

Relationship between digital competence and communicative and sociolinguistic competences of non-university foreign language teachers

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Abstract: New technologies applied to the field of information have transformed the world into global networks, into virtual communities of information. These changes produced at a dizzying pace have given rise to the society of knowledge, which modifies the principles of modern society derived from the Industrial Revolution.

The teaching-learning processes do not seem to have changed at the same pace as society has. The current educational centers, although impregnated with new technologies and web 2.0 tools, still aim to respond to the needs of society derived from the Age of Enlightenment. The current school has not assimilated adequately the evolution of a modern society coming from the Industrial Revolution to a postmodern society imbued with the advancement of the media and new technologies (Arroyo, 2007), in which emotions predominate over concepts.

This new society has meant a change in the students, who have been born immersed in the use of new technologies, and applies them both inside and outside the classroom for any activity of their daily lives. They are called "digital natives" (Prenski, 2001). The students of the current school present different ways of perceiving and knowing, new attitudes and emerging values, a rational capacity that gives way to the symbolic (Cardona, 2013: 32). The new training of non-university teaching staff must take the new student into account, and define methodologies and educational content that reflect these changes.

This research article is an analysis of the training of non-university teachers in general, and second language non-university teachers in particular, deepening the development of their key skills as a professional, especially the digital competence, making a review of the literature related to the subject.

Keywords: teacher training, foreign languages, key competences, digital competence, knowledge society

From a traditional perspective towards a new teaching role

Teachers have traditionally been mythologized as exemplary professionals, with moral qualities worthy of being imitated and the knowledge and values with which they imbued their students (Medina, 2018). They were idealized by their society as people of extensive knowledge, capable of transmitting it to their students. The teaching profession was understood from vocation (Martínez, 2010). The teacher was a person who helped the students to develop their abilities from an exemplary attitude. Social recognition was rarely accompanied by political recognition which would allow an improvement in their socioeconomic status (Vaillant, 2010).

The current postmodern society proposes a new model of a teacher and a new approach to the educational center, which evolves from a selective school to an adaptive school (Darling-Hammond, 1996). The teacher must deal with greater demands, facing stressful situations motivated by the swift transformation of social processes, the increasing populations at risk of social exclusion, multiculturalism and the loss of the sense of learning. All this makes necessary the development in teachers of a training that can empower them with skills that develop their most creative abilities (Cabero Almenara & Marín Díaz, 2017).

New responsibilities are demanded from the new teacher, new challenges are posed to a new school that is committed to helping all its students to succeed, creating a broad knowledge base, thus becoming an active part of society instead of being excluded from it (Day, 2005).

Teacher training for a multicultural school

The postindustrial era has generated a society with new learning scenarios in formal, non-formal and informal education. Teaching has become an intentional training activity, fundamentally in relation to the knowledge transmission (De Miguel Díaz, 2005). Teaching is a different activity, adapted to a different learning model, supported by new technologies and web 2.0 tools, which determine the procedures and methodology (Zoya & Leonardo, 2009). The students themselves demand new learning models that exploit the possibilities of communication and current technology to create more original learning instruments, in accordance with the postmodern society where we live (Hernández, 1999).

The new school and the new teachers of postmodernism must confront multiculturalism, making a model of education that facilitates the participation of all in a harmonious and democratic society that "*recognizes and estimates differences and allows a pleasant and fruitful coexistence*" (Marín Ibáñez, 1994: 52)

Multiculturalism is non-discrimination for reasons of race or culture, the celebration and recognition of cultural difference as well as the right to express it. It is an opposition to the tendency of modern societies towards unification and cultural universalization, protecting and celebrating diversity and trying to compensate for the inequality of minorities with respect to majority cultures (Grant, 1997).

At present the educational centers, especially in primary and secondary education, are a cultural mosaic, a conglomerate of cultures that are reconciled in an integrating process in a climate of tolerance and respect. A model of non-university teacher training in today's society should prepare teachers for a creative, innovative and collaborative function (Gómez & González, 2017).

