Communicative Competence in Student Teaching Degrees: A Systematic Review[1]

La competencia comunicativa en estudiantes de los grados de Maestro: Una revisión sistemática

师范本科学生的沟通能力; 系统性文献回顾

Коммуникативная компетентность студентов педагогических вузов: Систематический обзор

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Abstract

Technological advances have changed patterns of communication and interaction in society and in the educational field. These changes have affected both schools and teachers themselves, highlighting the need to rethink the inherent roles of teachers and the type of training they need to perform their future professional activities effectively. Despite the volatility with which today's teachers must cope, communicative competence remains an essential skill, which they must work on and develop in order to fulfil their main task, which is to teach. This research aims to provide an overview of how communication competence is worked with internationally. The methodological design responds to a systematic review, following the PRISMA guidelines, in Web of Science and Scopus databases on the field of linguistics and teacher training. The studies were carried out using a qualitative content analysis based on a population of 434 articles, with a final sample of 19. Among the findings, we detected the relevance given to the consolidation of methodological paths oriented towards the transmission of linguistic knowledge, as well as the acquisition of the required communicative competence by students, at different educational levels. Likewise, there is an inclination to point out the importance of training needs for future teachers with regard to communicative competence, noting it as necessary for their professional performance.

Key words: Communicative competence; Linguistic Competence; Communication Skills; Preservice Teachers; Competency based teacher Education.

Resumen

Los avances tecnológicos han transformado las formas de comunicación e interacción en la sociedad y en el ámbito educativo. Estos cambios han incidido tanto en las instituciones escolares, como en los propios docentes, evidenciándose la necesidad de un replanteamiento de las funciones intrínsecas del profesorado, así como del tipo de formación que precisan para desempeñar su futuro ejercicio profesional eficazmente. A pesar de la volatilidad con la que el profesor actual debe lidiar, la competencia comunicativa sigue siendo una capacitación esencial, que debe trabajar y desarrollar para cumplir con su principal cometido, enseñar. La presente investigación tiene la finalidad de ofrecer una panorámica sobre cómo se trabaja la competencia comunicativa a nivel internacional. El diseño metodológico responde a una revisión sistemática, siguiendo las directrices PRISMA, en las bases de datos Web of Science y Scopus sobre el campo de la lingüística y la formación del profesorado. Los trabajos se estudiaron mediante un análisis de contenido cualitativo partiendo de una población de 434 artículos, siendo la muestra final, 19. Entre los hallazgos encontrados, se detecta la relevancia concedida a la consolidación de vías metodológicas orientadas a la transmisión del conocimiento lingüístico, así como la adquisición de la competencia comunicativa necesaria por parte de los estudiantes, en distintos niveles educativos. Asimismo, se observa una inclinación a señalar como importante la necesidad formativa en el futuro docente con respecto a la competencia comunicativa, marcándola como necesaria para su desempeño profesional.

Palabras clave: Competencia comunicativa; competencia lingüística; habilidades comunicativas; profesores en formación; formación docente basada en competencias.

概要

技术的进步改变了社会和教育领域的交流和互动形式。这些变化影响了教育机构和教师，从而表明应重新考虑教师的内在功能，以及有效地开展未来职业实践所需的培训类型。尽

管当今教师必须应对时刻变化的情况，但对沟通能力的培养仍然必不可少，因此应该对该能力进行培训和发展以履行其主要的教学职责。本项研究的目的是概述关于如何培养沟通能力的国际文献。研究设计方法按照PRISMA准则，对Web of Science和Scopus数据库中关于语言学和教师培训领域文章进行系统的回顾。通过定性内容分析法对434篇文章进行了研究，最终19篇样本。研究发现证实了传播语言知识的方法途径与之的相关性，以及学生在不同教育水平上获得必要的沟通能力的相关性。同样，我们还观察到未来对教师在沟通能力方面培训需求的趋势，该方面在对其专业能力的培养中必不可少。

