

Beyond Language Skills: How Students Experience Scientific Research In Foreign Language Education

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ABSTRACT

The increasing demand for research-based teaching in higher education has highlighted the importance of integrating scientific research into foreign language education. This study examines the role of interdisciplinary research integration in enhancing students' research competencies and professional development within foreign language programs. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 70 bachelor's and master's students enrolled in teacher education, translation, and communication programs. The findings reveal a high level of student awareness regarding scientific research, alongside a strong interest in incorporating research activities into foreign language curricula. However, students also report significant challenges related to access to academic literature, evaluation of source credibility, and methodological guidance. The results suggest that interdisciplinary, research-based approaches can foster critical thinking, methodological awareness, and academic engagement among foreign language students. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on research-informed language education by providing empirical evidence from a higher education context and highlights pedagogical implications for curriculum design and institutional support

KEYWORDS: Interdisciplinary Research; Foreign Language Education; Research-Based Teaching; Higher Education; Student Research Competencies

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, higher education institutions have increasingly emphasized the integration of scientific research into teaching practices as a means of enhancing academic quality, student engagement, and employability. Within the field of foreign language education, this shift has generated growing interest in research-based and interdisciplinary approaches that move beyond traditional, content-focused instruction. Integrating research into language education is not solely intended to improve linguistic competence but also to foster students' analytical, critical, and methodological skills, which are essential in contemporary academic and professional contexts.

Empirical research indicates that students' engagement with research-related activities contributes to deeper learning processes and supports professional development by strengthening critical thinking and academic literacy (Bushi & Kristo, 2024). In the Albanian higher education context, previous studies have highlighted the need to strengthen research culture within foreign language programs through the systematic integration of scientific inquiry into curricula (Kristo & Bushi, 2023). Such integration has been shown to enhance students' academic awareness and promote a more reflective and inquiry-oriented approach to language learning. Nevertheless, curriculum-oriented research suggests that foreign language programs continue to face challenges in aligning teaching objectives with the research competencies required in contemporary academic environments (Bushi & Neçaj, 2024).

Interdisciplinarity has emerged as a key concept in educational research, particularly in contexts that require complex cognitive and communicative skills. In foreign language education, interdisciplinary integration enables students to engage simultaneously with linguistic, cultural, pedagogical, and methodological

perspectives. This approach aligns with current European and international higher education policies that emphasize inquiry-based learning and the development of transferable research competencies.

Despite the growing recognition of the value of research-based teaching, empirical studies examining students' perceptions of scientific research integration within foreign language programs remain limited, particularly in smaller higher education contexts. Existing literature has predominantly focused on curriculum design or teacher perspectives, while students' experiences and perceived challenges in engaging with research activities have received comparatively less attention. This gap underscores the need for empirical investigations that explore how students perceive research integration and how interdisciplinary approaches may support their academic development.

Research-based teaching has been conceptualized as a pedagogical approach that positions students not merely as consumers of knowledge but as active participants in research and inquiry processes (Healey & Jenkins, 2009). The integration of research and teaching has further been described as a continuum in which learning is enriched through engagement with research processes and knowledge production (Brew, 2006). These perspectives highlight the potential of research-based teaching to foster methodological awareness and critical reflection among students.

The present study aims to examine students' awareness, attitudes, and experiences related to scientific research in foreign language education, with particular emphasis on interdisciplinary integration. By analyzing questionnaire data collected from students enrolled in foreign language-related study programs, this research seeks to identify perceived benefits, challenges, and implications for teaching practice. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

- To what extent are students familiar with the concept of scientific research in foreign language education?
- How do students evaluate the importance of research-based and interdisciplinary approaches in their field of study?
- What challenges do students encounter when engaging in scientific research activities?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the international discussion on research-based foreign language education and offers pedagogical insights for strengthening research integration within higher education language programs. The present study is based on a larger and more diverse student sample, enabling a more comprehensive empirical examination of students' perceptions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Research-Based Teaching in Higher Education

The integration of scientific research into higher education teaching has increasingly been conceptualized as a fundamental component of academic quality and institutional development. Research-based teaching is commonly understood as an approach in which teaching practices are informed by ongoing research and, simultaneously, students are actively engaged in research-related activities. Rather than positioning students solely as recipients of knowledge, this model emphasizes inquiry, critical reflection, and methodological awareness as central elements of the learning process.