Applied to the field of foreign language teaching, communicative competence is the knowledge of the rules and conventions that direct every speech act, with special reference to sociocultural significance (Hymes, 2001). For Nikleva (2009), communicative competence is composed of several interrelated competences, such as grammatical (or linguistic), sociolinguistic, discursive, strategic, sociocultural and social competence. Intercultural competence should also be added (Paricio Tato, 2014), being defined as the ability of individuals to understand each other with different languages or ethnicities, implying acceptance of different cultures, mutual respect, understanding and tolerance (García, 2016). Therefore, cultural components must be part of the teaching of non-maternal languages, since they are linked to communicative competence and are necessary for the success of relations between diverse cultures (Paricio Tato, 2018).

The training activities currently implemented promote multilingualism and multiculturalism, empowering teachers with tools that allow them to provide students with a conscience of universal citizenship, typical of today's multicultural society, relying on collaborative learning and new technologies (Muñoz-Repiso, Gómez-Pablos & García, 2014).

Characteristics of the teaching function and dimensions that define it today

According to Terigi and Diker (1997: 96) teachers currently have common characteristics such as the multiplicity of tasks, the variety of contexts in which they implement these tasks, the complexity of the pedagogical act they carry out in the teaching processes -learning and the immediacy and simultaneity with which situations that are generated within the classroom occur-.

Marqués (2000), established a series of operational dimensions within which the core tasks of teaching are included: planning dimension (diagnosis of needs, preparation of classes or development of appropriate teaching strategies, with special attention to ICT and the web 2.0 tools), methodological dimension (orientation of the students towards autonomous learning, motivation for the development of activities and tasks and connection between acquired and new learning), tutorial dimension (advise students on the use of mediating information media between reality and their mental schemes and efficient use of ICT), evaluating dimension (evaluation of learning processes), model dimension (become an example for students in attitudes, values and the way of doing things, the selection of ICT resources, etc), research and personal development dimension (experiment with new materials and didactic strategies, in which ICT and web 2.0 tools play a key role again) and management dimension (perform bureaucratic tasks typical of the exercise of the teaching profession).

Teacher competences in the 21st-century school

The concept of competence has evolved over time, giving rise to many different definitions (White, 1959, Bruner, 1960, Chomsky, 1965, McClelland, 1973, Gagné, 1976, Wittgenstein, 1988, Habermas, 1997; Gardner, 1998), but the definition that interests us is included in the Delors report (1996), where it is conceptualized as the set of knowledge, abilities and skills that allow an individual to develop the four fundamental pillars of the Education: learn to know, learn to do, learn to live together and learn to be.

According to Cardona (2013: 91), the teaching competences are "the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for teachers to adequately solve the situations they face, in the exercise of their teaching work, and their acquisition requires a balanced interrelation between theoretical training and its application to the reality of educational centers".

The new professional conception of the teacher implies to consider team work, curricular transversality, shared responsibility and mastery of the specialty to manage the 21st-century society (García & García, 2015). Teachers must be skillful enough to apply a great deal of fundamental knowledge to the understanding of a type of individuals, educational centers, phenomena and processes, with a greater mastery of the contents of the disciplines and their methodologies. This ability is known as specifying competence (Bar, 1999).

Teachers must know how to plan and mobilize other actors and acquire or build content and knowledge through study or experience (Galvis, 2007). Likewise, they must know in which situations to apply a specific process or activity (especially relevant in the teaching of foreign languages), they must identify the problems in the execution of classroom activities, choose strategies for the development of the teaching and learning process, and act according to an intention by selecting appropriate cognitive functions (Estrada, 2009).

Viteri (2007) proposes the following competences of the 21st-century teacher: organize learning situations based on the previous knowledge of the student; manage the evolution of learning through a pedagogy of problem situations that combines specific didactics with the stages of student development; develop mechanisms for the attention to diversity; involve students in their own learning, developing their motivation and self-evaluation; work as a team, adopting the role of leader and underlining the assumption of conflict as an inherent condition of any group of individuals; participate in the management of the educational center and in the negotiation of an institutional project; involve parents by building spaces for communication and collaboration; use ICT for the teaching-learning process; face the duties and ethical dilemmas of the profession and organize their own continuous training.