关键词: 沟通能力; 语言能力; 沟通本领; 培训中的教师; 基于能力的教师培训。

Аннотация

Технологический прогресс преобразовал формы коммуникации и взаимодействия в обществе и в области образования. Эти изменения оказали воздействие как на школы, так и на самих учителей, подчеркнув необходимость переосмысления присущих учителям функций, а также вида подготовки, которая им необходима для эффективного осуществления их будущей профессиональной деятельности. Несмотря на нестабильность, с которой приходится иметь дело современным преподавателям, коммуникативная компетентность по-прежнему является важнейшим навыком, над которым они должны работать и развивать для выполнения своей главной задачи - задачи преподавания. Цель данного исследования - дать общее представление о том, как работает коммуникативная компетентность на международном уровне. Методологическая разработка отвечает систематическому обзору, в соответствии с методическими рекомендациями PRISMA, баз данных «Web of Science» и «Scopus» в области лингвистики и подготовки преподавателей. Исследования проводились с помощью качественного контент-анализа на основе совокупности 434 статей, итоговая выборка которых составила 19. Среди полученных результатов мы выявили актуальность консолидации методологических путей, ориентированных на передачу лингвистических знаний, а также приобретения студентами необходимых коммуникативных компетенций на различных уровнях образования. Точно так же существует склонность указывать на такую же важную формативную потребность будущего учителя в коммуникативной компетентности, отмечая ее как необходимую для своей профессиональной деятельности.

Ключевые слова: Коммуникативная компетентность; лингвистическая компетентность; коммуникативные навыки; студенты педагогических вузов; подготовка учителей на основе компетентности.

Introduction

The social-constructivist model sets the framework for development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). This model requests that teacher training degrees be adapted to the current social reality (Gràcia, Jarque, Astals, & Rouaz, 2019). Specifically, this is expressed as quality training based on the development of the skills and abilities that are essential for the development of competences and which promote interaction between students and teachers. This should occur within a learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom (Golovanova, Telegina, Donetskaya, & Khammatova, 2020).

The concept of communicative competence at the core of this study refers to an individual's ability to use language in different cultural contexts (Munezane, 2019). Ac-

cording to this conception, university teachers must be aware that those who have finished their education degree must have acquired this competence in order to use it professionally (Gràcia, Jarque, Astals, & Rouaz, 2020). This involves the acquisition, use and assessment of language in order to assume the role that language plays in interactions with colleagues, or with teaching professionals and even with those outside of teaching (Khan, Khan, Zia-Ul-Islam, & Khan, 2017; Mishra & Mishra, 2020). However, more than this, it involves relationships with students and parents (Van Niejenhuis, Huitsing, & Veenstra, 2020). Hence the importance of sociolinguistic aspects, the linguistic register or the resources needed by students to elaborate sentences or verbal texts (Neira-Piñeiro, Sierra-Arizmendiarrieta, & Pérez-Ferra, 2018).

Within the interaction processes engaged in with other classmates alongside oral communication, the ability to write, read and understand texts also plays a significant role, with these being main components of communicative competence. This implies an improvement in teachers' abilities to properly plan their teaching (König, Bremerich-Vos, Buchholtz, Fladung, & Glutsch, 2020).

Similarly, in addition to impacting skill development, the development of communication skills impacts upon the classroom climate as students design and manage alternative methods which directly affect their professional teaching practice (Monarca & Rappoport, 2013). It is also worth pointing out the importance of written language in the development of cognitive abilities or in understanding concepts and key aspects for the development of competences (Cotrena, Branco, Cardoso, Wong, & Fonseca, 2015).

This suggests that communicative competence involves other aspects that must be considered during the university training period of trainee teachers. Specifically, it involves the capacity to acquire information, process it, generate knowledge from it and transmit it. These aspects are closely linked to the changes posed by the EHEA, which demands conceptualisation and engagement of teachers and students. This process is not easy to achieve. University traditions do not always enable these aspects to be integrated into the new university cultural context.

On further examination of the literature, a prior systematic review found that communicative competences tended to be related to intercultural competences, especially in virtual environments (Avgousti, 2018; Huang, 2018). Likewise, the systematic review conducted by Jerez-Yáñez, Orsini-Sánchez and Hasbún Held (2016) of characteristics pertaining to higher education, points to the importance of the communicative competence for producing good teachers due to its close link to student learning.

However, this work, taking a professional teaching perspective, argues for the importance of examining the process of communicative competence acquisition and development. This is a feature with which teachers struggle to relate due to the continuous changes occurring to teacher training, as a consequence of the new demands of society. Along these lines, proposed changes must be adjusted to three complementary realities: "the development of metacognitive skills and the ability to regulate consciously the processes involved in performing tasks; the collaborative work of students, and; the structuring of mentoring processes" (Pérez-Ferra, Quijano, & Ocaña, 2013, p. 241).