Several studies suggest that research-based teaching contributes to the development of transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and academic writing competence. In this context, students are encouraged to engage with academic literature, formulate research questions, and reflect on empirical data, thereby acquiring competencies that extend beyond disciplinary content knowledge. However, the implementation of research-based teaching often depends on institutional support, curriculum design, and students' prior exposure to research practices, which can vary significantly across educational contexts.

Despite broad agreement regarding its pedagogical value, research-based teaching is not without challenges. Empirical findings indicate that students frequently experience difficulties related to methodological

complexity, access to academic resources, and uncertainty about research standards. These challenges highlight the importance of structured guidance and scaffolding when introducing research elements into undergraduate and graduate curricula.

Research-based teaching has been widely recognized as an effective pedagogical approach for developing transferable academic skills. Studies conducted in foreign language education contexts indicate that involving students in research-oriented tasks enhances critical thinking, academic writing skills, and methodological awareness (Bush, Aliaj, & Kristo, 2024). Furthermore, formative assessment and self-evaluation practices embedded within research-based learning environments have been found to support student autonomy and reflective learning processes (Bush & Aliaj, 2024).

However, despite its pedagogical potential, research-based teaching requires careful scaffolding and institutional support. Without adequate guidance, students may experience difficulties related to research design, source evaluation, and data analysis, particularly at early stages of their academic development (Bush & Likaj, 2021).

Inquiry-based learning has been identified as a key pedagogical approach in higher education, particularly for fostering students' critical thinking and engagement with research processes (Levy & Petrulis, 2012). Student engagement has been consistently associated with deeper learning outcomes and higher academic achievement, especially when students are involved in high-impact educational practices such as research-based learning (Kuh, 2008). Active learning approaches, including research-oriented tasks, have been shown to enhance students' understanding and retention compared to traditional lecture-based instruction (Prince, 2004).

The present study is theoretically informed by research-based teaching and inquiry-based learning frameworks, which conceptualize students as active participants in knowledge construction rather than passive recipients of information (Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Brew, 2006). These frameworks emphasize the development of research competencies, critical thinking, and methodological awareness as central learning outcomes in higher education.

Interdisciplinary approaches in foreign language education have been increasingly recognized as essential for fostering deeper conceptual understanding and critical awareness among learners. Research indicates that integrating historical and cultural perspectives into language learning extends educational outcomes beyond linguistic proficiency and supports a more holistic learning experience (Bush & Kristo, 2025). Similarly, curriculum-oriented studies emphasize that well-designed language programs benefit from interdisciplinary alignment, particularly when disciplinary content is connected to broader academic and professional objectives (Kristo & Bush, 2024).

The interdisciplinary nature of foreign language education is further evident in research focusing on specialized domains and applied language use. Studies examining error correction and reflective feedback in speaking skills demonstrate that methodological awareness contributes to learners' analytical thinking and self-regulation in language learning (Bush, Kristo, & Papajorgji, 2022). Moreover, research in specialized areas such as legal translation highlights the need for research-based approaches and methodological rigor, reinforcing the importance of interdisciplinary integration within foreign language programs (Bush & Papajorgji, 2021).

2.2 Interdisciplinarity in Foreign Language Education

Interdisciplinarity has gained considerable attention within educational research, particularly in fields characterized by complex cognitive and communicative demands. In foreign language education, interdisciplinary approaches are often associated with the integration of linguistic, cultural, pedagogical, and social perspectives. Such integration enables learners to situate language learning within broader academic and societal contexts, thereby enhancing both linguistic competence and conceptual understanding.