Key competences of foreign language teaching staff

The competences of the foreign language teacher are an application of knowledge that responds to the learning situations that the teacher may find (Cárdenas Ramos, 2009). They are related to the ability of the teacher to select, combine and mobilize the necessary resources to face situations such as planning a learning task, a didactic unit or a session in the classroom (García, 2012). Likewise, they enable the teacher to work with other colleagues from different areas of the curriculum.

The Cervantes Institute (2012), based on the model of competences developed by Perrenaud (2004) and other countries' standards, makes a classification of eight key competences of the foreign language teacher, among which we can highlight some core competences and others which are common to the teachers of other subjects. Each key competence comprises four specific competences:

- Diagnose learning situations: it refers to the ability of the teacher of foreign languages for the creation and development of learning opportunities for their students (Martínez Lirola, 2007). It is essential for the teacher to know the curriculum and adapt it to the needs of the students (Vez, 2001). Foreign language teachers must plan learning situations that provide the student with adequate scaffolding and favor opportunities for the use of the foreign language (Delmastro, 2008). Its specific competences are: diagnose and attend to the needs of the students; promote the use and afterthought in the target language; plan didactic sequences and manage the classroom (Perrenaud, 2004, García, 2012, Stratulat, 2013, Casal, 2014, Sánchez Rufat, 2017).

- Evaluate the student's learning and performance: the teacher must have the ability to assess the progress of their students in learning the foreign language, especially in the development of their communicative competence (Menéndez, 2007), integrating evaluation as an essential part of the learning process, making use of contextualized tools and procedures, thus favoring a constructive evaluation for the improvement of students' learning (Romero Martín, Castejón Oliva, López Pastor & Fraile Aranda, 2017). Its specific competences are: use evaluation tools and procedures; guarantee good practice in the evaluation; promote constructive feedback and involve the student in the evaluation (Perrenaud, 2004, García, 2012, Stratulat, 2013, Casal, 2014).

- Concern students in the control of their own learning: the teacher must have the capacity to involve the students in their learning process, so that they gradually develop their autonomy and independence from the teacher (Ruiz & García, 2005, Martínez Lirola, 2007). The teacher gives the students the control so that they are increasingly autonomous, producing a continuous process of reflection that will lead to meaningful learning (Betancourt & Zermeño, 2017). Its specific competences are: promote the students' management of the available means and resources to learn; integrate the teaching tools to reflect on the learning process; promote the students' definition of their learning project and motivate the student to take responsibility for their own learning (Perrenaud, 2004, March, 2006, Yániz & Villardón, 2008, Barriga, 2009).

- Facilitate intercultural communication: foreign language teachers should promote relationships between people with different cultures, striving to know and understand the cultures and languages of the environment and the people with whom they interact, facilitating dialogue and cultural understanding from open-mindedness and respect (Vez, 2018). Its specific competences are: be involved in the development of intercultural competence; adapt to the surrounding cultures; promote intercultural dialogue and promote the development of intercultural competence of the student (Perrenaud, 2004, Patricio Tato, 2014, Hernández Muñoz, 2016, Rodríguez, 2017).

- Develop professionally as a teacher of the institution: teachers must plan, manage and evaluate their own learning process, taking responsibility for their own professional performance (Altet, Charlier & Perrenaud, 2005). It implies an everlasting afterthought on their teaching labour in order to improve it (Lieberman and Miller, 2003) and learning from the exchanges with co-workers and other foreign languages teachers,

contributing to the professional development of others (Montecinos, 2008). Its specific competences are: analyze and think over the teaching practice; define a personal plan for ongoing training; be involved in the professional development of the teaching team; participate actively in the development of the profession (Perrenaud, 2004; Barriga, 2009; Bolívar, 2011; Vaillant & Marcelo, 2015).