Considering the issues described above and the lack of specific reviews examining communicative competences in students with teaching degrees and pertinent teaching qualifications related to training in this area, the following four research questions are raised:

a. How does the communicative competence of students undertaking degrees in primary and pre-school education affect student training?

b. Is there any relationship between the communicative and linguistic ability of students undertaking primary and pre-school education degrees, and their tendency to collaborate with other classmates?

c. Do the linguistic and communication skills of primary and pre-school students affect the classroom climate?

d. What kind of studies emerge to have analysed teachers' communicative competences?

Method

The procedure followed in the present research adhered to recommendations included in the PRISMA statement for the development of systematic reviews (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). Identification, evaluation and interpretation processes were applied to identified scientific studies on the study topic (Fink, 2005), in order to select relevant research in the field of linguistics and teacher training.

Specifically, the purpose of this work was to provide a detailed overview of the importance of communication skills to trainee teachers when it comes to effective professional practice. These skills not only have an impact on their professionalism but also on the relationships they establish with their students and colleagues. They also influence their ability to acquire new teaching knowledge and to perform effectively in innovation processes.

The research objectives are:

a. Analyse the impact of communicative competence on teachers' educational practice.

b. Examine the relationship between the development of linguistic competence and the consolidation of collaborative relationships between primary school and pre-school students.

c. Identify the impact of competent university teaching staff on the development of communication and language skills in students undertaking primary and pre-school teaching degrees.

Search strategy

Systematic search processes were carried out using the Web of Science (hereafter WoS) and Scopus databases during the months of April and May 2019. The following key words were extracted from the ERIC and entered into these search engines: "Communicative competence"; "linguistic competence"; "communication skills"; "teachers"; "competency-based teacher education".

Eligibility criteria

The search was limited to articles published between 2009 and 2019 in order to ensure current relevance and pertinence of the work. This was important as the aim was to

identify relatively recent research that reflected the concerns, roles and training of current teachers. Following this first decision, a research population of 434 articles was established. This was made up of 161 articles from WOS and 273 from Scopus. Figure 1 summarises research trends in communicative competence over the analysed period:
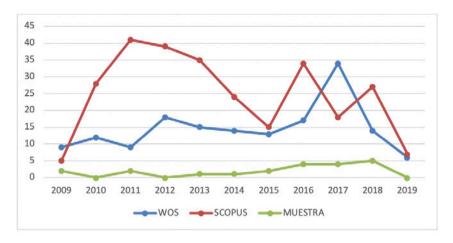

Figure 1. Distribution of publications between 2009 and 2019

In order to ensure that the review was systematic, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied (see Table 1). This reduced the study's sample size and responded to the research objectives.

Table 1
Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Research articles	Books, chapters, theses, conference proceedings.
Published between 2009 and 2019	Published prior to 2009
Written in Spanish or English	Written in any language other than Spanish or English
From the field of social sciences	From research areas that did not belong to the field of education.
Cover the area of *"education and educational research"*	Sample not made up of teachers.
Empirical study and/or review	
Sample made up of teachers or trainee teachers	

Initial criteria pertained to the "area of research", "language", "type of publication", "sample" and "type of evidence". In this respect, the search was configured to only include articles included within the field of social sciences. Subsequently, criteria limited the language of studies to include only articles published in English or Spanish, since the majority of international scientific studies are written in these languages.

Next, research focused on investigations conducted in the field of education. Thus, only papers published in the areas of education and educational research were included.

Following determining of these initial filters, more specific filters were applied to ensure the relevance of manuscripts to the established research questions. Articles were selected that provided relevant empirical evidence or evidence reviews to the purpose of the present study. Studies were only included if their sample was made up of students undertaking primary or pre-school teaching degrees within the formal education system. Studies had to present research that had been carried out in relation to specialised programmes for the development and acquisition of communicative competences. Doctoral theses, books and conference proceeding were excluded despite their important contribution to the scientific field being recognised.

