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CALL FOR PAPERS
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL “PALIMPSEST”

ПРЕДГОВОР

Ми претставува чест да бидам член на меѓународниот Уредувачки одбор на „Палимпсест“, меѓународно списание за лингвистички, книжевни и културолошки истражувања, иницирано и формирано на Филолошкиот факултет во Штип пред три години, а ми претставува и особена чест да учествувам со предговор за седмиот број.

Од првата година па до сега списанието излегува редовно во два броја годишно со широк спектар на трудови од сите предвидени рубрики („Јазик“, „Книжевност“, „Култура“, „Методика на наставата“, „Прикази“), со автори од разни земји и од различни истражувачки профили. Објавувањето на списанието во електронска форма е многу важно, бидејќи овозможува побрза дистрибуција и отворен пристап, а со тоа и поширок круг на читателска публика како и поголеми можности за примена на резултатите од објавените трудови.

Во „Палимпсест“ бр. 7 има 25 трудови (12 оригинални научни трудови, 10 стручни трудови, 1 прегледен труд и 2 приказа) на автори од единаесет држави и тоа Македонија, Турција, Франција, Бурунди, Бенин, Швајцарија, Србија, Брегот на Слоновата Коска, Сенегал, Мароко, Алжир, напишани на македонски, англиски, француски и турски јазик. Трудовите ги пополнуваат сите рубрики на списанието. Квантитативно доминираат трудовите од рубриката „Книжевност“ (вкупно 12, а во нив се истражуваат дела на класици и на современи македонски, руски, турски, шпански, француски, алжирски, американски автори, како и народното творештво), следува рубриката „Јазик“ со 7 статии (истражувања од областа на следниве јазици: македонски, турски, француски, непалски, кирунди), 2 статии се посветени на културолошки истражувања (за етнокоролошките карактеристики на ората Тешкото и Лесното и за влијанието на мебелот врз културолошкиот аспект на станбениот простор во првата половина на 20 век во Скопје), 2 статии се од областа на методиката на наставата по англиски јазик, а списанието завршува со рецензијата за докторската дисертација за јазичните грешки поврзани со менливите зборови во македонскиот јазик кај учениците во основното образование од Марија Гркова и со освртот кон научно-литературната монографија на Венко Андоновски за книжевниот текст како процес.

Им честитам и им благодарам на авторите и на сите јазични редактори, рецензенти и соуредници за нивниот придонес кон оформувањето на седмиот број на списанието „Палимпсест“ на кое му посакувам што повеќе читатели!

Намита Субиото, уредник на „Палимпсест“

FOREWORD

I am honoured to be a member of the International Editorial Board of “Palimpsest”, an international journal for linguistic, literary and cultural research, initiated and established three years ago at the Faculty of Philology in Stip. It is also a great privilege to participate with the foreword of the seventh issue.

From the first year until now, the journal has been published twice a year on a regular basis, with a wide range of papers covering all of the sections (Language, Literature, Culture, Teaching Methodology and Book Reviews), created by authors from many different countries and various research profiles. Publishing a journal in electronic form is quite significant because it enables faster distribution and open access, thus enabling a wider circle of readership and greater opportunities for applying the results of the published papers.

In the 7th issue of “Palimpsest” there are 25 papers (twelve original scientific papers, ten theoretical papers, one review paper and two book reviews) by authors from eleven countries: Macedonia, Turkey, France, Burundi, Benin, Switzerland, Serbia, Ivory Coast, Senegal, Morocco, and Algeria, written in Macedonian, English, French and Turkish. The papers cover all the sections of the journal. The biggest number of papers belong to the Literature section (a total of twelve papers in which classical and contemporary Macedonian, Russian, Turkish, Spanish, French, and Algerian authors as well as folk arts are the subject of research), followed by seven papers in the “Language” section (with research conducted in the following languages: Macedonian, Turkish, French, Nepalese, Kirundi), two papers are dedicated to the cultural research (on the ethnocoreological characteristics of the folk dances “Teshkoto” and “Lesnoto” and the influence of furniture on the cultural aspect of housing space in the first half of the 20th century in Skopje), two papers are in the field of English language teaching methodology, and finally the journal concludes with a review of the doctoral dissertation on language errors related to inflected words in the Macedonian language among elementary school students by Maria Grkova as well as a review of the literary monograph written by Venko Andonovski on the literary texts as a process.

I congratulate and express my gratitude to all the authors and language editors, reviewers and co-editors for their contribution to the creation of the seventh issue of “Palimpsest”, wishing them a wider readership.

Namita Subiotta, *Editor of “Palimpsest”*

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Abstract: Learners' accomplishments depend to a great extent on the knowledge and skills of their teachers. In order to be able to develop students' potential, teachers need to have competences for a high quality education and opportunities for professional growth. English communicative competence is an important aspect of teacher expertise. The aim of this paper is to show how novice teachers evaluate their own communicative competence, the ways they developed it during their studies and the possibilities for improvement after graduation. 26 novice teachers graduated from the South East European University (SEEU), participated in the study. The results gathered from their reports are expected to identify the areas for improvement in teacher education curricula at this particular university and generally, in the countries where English is taught as a foreign language and by non-native speakers.