- Manage feelings and emotions in their work performance: foreign language teachers must show empathy in their communicative acts and identify their own emotions and those of others (Galindo-Merino, 2005). It is a clear allusion to emotional competence, whose management involves taking advantage of less favorable situations as an opportunity to initiate actions that involve motivation and emotional growth (Comas & María, 2018). In the same way, teachers are involved in the development of the students' emotional intelligence during the foreign language learning process (Pérez, 2014). Its specific competences are: manage emotions; find suitable motivation at work; develop interpersonal relationships; be involved in the development of the students' emotional competence (Perrenaud, 2004, Fuentes Abeledo, Gonzalez Sanmamed & Raposo Rivas, 2012, Robira & Bris, 2015).

- Participate actively in the educational center: teachers must be able to act responsibly as members of their school faculty (Ainscow, Hopkins, Southworth & West, 2001). They must adopt the core action schedule of the center, collaborate with other teachers in order to achieve it and be involved in the continuous improvement of the educational center and in the programs and projects for the improvement of the quality of teaching, providing a critical and constructive vision and promoting innovating practice (Díaz, Fernández, Gómez & Halbach, 2005). Its specific competences are: work as a team in the educational center; get involved in center-improvement projects; promote and disseminate good practice in the educational center; know the educational center and integrate in it (Perrenaud, 2004, Armengol Asparó, Castro Ceacero & Jarriot García, 2011).

- Use ICT for the performance of their work: foreign language teachers must use the digital resources of their environment in the effective development of their work, according to the targets set by the educational center, which entails a process of afterthought about the technological resources available to them so as to get the most out of them, make an adequate use of them and integrate them in their teaching practice to encourage the use of the foreign language and favor autonomous and collaborative learning (Izquierdo, 2008; Simons, 2010, Prendes Espinosa & Castañeda Quintero, 2010). Its specific competences are: be involved in the development of digital competence; deal with digital environments and available computer applications; take advantage of the didactic potential of ICT; promote that the students use ICT for their learning (Perrenaud, 2004, Stratulat, 2013, Casal, 2016).

Thus, the model of key competences proposed by the Cervantes Institute (2012) for foreign language teachers, based on the model of teaching competencies developed by Perrenaud (2004), includes digital competence as one of the eight key competences that teachers of non-native languages or second languages must possess. The process of reflection that involves professional practice leads foreign language teachers to make use of ICT and web 2.0 tools to develop the seven remaining key competences (Tomé, 2010). The development of the digital competence is paired with the other competences (assess and diagnose needs, evaluate the student and the teaching practice, motivate students in the implication of their own learning, develop emotional competence and participate actively in the educational center), thus serving as an instrument for their acquisition (Martí, 2013).

The digital competence of the foreign language teacher

Some studies on the use of ICT by teachers show that technologies have not yet become standardized elements in the classroom and activities are barely developed to enhance all their teaching potential (Peñaherrera, 2016; Martín & Arriba, 2017). The pedagogical practice of teachers in the classroom has not undergone substantial modifications with respect to traditional didactic approaches despite the increase in available technological resources (Pozuelo Echeagaray, 2014). For this reason, the current educational challenge of our schools should be the innovation of the teaching model so that teachers are trained to take advantage of the educational infrastructure of the centers. Technologies alone do not represent a new paradigm or teaching model. Teachers adapt ICT to their own beliefs about learning, reproducing traditional teaching models (Sancho, 2006).

It is necessary to assume a new conception of the teaching function which at the same time implies a new conception of the school, where there is a deep revision of the training programs, methodology, organization, management of educational centers, materials and infrastructures. Teachers' training in any subject should include advanced digital skills, both in initial and in-service training, so that ICTs become not only a tool for teaching in the classroom but for the learning processes of students outside the classroom (Ala-Mutka, Punie & Redecker, 2008).

The impact of ICT should be reflected in important issues such as communication, collaborative work, democratization in dialogue, focus on processes instead of products, the realization of joint projects or the analysis of learning situations (Barria Lobos, 2017). It is important to consider the fact that foreign language teachers in the 21st century manage digital competences that did not exist in previous stages (Segura et al., 2007). They must be competent enough to design interventions focused on the task and the students' participation, in the evaluation of resources and materials and in the creation of their own didactic media or the adaptation of existing ones to the characteristics of their students (Herrera Jiménez, 2013).