Selection process

First, we carried out a preliminary reading of the title and abstract of each manuscript. Next, the full text was read whilst considering the methods, results and conclusions. Outcomes were considered according to the relevance of the relationship between examined dimensions (communicative competence, language skills, teacher training and teaching staff). During this process, a more detailed reading of the manuscripts was performed concurrently by two different experts. The purpose of this was to increase reliability and validity of the search (García-Martínez & Martín-Romera, 2019).

Finally, data was extracted and analysed. A logical order data comparison was carried out and all obtained information was summarised in order to achieve true and up-to-date outcomes. For this, a separate file was developed for each article (González de Dios & Balaguer, 2007). The following descriptive information was collected for all articles: (1) author/s, (2) year of publication, (3) type of study, (4) population, (5) sample, and (6) techniques and instruments used.

Population and sample

Following completion of the procedure described above, a sample of 434 articles was obtained, with 161 and 273 coming from WOS and Scopus, respectively. Following application of inclusion criteria and completion of the second level of analysis, a final sample of 19 articles was established (see Figure 2).
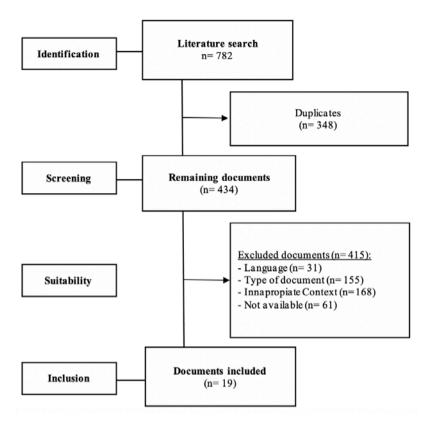
Figure 2. Sample selection process

Results

Identification of selected publications

Based on the proposed methodology, four article classification categories were identified: (a) quantitative - methods, techniques and instruments seek to describe or predict the phenomenon, based on statistical analysis; (b) qualitative - methods, techniques and instruments seek to understand the phenomenon; (c) mixed - quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques and instruments are used in the study, and; (d) theoretical - empirical data not collected but relevant and current research is presented which enriches the field of research under study.

Characteristics of included publications

The articles that constituted the sample of the present systematic review employed different methodologies. Some included studies used mixed methodologies. Articles were also identified whose instruments were mainly quantitative, whilst others were

developed from a qualitative perspective. In terms of study typology, the vast majority were cross-sectional, with five being theoretical in nature.

With regards to the population, most samples came from higher education settings, being made up of either students or the teachers themselves. Studies were also included in relation to the educational stages pertaining to pre-school, primary school and secondary school. This was necessary to provide references for communicative competence needs in relation to knowledge of the teaching activity of teaching staff.

A list of the articles making up the present study is provided below (see Table 2). Details are provided for identifying data, in addition to the articles impact within the specialised literature, according to the number of citations it has received in Google Scholar:

Table 2

Analysis of included articles

Author (s)	Year	Study*	Population	n	Instrument	Quotes
Maiier & Ustymenko	2018	C-S	University	167	CS	4
Farfán et al.	2017	C-S	University	105	O; P; Q	9
Korniyaka	2018	Th	University	-	-	1
Elder et al.	2017	Th	Teachers	-	-	32
Toropova & Sharafeeva	2016	Th	University	-	-	1
Del Moral-Pérez, Villalustre & Neira	2016	C-S	University	143	DS; C	26
Pérez-Lisboa	2014	C-S	Pre-School	-	O	3
Vázquez-Cano	2013	C-S	Secondary	-	M	21
Ramos, Chiva & Gómez	2017	C-S	University	1285	P	15
Mohamed-Fauzi & Raja-Hussain	2016	C-S	Primary	24	FC; P	12
Villalustre-Martínez & Del Moral-Pérez	2015	C-S	University	161	P; G	81
Salavera-Bordás & Antoñanzas	2011	C-S	University	-	P	2
Brebner et al.	2017	C-S	Primary	-	P; M	7
Hürsen et al.	2011	C-S	University teachers	600 41	Q	26
Stark et al.	2016	C-S	Schools	78	Q	53
Purvis, McNeill & Everatt	2015	C-S	University	24	P	15
Neira-Piñeiro, Sierra-Arizmendiarrieta & Pérez-Ferra	2018	Th	University	-	-	4

Author (s)	Year	Study*	Population	n	Instrument	Quotes
Murray & McConachy	2018	C-S	University teachers	16	FG	9
Emerick	2019	C-S	University teachers	606	Q; I	15