Scholars argue that interdisciplinary learning environments foster deeper engagement by encouraging students to draw connections between different domains of knowledge. In foreign language education, this may involve combining language instruction with elements from fields such as linguistics, education sciences, sociology, or cultural studies. When linked to research activities, interdisciplinarity can further support students' ability to approach language-related phenomena from multiple analytical perspectives.

However, existing research also indicates that interdisciplinary approaches require careful coordination and explicit methodological frameworks. Without clear guidance, students may struggle to integrate diverse theoretical perspectives or to apply appropriate research methods. This suggests that interdisciplinarity in foreign language education should be accompanied by explicit instruction in research design and academic conventions, particularly for students at earlier stages of their academic development.

Interdisciplinarity is commonly defined as the integration of knowledge, methods, and perspectives from multiple disciplines to address complex educational and research questions (Klein, 2010). From an educational perspective, interdisciplinary approaches encourage students to synthesize diverse forms of knowledge and to apply methodological frameworks across disciplinary boundaries (Repko, Szostak, & Buchberger, 2017).

2.3 Student Engagement with Scientific Research

Student engagement with scientific research has been identified as a key factor in promoting meaningful learning experiences in higher education. Engagement is commonly conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, behavioral, and affective components. In the context of research-based learning, engagement may manifest through active participation in research projects, sustained interaction with academic literature, and reflective evaluation of research processes.

Empirical studies suggest that students who engage in research activities tend to develop a stronger sense of academic identity and increased motivation toward their field of study. In foreign language education, research engagement has been associated with improved awareness of linguistic structures, enhanced analytical skills, and greater sensitivity to discourse and context. Nevertheless, levels of engagement are influenced by factors such as perceived relevance, prior research experience, and institutional support mechanisms.

Notably, research focusing on students' perceptions reveals that while many students recognize the importance of scientific research, they often feel insufficiently prepared to conduct research independently. Commonly reported obstacles include difficulties in identifying reliable sources, limited familiarity with research methodologies, and uncertainty regarding data analysis procedures. These findings underscore the importance of integrating research training gradually and systematically within foreign language curricula.

Student engagement with scientific research has been identified as a key factor in promoting meaningful learning experiences in higher education. Empirical studies focusing on foreign language education show that students generally express positive attitudes toward scientific research but often feel insufficiently prepared to engage independently in research activities (Bushy & Kristo, 2024). This discrepancy between perceived importance and actual research competence highlights the need for systematic integration of research training within language curricula.

Learner autonomy has also been identified as a crucial component in fostering sustainable engagement with research practices. Students who develop autonomous learning strategies tend to demonstrate greater motivation and confidence in conducting research-related tasks (Bushy & Gjetani, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of embedding research-based activities that gradually build students' independence and methodological competence.

Difficulties related to academic writing, source evaluation, and research conventions can be understood through the academic literacies model, which conceptualizes learning as participation in disciplinary practices

rather than the acquisition of isolated skills (Lea & Street, 1998).

Research skills development requires explicit instruction and pedagogical support, particularly in relation to academic writing and methodological awareness (Wingate, 2012).

2.4 Research Gap and Rationale for the Present Study

Although the literature highlights the pedagogical value of research-based and interdisciplinary approaches in higher education, empirical investigations focusing specifically on students' perceptions within foreign language programs remain relatively limited. Existing studies often emphasize curriculum models or teacher perspectives, while students' experiences and perceived challenges receive less systematic attention.

Furthermore, research conducted in smaller or less frequently represented higher education contexts is underrepresented in international publications. This limits the diversity of empirical evidence available for understanding how research integration functions across different institutional and cultural settings. Addressing this gap is particularly relevant for foreign language education, where contextual factors play a significant role in shaping teaching and learning practices. By foregrounding students' perspectives, this study adds empirical insight to the relatively underexplored area of research-based foreign language education in smaller higher education contexts.

