, but different task formats are suggested: E6 advocates reading tasks to test text comprehension, while E1, E3, and E4 use activities such as partner interviews to develop individual research interest. Despite divergent preferences, all tasks ultimately converge on fostering student-centered and action-oriented pedagogical quality.

4.1.5. Literature sources of an innovative research methods course

The analysis of the main code “Literature Sources” resulted in a total of 26 coding segments, which are distributed across 11 subcodes (see Fig. 5 and Table 6).



Figure 5. CMB of the 5th Analysis Unit “Literature Sources”

Table 6. Example interview statements for the 5th analysis unit “Literature Sources”

SUBCODE	CODING SEGMENT
Caspari et al. (2022): Forschungs-methoden in der FS-Didaktik.	“And in general, when it comes to literature on research methods in the field of foreign language teaching and teacher training, I must point out the book that served as the basis for my doctoral thesis. It is “Research Methods in Foreign Language Teaching,” a handbook by Daniela Caspari, Friederike Klippel, Michael Legutke and Karen Schramm. 2016. [...] This handbook on research methods in foreign language teaching answered <u>every question</u> I had about research methods. I think the book is very good. It gives a great overview; it is very well structured.” (E1, Pos. 34)
Cohen et al. (2007): Research Methods in Education.	“I think the classic is Cohen and Manion Research Methods in Education.” (E8, Pos. 136)
Settinieri et al. (2014): Empirische Forschungs-methoden.	“I recommend the empirical research methods as a variant of Settinieri. Then this work, empirical scientific work in the context of educational science, because we are very socially oriented towards social-educational science.” (E4, Pos. 54)

The analysis of Figure 5 shows that a total of eleven literature sources were recommended by the experts. The handbook „Forschungsmethoden in der Fremdsprachendidaktik: ein Handbuch“ (Caspari et al, 2022), „Research Methods in Education“ (Cohen, et al, 2007), and „Empirische Forschungsmethoden für Deutsch als Fremd- und Zweitsprache „ (Settinieri

et al., 2014) were mentioned particularly frequently. Works such as “Fremdsprachenunterricht empirisch erforschen” (Doff, 2012) and “Research Methods in Applied Linguistics” (Dörnyei, 2007) were mentioned less frequently, while other sources were mentioned only occasionally. Overall, these are predominantly introductions and handbooks with a broad overview, as well as practice-oriented publications, which are valued primarily for their relevance to foreign language didactics, their clarity, and their clear structure.

4.1.6. Assessment and Evaluation Techniques of an innovative research methods course

The analysis of the expert interviews regarding the main code “Assessment and Evaluation” resulted in a total of 23 coding segments, which are distributed across 7 subcodes (see Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Code Matrix Browser of the 6th Analysis Unit “Assessment and Evaluation Techniques”

Table 7. Example interview statements for the 6th analysis unit “Assessment and Evaluation Techniques”

SUBCODE	CODING SEGMENT
Evaluation of the research diaries	“So, my first exam is this research diary. Where you reflect on what you’ve read in relation to your own work. So that’s something that I find quite easy to assess.” (E5, Pos. 82)
Evaluation of the exposés	“And in written assessment we had the exposé, 15 pages.” (E3, Pos. 61)
Conducting written self-evaluations	“I encourage my students to define their own individual, personal learning goals at the beginning of the semester. Written. They should think about what they need to achieve these learning goals. And then I have the students review their own learning goals in the middle of the semester. Have they learned anything yet? How is the semester developing for them? And if their learning goals have not yet been achieved or if they have not made any progress, then the students should also consider, as part of this learning goal evaluation, what they still need from the teacher, from me for example, in order to achieve their learning goals, be it literature or a certain topic that we have not yet discussed or a certain practical exercise. And at the end of the semester the students should reflect again in writing. What have you learned? How did you achieve these learning goals? What was perhaps still missing?” (E1, Pos. 38)

The analysis results show that a total of seven different evaluation and assessment techniques could be identified. In this context, three experts (E1, E3, E6) highlight the

technique of evaluating the exposé as recommendable. Likewise, three experts (E1, E2 and E3) rate “conducting written self-evaluations” as a useful evaluation method. In addition, two experts each suggest using online questionnaires to check knowledge (E1 & E2) and “evaluating research diaries” (E3 & E5). The analysis represents a variety of different evaluation and assessment techniques, which not only test theoretical knowledge but also allow the development of students’ individual research skills to be tracked.

5. DISCUSSION AND OUTLOOK

The findings of this case study provide empirical insight and data-based design principles for the conception and further development of research methods courses in the context of foreign language teacher training. The analysis of the expert interviews suggests that sustainable development of prospective teachers’ research competence is based on the creation of learning environments that offer numerous opportunities for combining theory with practice through hands-on experience with empirical data. Accordingly, the experts advocate, for example, the use of various simulation tasks such as conducting interview analyses or think-aloud protocols. They also recommend specifically increasing students’ practical experience of using various data analysis tools, working on real data sets, and critically discussing existing research designs. The principle of practice orientation that emerges from the findings of this study is also in line with Aguado (2015) and Legutke et al. (2022), as they also advocate the use of concrete and practical working methods in relevant courses. In this respect, these results show us that the didactic linking of theory and practice is essential for effective research methodology teaching.

In addition to a practical orientation, the use of cooperative and reflective elements in appropriate learning environments plays an essential role. As also outlined in Paseka et al. (2022), the experts emphasize that prospective teachers urgently need supervised reflection and opportunities for cooperation. As a result, they recommend, for example, the use of research diaries that should be supervised in a process-oriented manner through group work, peer feedback, and reflection tasks. The tendency toward reflexivity is also reflected in the performance measurement methods mentioned by the experts. The methods identified in this sense, such as the assessment of research diaries, submission of process-oriented exposés, or written self-evaluations, show that instead of traditional assessment techniques, targeted techniques should be used to evaluate not only test the existence of knowledge but also the internalization and practicality of knowledge. The results also demonstrate that the learners’ affective state must be considered. Accordingly, the experts emphasize that emotions such as curiosity and enjoyment of research play a motivating role in research. The form of research methodology described above therefore also helps students overcome their insecurities when dealing with research processes.

In summary, effective courses for promoting research skills combine the teaching of theoretical foundations with practice-oriented and authentic research activities, while also making targeted use of techniques for reflective evaluation. The integration of these three core elements ultimately leads to the training of teacher researchers who are skilled in independent planning, conducting, and reflecting on empirical projects in their own teaching contexts. It is undeniable that the training of these teachers will significantly improve the quality of foreign language teaching.

However, it should be emphasized that the study only draws on expert opinions from one institution. In this sense, it would be interesting to also analyze student perspectives or compare the results obtained with those of other national institutions and their experts. Nevertheless, the study contributes to evidence-based teacher education by presenting data-based and practical design principles that can be used to develop future learning formats.

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