*C-S: Cross-sectional; L: Longitudinal; Th: Theoretical; O: Observational; Q: Questionnaire/s; I: Interview/s; DS: Digital stories; C: Checklist; M: Microblog/s; FC: Flipped classroom; G: Gamification; DA: Document analysis; CS: Case study; P: Program; M: Model; FG: Focus groups

Description of included publications

A range of different topics were covered by the studies selected for the present systematic review. Some studies focused on the methodology used for teaching language. This was the case in the study carried out by Maiier and Ustymenko (2018). Their study focused on the knowledge and skills that must be acquired by teachers of foreign languages and culture during teacher training in order to perform properly.

Researchers in the Kiev university context found the test method, case study method, play method, project-based method and ICT to significantly contribute to the development of methodological competence within foreign language teachers. A similar study was developed by Farfán, Villafuerte, Romero and Intriago (2017) in Ecuador. This used film as a communicative and educational tool with the aim of promoting the communication skills of listening, comprehension and oral expression, within future English teachers.

In contrast, a study developed by Korniyaka (2018) considered oral communication to be an essential "tool" for achieving successful communication and social relationships amongst teachers. In this sense, this study identified specific components of the communicative competence whilst also examining its effects on professional teaching profiles. In general terms, the author argues that communicative and oral competence depends on three comprehensive characteristics. These characteristics determine the quality of the professional interactions of university teachers. Namely, they are didactic intention, creative orientation and pedagogical flexibility.

Other studies were framed by the learning of a second language. For example, research conducted by Emerick (2019) addressed the beliefs of university language teachers regarding explicit teaching and authentic materials in the teaching of a second language. This research urged the importance of explicit listening instructions for students in order for them to develop active listening skills. Such instruction is especially useful when it is supported with direct strategic instruction, listening practice and listening assessment.

On the other hand, some studies focused more on the linguistic register. This included a study conducted by Elder, McNamara, Kim, Pill, and Sato (2017) aimed at the learning of English as a second language. This aforementioned study analysed inconsistencies in language performance tests, which were seen to place language component knowledge before cognitive language skills. Further, research developed by Toropova, Sharafeeva, and Sharafeeva (2016) stands outs in relation to the linguistic register, although their study was more focused on interpersonal relations and interculturality. With regards to the university context, the aim of this relevant research is to identify different conditions and factors that are needed to improve students' language learn-

ing and motivate them to achieve high levels of linguistic culture. At the same time, the intention is for them to achieve better mastery of communication skills when communicating in their non-native language. This knowledge area also includes research undertaken by Murray and McConachy (2018). These researchers unified cultural competence and linguistic diversity in order to achieve better internationalisation in a higher education setting.

A further example of research performed in the university context comes from the study carried out by Del Moral-Pérez, Villalustre, and Neira (2016) with students undertaking a primary education teaching degree. Following the development of a relevant experience, researchers administered a checklist to 128 trainee teachers. Outcomes demonstrated high levels of expertise in relation to technology. However, only medium-low levels of communicative competence were identified, with issue emerging in relation to register, morphosynthesis, punctuation and vocabulary.

Further, research conducted by Pérez-Lisboa (2014) addressed communicative competence in teachers. Specifically, the study found that the communicative competence of pre-school teachers affected the language development of their students as it provided their linguistic reference.

In relation to the secondary school stage, a study carried out by Vázquez-Cano (2013) analysed linguistic and digital competence, and information processing following the completion of school microblogging activities using the free social network "Edmodo". Collaborative links were established between students and teachers through the exchange of messages via this social network. The provision of online resources and tools to structure information affected the acquisition of not only communicative competence, but also of scientific-technological and other core competences.

An exploratory-descriptive study conducted by Ramos, Chiva, and Gómez (2017) regarding teaching innovation experiences amongst university students undertaking different degrees, examined information processing specifically. This study analysed a range of basic skills, such as communication and information analysis. Findings indicated that information processing skills and communication were most highly valued by participants, along with teamwork and problem solving.

With regards to innovative experiences, a study conducted by Mohamed-Fauzi and Raja-Hussain (2016) stood out. This study specifically employed a flipped classroom methodology with the aim of achieving higher communicative competence levels within students. Further, this alternative methodology considered students' different learning styles. Outcomes were generally positive, finding improvements in levels of empowerment, student engagement and motivation, as well as progress in the development of students' communication and thinking skills.