The present study seeks to contribute to this body of research by examining students' awareness, attitudes, and experiences related to scientific research integration in foreign language education. By focusing on students enrolled in language-related study programs and exploring their perceptions of interdisciplinary research practices, the study aims to provide empirical insights that complement existing literature and inform pedagogical decision-making in higher education.

Despite the growing body of research on research-based teaching in higher education, empirical studies focusing specifically on students' perceptions of interdisciplinary research integration within foreign language education remain limited. In particular, smaller higher education contexts are underrepresented in international research, resulting in a lack of empirical evidence regarding how students experience and evaluate research-based approaches in language programs. This study addresses this gap by providing exploratory empirical insights into students' awareness, attitudes, and perceived challenges related to scientific research integration in foreign language education.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative research design with descriptive and exploratory elements. This approach was considered appropriate given the study's aim to examine students' awareness, attitudes, and experiences related to the integration of scientific research in foreign language education. A questionnaire-based method was selected in order to collect structured data from a defined group of participants and to identify general tendencies in students' perceptions rather than to establish causal relationships.

The research design enables the systematic analysis of students' responses across several dimensions, including familiarity with scientific research, perceived importance of research-based teaching, experienced challenges, and interest in future research engagement. The focus on descriptive analysis reflects the exploratory nature of the study and aligns with its objective of providing empirically grounded insights into students' perceptions of research integration within foreign language programs.

Although the sample size ($n = 70$) does not aim to support broad statistical generalization, it is adequate for a descriptive empirical study focusing on students' perceptions of scientific research in foreign language education. The purpose of the study is to provide context-sensitive empirical insights rather than to establish causal relationships. By including students from different study levels and academic programs, the research contributes to the ongoing discussion on research-based and interdisciplinary approaches in higher education

language contexts.

By employing a quantitative descriptive research design, the study aims to identify prevailing patterns in students' views, experiences, and attitudes toward scientific research. This methodological approach is appropriate for examining perceptual data across heterogeneous student groups and is consistent with previous studies that highlight the value of descriptive quantitative methods when investigating educational perceptions and attitudes.

3.2 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of a total of 70 students enrolled in foreign language-related programs at a public university. The sample included both undergraduate (bachelor's) and graduate (master's) students, with representation from teacher education, translation, and communication programs. The inclusion of students from different academic tracks and study levels allowed for a more comprehensive examination of perceptions of scientific research in foreign language education.

Participants were selected through convenience sampling, based on their availability and willingness to participate. Participation was voluntary, and data were collected anonymously through an online questionnaire.

3.3 Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed specifically for the purposes of this study. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for the collection of quantitative data as well as brief qualitative insights into students' experiences and perceptions.

The closed-ended items focused on students' familiarity with scientific research, evaluation of the importance of research-based teaching, and interest in participating in research projects. Open-ended questions were included to capture students' views on perceived challenges, preferred research topics, and experiences with research tools and methods. The questionnaire was administered electronically, which facilitated accessibility and efficient data collection.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to participants during the academic term through an online platform. Prior to participation, students were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would remain anonymous and be used exclusively for academic research purposes. Participation was voluntary, and no identifying personal data were collected.

The data collection process was conducted within a defined time frame, allowing participants sufficient time to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. All completed questionnaires were included in the analysis, as no responses were excluded due to incompleteness.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Frequencies and percentages were calculated in order to summarize students' responses and to identify general patterns and tendencies related to their awareness of scientific research, perceived importance of research-based teaching, experienced challenges, and interest in future research engagement. This analytical approach was selected to provide a clear and systematic overview of the data rather than to test hypotheses or establish causal relationships.

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the limited sample size, the analysis was intentionally restricted to descriptive statistics. Inferential statistical procedures were not applied, as the primary objective of the study was to explore students' perceptions and experiences rather than to achieve statistical generalization or to identify statistically significant differences between groups.

Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed through thematic categorization. Recurrent themes related to research challenges, access to academic resources, and engagement with research practices were identified and grouped into broader analytical categories. This qualitative component served to contextualize and enrich the quantitative findings by providing insight into students' perspectives and experiences.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, and participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings derived from the questionnaire responses. The results are organized according to the main thematic areas addressed in the research questions, focusing on students' familiarity with scientific research, their evaluation of its importance in foreign language education, perceived challenges, and interest in future research engagement.

4.1 Familiarity with Scientific Research

The majority of participants reported a high level of familiarity with the concept of scientific research and the research process. Specifically, 63 out of 70 students (90.0%) indicated that they were familiar with scientific research, while 7 participants (10.0%) reported limited or no familiarity with this concept. These findings suggest that students possess at least a basic understanding of scientific research, which is likely acquired through their academic coursework and previous educational experiences.

The inclusion of both bachelor's and master's students allowed for a more nuanced overview of research awareness across different study levels, indicating that familiarity with scientific research is present at various stages of academic progression.

4.2 Previous Research Experience

When asked about prior involvement in scientific research projects, students' responses revealed varying levels of experience. A total of 33 students (47.1%) reported that they had not previously participated in scientific research projects. Meanwhile, 18 students (25.7%) indicated that they had gained research experience through coursework-related assignments, and 19 students (27.1%) reported engagement in research activities related to their master's thesis.

This distribution indicates that while a substantial number of students have limited direct research experience, a considerable proportion have been exposed to research practices through academic tasks and graduate-level research. The findings suggest a differentiated research trajectory, with more intensive research engagement typically occurring at higher levels of academic study.

Students' familiarity with scientific research and their previous research experience are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Familiarity with Scientific Research and Previous Research Experience

Variable	n	%
Familiar with scientific research	63	90.0
Not familiar with scientific research	7	10.0
No previous research experience	33	47.1
Research experience through coursework	18	25.7
Research related to master's thesis	19	27.1

Note. Percentages are based on the total number of participants (n = 70).

Overall, the results indicate a high level of awareness of scientific research, despite limited direct research experience among a substantial proportion of participants.

4.3 Perceived Importance of Scientific Research in the Field of Study

Students were asked to evaluate the importance of scientific research in their field of study. The majority of respondents rated scientific research as either very important or important. Specifically, 37 students (52.9%) considered scientific research to be very important, while 26 students (37.1%) rated it as important. A smaller proportion, 7 students (10.0%), perceived scientific research as only slightly important. None of the participants indicated that scientific research was not important.

These findings indicate a generally positive perception of scientific research among students enrolled in foreign language-related programs, highlighting a strong recognition of its relevance for academic and professional development.

4.4 Interest in Specific Research Topics

Responses regarding interest in specific research topics revealed a wide range of perspectives among participants. Some students reported clearly defined research interests, particularly in areas such as syntax and comparative linguistic analysis. Others expressed a more general interest in scientific research without identifying a specific topic, while a number of participants indicated uncertainty or a lack of current research focus.

In addition to thematic interests, several students emphasized the importance of adequate research infrastructure and institutional support as a prerequisite for developing and sustaining research engagement. These responses suggest that students' research interests are closely linked not only to individual academic preferences but also to perceived opportunities and structural conditions within their study programs.

4.5 Perceived Challenges in Conducting Scientific Research

Participants identified a range of challenges encountered when initiating or conducting scientific research. The most frequently reported difficulties were related to access to academic materials, the selection of relevant literature, and the evaluation of source credibility. Additional challenges included organizing research data, identifying appropriate references, and managing time effectively during the research process.

These findings indicate that although students generally recognize the importance of scientific research, they often face practical and methodological obstacles that may hinder effective engagement. The reported challenges highlight the need for greater methodological guidance and improved access to academic resources within foreign language programs.