Nowadays, the most frequent way for teachers to acquire digital competences is through the systems of permanent teacher training, with a range focused on new technologies and most recent pedagogical trends (Project Based Learning, Gamification, Flipped Classroom, creation of Open Educational Resources, etc.) (Vez, 2001, Martínez Lirola, 2007, Nova, 2011). Pozuelo Alarcón (2014) structures the digital competence in instrumental and didactic-methodological, both divided into a series of subcompetences which establish the capacities that the teacher of the Information Society must possess.

Within the instrumental competences we can highlight some subcompetences of a generic nature (use of operating systems, web 2.0, DVD, pendrive stuff, text processors, spreadsheets, databases, blogs, web pages, online storing spaces, etc.). dealing with the organization (creation of mental maps and interactive posters, calendars, appointment management, meetings, etc.), related to communication (email, chat rooms, social networks, etc.), related to the search and management of the information (Internet, personalized search engines, encyclopedias, bibliography management, etc.) and to privacy and related to security in the network (Creative Commons licenses, users and passwords, privacy in social networks, etc.) (Schachter & Santiago, 2008, Pozuelo Alarcón, 2014).

Within the didactic-methodological competences, some generic subcompetences can be highlighted (integration of ICT in teacher training, resolution of complex problems, design of collaborative projects in a network, use of ICT for autonomous learning, critical selection of information, evaluation, tutorial action, students' personalized follow-up, etc.), related to the presentation of the information (choice of the most appropriate web 2.0 tools, non-linear presentations, use of copyrighted images, capture of video files, etc.), related to educational technology systems (design, evaluation and application of didactic materials in their area of knowledge, use of the interactive whiteboard, webquests, treasure hunts, webtasks, e-books, multimedia files, use of digital training platforms such as Moodle, etc.), related to research through the use of new technologies (production and dissemination of the research process through technological support, creative use of ICT, generation of networks among teachers) and related to attitudes and values with ICT (open and critical attitude towards ICT, predisposition for continuous learning and permanent training, prudent use of ICT, knowledge of the rules of netiquette, prevention of misuse of social networks and cyberbullying) (Pozuelo Alarcón, 2014; Martínez & del Cisne, 2015).

Digital competence in Spanish Primary Education teachers

The acquisition of digital competence and its development by any primary-education teacher is subordinated to the role that teachers must play as trainer-mediators of digital competence on the part of their students (Salazar Valera, 2016). In Spain, the Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9, for the Improvement of the Educational Quality, cites in its preamble, article XI that:

"The widespread incorporation into the educational system of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which will take into account the principles of design for everyone and universal accessibility, will allow personalizing education and adapting it to the needs and rhythm of each student. On the one hand, it will serve to reinforce and support in cases of low performance and expand the knowledge transmitted in the classroom unlimitedly. Students with motivation can thus access, according to their ability, the educational resources many institutions at the national and international levels offer. The Information and Communication Technologies will be a fundamental piece to produce the methodological change that will become an objective for the improvement of the educational quality. Likewise, the responsible and organized use of these new technologies by students must be present throughout the education system. Information and communication technologies become a key tool in teacher training and lifelong learning for citizens, allowing them to combine training with personal and work obligations, as well as the management of processes."

Following the line of the previous law (Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, of Education), the Organic Law that governs the Spanish educational system grants a major importance to digital competence not only in students' learning, but also in teachers' training, essential to the responsible and ethical acquisition and development of this competence and as a vehicle for knowledge transmission (González, 2008, Pozuelo

Echegaray, 2014). The Royal Decree 126/2014, of February 28, which contains the Basic Curriculum for Primary Education, states in its preamble that:

"In line with Recommendation 2006/962 / EC, European Parliament and Council, of December 18, 2006, on the key competences for lifelong learning, this royal decree is based on the empowerment of learning by competences, integrated in the elements of the curricula to promote a renewal in the teaching practice and the teaching and learning process",

and establishes seven key competences in the curriculum: linguistic communication, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurial spirit and awareness and cultural expressions.

