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***Courses in the Curricula of the Faculties
of Education (Pedagogy) in Serbia in the
Function of Developing Communicative
Linguistic Competencies of Future
Primary School Teachers – Overview and
Analysis –***

Extended summary

Linguistic and communicative competencies should by default be an integrative part of the competencies that modern times require of mankind. The development of these competencies is a priority of contemporary education, language and literature teaching, and particularly of the initial training of pre-service primary school teachers and all other actors involved in education. Lately, many authors have emphasised the need to include disciplines in the initial education of future primary school/subject teachers in which an emphasis would be on developing linguistic and communicative competencies as an important prerequisite for a successful methodological modeling of teaching. These competencies are expressed through the implementation of professional knowledge, in communication and interaction with others, monitoring and evaluation of students' work, as well as through professional development planning, which requires a good knowledge of Serbian as an official language and a successful use of English as a foreign language.

In this paper we investigate the representation in the curricula of the faculties of education/pedagogy in Serbia of the courses offering the content which enables further development of linguistic and communicative competencies of students in the field of Serbian language

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as a mother tongue and official language and English as a foreign language. The comparative analysis is based on a number of academic courses, a total number of lessons, and a number of credits, which provides a better insight into the representation of certain groups of either compulsory or elective academic courses. The main aim of the research is to investigate the representation of the courses offering the content which enables further development of linguistic and communicative competencies of students. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

- To determine the presence of compulsory and elective courses offering the content which enables further development of linguistic and communicative competencies of students in Serbian language;
- To determine the presence of compulsory and elective courses offering the content which enables further development of linguistic and communicative competencies of students in a foreign language, namely English Language;
- To determine the presence of compulsory and elective courses offering the content which enables students to acquire competencies related to the methods and techniques of pedagogical communication.

Comparative analysis method was used in the research. The data obtained by using theoretical analysis indicate an uneven representation of the courses of Serbian Language and Literature. The number of the courses increases relative to the years of study, though not at all faculties. When it comes to English Language courses, the number of compulsory courses decreases with years of study. The situation is particularly alarming with regard to courses aimed at developing communication skills.

The courses of Serbian language and Literature should definitely have a central place in the curricula of the faculties educating future teachers who will teach in Serbian Language which is a mother tongue of the majority of them, and an official language in the Republic of Serbia. The importance of mastering one's mother tongue for successful teaching is indicated in the analyses of the curricula currently in force in many countries in the region, and beyond the region. These curricula prescribe that the score in the test of the knowledge of the mother tongue and the quality of the candidates' oral and written skills are crucial at university entrance exams.

Foreign language competencies help primary school teachers to be informed about the latest developments in the profession and the relevant research. As teaching profession requires permanent education, starting from undergraduate courses, through master courses, to doctoral studies, it is unacceptable that the development of foreign language competencies should be interrupted at any stage of teachers' education.

The situation is particularly alarming with regard to courses aimed at developing communication skills. If these competencies are developed, they can considerably contribute to creating a positive classroom atmosphere and preventing verbal and physical violence. Given that one course, or none, dealing with communication skills and techniques is not sufficient, all relevant teacher training faculties should keep this fact in mind when the time comes for the new accreditation of the curricula.

To obtain more objective indicators regarding the possibilities for developing linguistic and communicative competencies of the students of teacher education faculties, future research should focus on the analysis of the syllabi for the relevant academic courses. This kind of research would offer more detailed data about the planned course content, expected outcomes, methodology, and the ways of direct evaluation of students' oral and written skills, providing pre-service primary school teachers with more opportunities for using their mother tongue and foreign languages more effectively.

Keywords: initial education, primary school teachers, academic courses, curricula of faculties of teacher education (pedagogy), language, competencies.

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