Within this same realm of methodological innovations geared towards improving communicative competence, a study carried out by Villalustre-Martínez and Moral-Pérez (2015) also emerges as important. In this study, gamification was considered to provide a useful strategy for the acquisition of communicative competence. According to a study published by Vázquez-Cano (2013), a relationship exists between communicative and scientific-technological competence. In fact, students who used technological tools, such as wikis or social networks, were found to improve their written communication skills, as well as skills related with the organisation and management of information.

Research conducted by Salavera-Bordás and Antoñanzas (2011) highlights the positive effect of communicative competence on the acquisition of professional skills. Motivated by the general difficulty experienced by a large number of trainee teachers to establish in-depth conversations, a prospective and comparative study was carried out with two groups. The experimental group (receiving a communication skills intervention) demonstrated higher levels of structuring than the control group. The experimental group also exhibited more developed cognitive and learning aspects.

Other studies, such as that conducted by Brebner, Attrill, Marsh, and Coles (2017) and that carried out by Stark, Snow, Eadie, and Goldfeld (2016) reported on the design of programmes focused on the development of communicative competence in students with special educational needs.

Hürsen, Özçınar, Özdamlı, and Uzunboylu (2011) conducted research across different educational levels (secondary school, high school and university). These authors used a comparative design to examined students' and teachers' perceptions of their communicative competence. No significant differences were found between the self-assessments made by the two groups. Similarly, no differences emerged in relation to gender, nationality or educational level.

With regards to the ambit of teacher training, a study conducted by Purvis, McNeill, and Everatt (2015) analysed the metalinguistic knowledge of student teachers. In particular, the study examined the impact of a language structure course taught at a New Zealand university to first-year students. Results were somewhat notable, with improvements being seen in all analysed dimensions following intervention. Concretely, phonological and morphological dimensions were improved, in addition to orthographic awareness.

Similarly, research undertaken by Neira, Sierra-Arizmendiarrieta, and Pérez-Ferra (2018) sought to analyse the communicative competence of future teachers. Specifically, these authors performed an analysis of communicative competence that was based on the specialised literature. This enabled them to characterise outcomes according to the following four groups: basic functions, units of competence, descriptors and performance criteria. In turn, authors provided guidance for developing communicative competence in trainee teachers.

Discussion

The present systematic review reports on several action areas pertaining to the study of communicative competence. A large section of included research gathered information on the elaboration of methodological paths to ease the transmission of linguistic knowledge. Acquisition of the communicative competence also emerged at the forefront, with this being a requirement for students at different educational stages. These outcomes are consistent with other studies in the field. For example, Maslieva, Osadchaya, Delvig, and Vdovina (2018) argued that the combination of personality-oriented, communicative and environmental approaches present the best way for future teachers to acquire communicative competence and skills needed for language teaching.

Turning our focus onto teacher training, it has been noted that the communicative competence is one of the core competencies for those who teach or practice in teaching-related professions.

Study outcomes along these lines confirm the essential role played by language acquisition and social skills in professional practice. Similarly, findings directly linked language competence to the type of activities carried out in the classroom, with other factors such as student motivation and the creation of favourable learning environments also being related.

Present findings coincide with those of other studies, such as that reported by Aspelin and Jonsson (2019) who developed a project with student teachers which focused on interpersonal teacher-student relations. In this way, these authors addressed relational competence in teacher training, focusing on three components: communication, differentiation and socio-emotional competence. In turn, they highlighted the benefits of developing this competence for students' subsequent professional practice.

Similarly, conceptions of teaching communicative competence as a linguistic reference for students were evidenced in the present review. A study carried out by Van der Veen, Van der Wilt, Van Kruistum, Van Oers, and Michaels (2017) promoted productive conversations between teachers and students. This was encouraged in order to improve students' oral communication skills, as an intermediary factor between the learning process and the student's thinking.

Students' oral skills are also seen to go hand in hand with skills related with later reading comprehension, as well as with psychosocial factors such as motivation, social acceptance and self-regulation (Tao, Zheng, Lu, Liang, & Tsai, 2020).