4.6 Use of Research Resources and Technological Tools

All participants reported using multiple resources to obtain information for their academic work. The most commonly used tools included laptops, desktop computers, and smartphones, often employed in combination. Online resources and academic websites were frequently mentioned, with several students specifically referring to platforms such as Google Scholar for accessing scholarly literature.

The findings demonstrate a strong reliance on digital technologies for research activities, reflecting contemporary research practices in higher education. This reliance underscores the central role of digital literacy and access to online academic resources in supporting students' engagement with scientific research.

4.7 Awareness of Scientific Research in Foreign Language Education

Regarding familiarity with scientific research specifically in the context of foreign language education, the majority of participants reported a clear awareness of this concept. In particular, 44 students (62.9%) stated that they were familiar with and understood scientific research in foreign language education, while 22 students (31.4%) reported having limited knowledge. A small number of participants, 4 students (5.7%), indicated no prior awareness of this concept.

This distribution reflects varying levels of conceptual understanding among students and highlights the need for a more explicit and systematic integration of research-related content within foreign language curricula, particularly at earlier stages of academic study.

4.8 Interest in Participation in Future Research Projects

Students' responses revealed a generally positive attitude toward future involvement in research projects. Specifically, 26 students (37.1%) reported being *very interested* in participating in research activities, while 22 students (31.4%) indicated *moderate interest*. A smaller proportion of participants expressed *uncertainty*, with 11 students (15.7%) reporting that they were not sure about future research involvement, and 7 students (10.0%) indicated a lack of interest.

These findings suggest that a substantial number of students are open to engaging in scientific research, provided that appropriate methodological guidance, supervision, and institutional support are available.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study provide insight into students' perceptions of scientific research integration in foreign language education and can be discussed in relation to existing literature on research-based and interdisciplinary teaching in higher education. Overall, the results suggest a generally positive attitude toward scientific research among students, alongside identifiable challenges that may limit effective engagement if not adequately addressed.

One notable finding concerns the high level of self-reported familiarity with scientific research concepts. This aligns with previous studies indicating that students in language-related programs are increasingly exposed to research-oriented content during their academic training. However, familiarity with research does not necessarily translate into confidence or competence in conducting independent research. The results showing limited prior research experience for nearly half of the participants reflect findings in earlier research, which suggests that students often encounter research primarily through coursework rather than through sustained research projects. These patterns appear more pronounced among master's students, reflecting increased exposure to research-oriented coursework and thesis-related activities at higher levels of study.

The strong perception of scientific research as important or very important in foreign language education further supports the argument for research-based teaching models. This finding corresponds with literature emphasizing that research engagement enhances students' critical thinking and academic literacy skills. At the same time, the presence of a small group of students who perceived research as only marginally important may indicate differing academic orientations or varying levels of preparedness. Such variation highlights the need for differentiated instructional approaches when integrating research components into language curricula.

Students' expressed interest in participating in future research projects suggests a potential for increased research engagement, particularly if appropriate institutional structures are in place. Previous studies have emphasized that motivation alone is insufficient without access to resources, mentoring, and methodological support. In this regard, the challenges reported by participants in the present study—especially those related to accessing reliable literature and evaluating source credibility—are consistent with commonly identified barriers in undergraduate and graduate research training. These findings suggest that research integration should be accompanied by explicit instruction in information literacy and research methodology.

The results related to interdisciplinary perspectives are particularly relevant for foreign language education. Students' interest in linguistics, syntax, and comparative language studies reflects the inherently interdisciplinary nature of language learning. When research activities draw on multiple disciplinary perspectives, students may develop a more nuanced understanding of language as both a structural and social phenomenon. Nevertheless, interdisciplinary research also requires careful scaffolding, as students may struggle to navigate diverse theoretical frameworks without clear guidance.