The investment in technology and technological equipment, the connections to the network and the training of teachers for the production of educational digital content contextualized to their centers and students have increased notably throughout Europe, and Spain is no exception. Nevertheless, studies on the subject (Balanskat, Blamire & Kefala, 2006; Ala-Mutka, 2011) indicate that primary-education teachers still use ICT to support their traditional methodology since they have little or no predisposition to innovation.

According to the Horizon report (Johnson et al., 2014), the inclusion of new methodologies such as the Flipped Classroom, gamification (the use of game activities based on problem solving and critical thinking) or augmented reality should provoke deep transformations in the digital competence of primary school teachers in the short, medium and long term.

Digital competence in Spanish secondary school teachers

The Royal Decree 1105/2014, of December 26, which establishes the basic curriculum for Compulsory Secondary Education and the Baccalaureate supports the same text with the same discourse on the importance of competence-based learning and the key competences of the Royal Decree 126/2014, of February 28, which the Basic Curriculum of Primary Education determines. In its article XI section e) this Royal Decree establishes as *"one of the objectives of Compulsory Secondary Education the contribution to the development of the students' abilities that allow them to develop basic skills in the use of information sources to critically acquire new knowledge and basic training in the field of technology, especially information and communication."*

In order to overcome the challenges demanded by the Knowledge and Information Society, the Secondary Education teacher of the 21st century must have a solid intellectual and disciplinary training, capable of adapting to the multiple contextual situations of the educational centers, which responds to the individualized learning of the students. The learning rhythm of the learner becomes the new teaching paradigm, who in turn must have competences to empower their students in the joint construction of knowledge (Travería, 2008).

Meirieu (2005) proposed a unique model for the training of secondary school students, which would serve as a reference to the initial training of teachers, with three fundamental steps: formulating a project, identifying obstacles and finding the resources to solve the learning difficulties the teacher has detected. This would imply greater collaborative work and the presence of more than one teacher in the classroom to guarantee individual attention (Muñoz Repiso, Gómez Pablos & García, 2014).

Secondary school teachers still give priority to expository methods, but innovative experiences and interactive methodologies are increasing in line with the use of ICT. The secondary education teacher is not required to be a multimedia content producer, but a locator of contextualized resources in his educational center and his classroom (Cano, Monge, 2014: 39).

Secondary school teachers must use the technological tools and resources of the web 2.0 in a critical and constructive way in order to encourage other competences. To do so, they must take a series of principles into account (Cabero and Román, 2006): establish the construction of knowledge as a reference, not its mere reproduction; encourage the development of reflexive practice whose result is the connection between theory and practice, between learning and reality; assume the collaboration between the different agents of the teaching-learning process in the construction of knowledge and to create personal learning environments which are more significant and differentiated from the traditional approaches (Solé & Coll, 1993).

Conclusions

The evolution from a modern society based on the industrial revolution to a postmodern society based on knowledge and information has radically transformed education, including the training needs of non-university teaching staff in general, and foreign languages teachers in particular. The teachers of the current educational centers must take into account the characteristics of multicultural students, who have been born among digital gadgets that have configured their cognitive development in a completely different way with regards to the previous generations of students.

Given this new sight, the foreign language teachers must develop a series of competences that will allow them to satisfy the training needs of their students. The digital competence of teachers has become a key element for the development of other competences, including multicultural and communicative ones.

Not all teachers have reacted equally to the way the information society has been transformed. Some feel security in their comfort zone and apply traditional models based on unidirectionality and content transmission. Similarly, it would be imprudent to say that all experiences of applying new technologies in the classroom have been successful. Many of these experiences are framed in what is called a digital "doing to do", elaborating traditional methodologies with 21st century tools.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the role of the current teachers should not be that of mere knowledge transmitters. On the contrary, they must receive a professional training that will lead them to awaken curiosity about the subject in the students, so that they will become the builder of their own knowledge. Applied to the field of foreign languages, the current teachers must develop communicative competence, so deficient in previous periods, in a heterogeneous environment, which demands training for a multicultural and multilingual society. And at the base of the pyramid must be digital competence as the key that allows access to all others.

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