It was noteworthy that a large number of the studies that combined communicative competence and teacher training were found in the foreign language teaching field. Issues such as the teaching of a second language, the way in which it is learned and the most suitable conditions in which instructional processes take place, were often identified by the selected databases as an important part of language studies (Sadenova, Orazakynkyzy, Anuar, & Yesbulatova, 2017). In this field, there is also a tendency to join linguistic competence in second language teaching with cultural competence. This is useful for initiating effective processes of transculturality and interculturality, especially in higher education (Begeka, 2019; Fantini, 2020).

Other contributions were limited to the analysis of parameters and units of scientific competence, with the "language register" being the most frequently studied (Schaefer & Warhol, 2019). In contrast, other studies focused on the oral component of communicative competence, such as in the study conducted by Santamarina-Sancho and Núñez-Delgado (2018) with students enrolled on pre-school teacher education degrees.

A relationship between "communicative competence" and "scientific competence" was also observed in the selected studies. It seems that the essentially practical approach of the former, together with growing digital literacy (as a product of the inception of Web 2.0 and information and communication technologies), has contributed towards changing the traditional conception of communicative competence. These more up-to-date conceptions are better adapted to current demands.

A number of studies highlighted communicative competence transformation processes by considering them alongside scientific competencies within virtual educational environments (Mei, Brown and Teo, 2018). Likewise, in relation to the field of initial teacher training, this trend also emerges in the Spanish context. An example of this can be seen in the paper published by Romero-Martín, Castejón-Oliva, López-Pastor, and Fraile-Aranda (2017). In this work, students, teachers and graduates reported

higher scores for skills involved in communicative competence than in those related with technological competence.

Conclusions

Communicative competence is necessary for everyone. With regards to the teaching profession, its need is even more evident. This is shown by the studies presented through the present systematic review. In this regard, outcomes have recently been published of an in-depth study into aspects related with communicative competence showing it to be an essential transversal element of the comprehensive training of future teachers (Pérez-Ferra, 2019).

The present literature review sought to answer four questions. The first question regarded the influence of a thorough understanding of communicative competence on teaching practices. In this regard, such understanding was shown to have a positive impact in terms of the type of relationships defined between students and their classmates, whilst also positively impacting upon the use of suitable methodologies geared towards student characteristics. This implies that teachers adapt to the cultural and social reality of the environment in which their students operate. This generates a classroom climate which facilitates and encourages learning.

With regards to the relationship between the communicative and linguistic capacity of teachers and their tendency to collaborate with other colleagues, more competent teachers in the linguistic field tended to interact more with their colleagues, in this way enhancing the quality of relationships.

Similarly, competent teachers tend to have oral skills which enable them to interact more, and be more assertive and empathetic. This generates confidence and security in the individual. Studies (Pérez-Ferra, 2019) show that students enrolled on teacher training degrees value key aspects related to the discursive field, such as the appropriate use of synonyms.

With regards to the question about whether a relationship exists between teachers' language and communication skills, and the classroom climate, a consistent and direct relationship was found. Reviewed literature shows that such a relationship exists. Further, it can be stated that the different studies demonstrate the importance of empathy in relation to the ease of expression and communication (in the broadest sense). This appears to be the case at a professional teaching level both between colleagues, and between teachers and students.

Finally, with regards to research trends in relation to the type of studies examining teachers' communicative competence, many studies involve projects whose impact tends to be evaluated through Likert type scales, quasi-experimental designs and, even, interviews. Quasi-experimental studies provide methodologies which can be established within the classroom in order to facilitate the development of different communication skills. In some cases, such methodologies incorporated so-called "new technologies". In the case of the latter, significant improvements were detected in processes associated with the sociolinguistic and pragmatic aspects of communicative competence.

It can be concluded that the communicative competence constitutes a relevant and much needed field of research. Professions such as teaching require experts with advanced knowledge of communicative competence in order to receive training aimed

at the proper enactment of their teaching tasks. This not only has an impact on the design of educational processes, generally, but also directly affects relationships between students and teachers, motivational factors and the classroom climate, and students' cognitive development. Particularly in terms of teacher training, a re-thinking is needed of the way in which teachers are trained during university education and the way in which they adapt to social demands. This poses a great challenge given that it involves changes geared towards developing teaching staff who see the EHEA from different viewpoints, rather than through the same bureaucratic processes.

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