Taken together, the findings suggest that integrating scientific research into foreign language education can contribute to students' academic development, provided that such integration is systematic and supported by institutional and pedagogical measures. Rather than treating research as an isolated academic requirement, embedding research activities across the curriculum may foster a more sustainable research culture within language programs. The present study thus supports existing arguments for the inclusion of research-based and interdisciplinary approaches in foreign language education, while also highlighting the practical challenges that must be addressed to ensure meaningful student engagement.

From an institutional perspective, the results reinforce the argument that foreign language programs must prioritize the systematic integration of scientific research within curricula. Previous studies have emphasized that curriculum development plays a central role in shaping students' research competencies and academic preparedness (Bush & Neçaj, 2024). Strengthening research-based teaching practices may therefore contribute not only to improved educational quality but also to the long-term development of a sustainable research culture within foreign language education.

The findings of the present study support previous research indicating that engagement with scientific research plays a central role in the development of research awareness in language education contexts (Borg, 2010).

Research-informed teaching has been identified as a key component of effective language education, as it enables learners to connect linguistic knowledge with analytical and methodological competencies (Ellis, 2010).

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined students' perceptions of scientific research integration in foreign language education, with particular emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches and research-based teaching practices. The findings indicate that students generally recognize the importance of scientific research within their field of study and demonstrate a willingness to engage in research-related activities. At the same time, the results reveal persistent challenges related to access to academic resources, methodological guidance, and confidence in conducting research independently.

The study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence from a higher education context that is less frequently represented in international research. By focusing on students' perspectives, the findings complement previous research that has predominantly addressed curriculum design and teacher-centered approaches. The results suggest that integrating scientific research into foreign language education may enhance students' analytical and critical thinking skills, while also supporting their academic and professional development.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings highlight the importance of embedding research activities systematically within foreign language curricula. Rather than treating research as an isolated component, integrating research-based tasks across different courses may help students gradually develop methodological awareness and research confidence. Explicit instruction in information literacy, academic writing, and research methodology appears particularly important in addressing the challenges reported by students.

At the institutional level, the study underscores the need for adequate infrastructure and support mechanisms to facilitate student engagement in scientific research. Access to academic databases, research-oriented coursework, and mentoring opportunities may play a crucial role in fostering a research-informed learning environment. Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration among departments may further strengthen the integration of research into foreign language education.

The findings of the present study are consistent with previous research conducted in foreign language education contexts. Similar to earlier studies examining students' perceptions of scientific research,

participants in this study demonstrated a high level of awareness regarding the importance of research-based teaching, while simultaneously reporting challenges related to access to academic literature and methodological guidance (Bushì & Kristo, 2024).

The observed interest in interdisciplinary and research-oriented approaches aligns with findings suggesting that research engagement enhances students' analytical and reflective skills (Bushì & Likaj, 2021). At the same time, the reported challenges indicate that research integration should be accompanied by structured pedagogical support, a conclusion also supported by curriculum-focused studies in foreign language education (Bushì & Neçaj, 2024).

Embedding research-based and inquiry-oriented practices within foreign language curricula may therefore enhance student engagement and academic development, particularly when supported by institutional structures that promote active learning and research participation (Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Kuh, 2008).

The findings suggest several practical implications for foreign language education:

1. Research-based activities should be gradually integrated into language curricula to scaffold students' research competencies.
2. Explicit instruction in information literacy and research methodology is necessary to address students' reported challenges.
3. Institutional support, including access to academic databases and mentoring, plays a critical role in fostering sustainable research engagement.

These findings are consistent with previous research emphasizing that interdisciplinary perspectives and methodological reflection enhance students' engagement and analytical skills in foreign language education (Bushì & Kristo, 2025; Bushì, Kristo, & Papajorgji, 2022).

From a curricular and pedagogical perspective, the integration of interdisciplinary content and research-based methodologies emerges as a key factor in strengthening students' academic competencies and preparing them for complex linguistic and professional contexts (Kristo & Bushì, 2024; Bushì & Papajorgji, 2021).

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