Keywords: *Language, education, competence, teachers.*

Introduction

The state of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Macedonia resembles the description offered by Weddell, (2011, in Freeman, Katz, Gomes and Burns, 2015) according to which, in spite of the introduction of English in state schools from early age and the huge financial investment in this initiative in developing countries, students' knowledge of English is not satisfactory. Learners' experiences and accomplishments depend to a great extent on the knowledge and skills of their teachers. Based on this, we tend to believe that teachers' communicative competence, as an important aspect of teacher expertise, influence the communicative competence of their students. In other words, if teachers are proficient users of English and competent communicators, they can transfer their knowledge to students more successfully.

Unfortunately, in the country, both at state and private universities, there are no entry language proficiency requirements for English education programs. Neither are there university exit requirements in terms of any kind of a national standardized proficiency assessment, apart from the regular exams that do include assessment of speaking skills, but are not standardized. In this way, English teachers can find a job after graduation even without having mastered the target language well. What is more, the present system in the country does not offer opportunities for improvement of this particular skill. As such, it has a direct negative effect in the classroom, reflected further on the achievements of students.

Therefore, it is important to analyze how English teachers develop their proficiency during studies and after graduation. It is also critical to identify the areas where improvement is needed and offer recommendations to governmental officials and higher education institutions in order to address this issue.

Literature review

The concept of communicative competence was originally defined by Hymes (1972), (in Bagaric and Djigunovic, 2007) as the “ability to use” in various communication settings. (p. 95). Different terms were proposed later to refer to the same notion: language proficiency, communicative proficiency, communicative language ability and so on. Nevertheless, all these definitions had one thing in common: knowledge and abilities/skills for use. As these authors point out, “a competent language user should possess not only knowledge about language but also the ability and skill to activate that knowledge in a communicative event”. (p. 100).

Communicative competence is the basic principle underlying the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLT) which stresses the communicative functions of the language (Canale and Swain, 1980) in terms of Hymes’ (1975) “ability to use”. Based on this approach to teaching, rooted in the Direct Method, (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), there is a general perception that the instruction in the English classroom should be carried out in English, which requires proficient language use by the teachers.

Research has also proven that good command of English is the main prerequisite for high quality practices in the English classroom, although not the only one. Johnson (2001) argues that the core of second language teacher education is disciplinary knowledge: “knowledge about how second languages are acquired, about how the English language is structured and used, about how people interact and communicate.” (p. 54). Petkute (2010) claims that in foreign language teaching, teachers’ communicative competence adds to students’ communicative competence.

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2001) starts from the assumption “that the aim of language teaching is to make learners competent and proficient in the language concerned” (in Notes). In this document, communicative competence consists of linguistic, socio-linguistic and pragmatic competences. Each of these three categories is further defined more specifically in order to take into account all aspects of language knowledge and use, but it is pointed out that the scheme is offered only as a basis for reflection and not as a complete and definite list. Thus, within the linguistic competence, CEFR distinguishes lexical, grammatical, semantic, phonological, orthographic and orthoepic competence. (p.109). Socio-linguistic competence is concerned with the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language. The last component of the communicative competence - pragmatic competence, deals with the user/learner’s knowledge of the principles according to which messages are organized, structured and arranged in order to perform communicative functions and sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata.

The closest definition to our understanding of the term English teachers’ communicative competence is used in the very influential work of the Slovenian

scholar, Urshka Seshek (2007). According to her extensive research about the competences that English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Slovenia need to develop, the English they require is a case of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and that this is often overlooked in EFL teacher training. She uses the term “target language competence” and points out that in many countries it is insufficient. Seshek (2007) provides a holistic, systematic and empirically based description of English for teaching, based on the CEFR, aimed to be used for a better profiled, target language competence of the English teachers.

Methodology

The assumption that language teachers are most self-conscious about their target language proficiency when teacher expertise is in question (Medgyes, 1994) was a starting point for creating data collection instrument related to teachers’ communicative competence. The work of Seshek (2007), mentioned previously, was also very inspirational because of the fact that the educational system in Macedonia followed the Slovenian models as both countries belonged to the same federation and used to have a common higher education system. Slovenia became a member of the European Union (EU) in 2004 while Macedonia aspires to become one and as such it has to undergo many educational reforms. Additionally, English has the same status in the two countries: very widely used foreign language, introduced as an obligatory subject at early age.

The instrument used, (Appendix 1), had been adapted from Seshek (2007) and based on the description of communicative competence in CEFR. It was in a form of a questionnaire that consisted of 8 categories. These categories contained questions for novice teachers referring to the different components of communicative competence: linguistic, socio linguistic and pragmatic. The aim was to collect data about how these competences had been developed, how they were used in the teaching practice, and how they were further upgraded. Results from data collection and analysis were expected to provide valuable information about the aspects of communicative competence that needed more attention in the teacher education programs, as they were based on self-reflection by teachers – practitioners, at the beginning of their teaching career when they needed the greatest support.

The questionnaire was distributed online. 26 novice teachers (from 1 to 5 years of teaching experience) employed at state and private schools in Macedonia and Kosovo responded to it. They were all SEEU alumni from the Master in English language Teaching (ELT) program at SEEU.

Results and discussion

The first category in the questionnaire examined respondents’ perceptions about the aspect of communicative competence considered as the most important for an English teacher to develop during studies. Novice teachers were asked to number the different components according to the level of priority, with 1 being the least important and 4 being the most important. Accuracy (grammatical, lexical and phonological control) and fluency (smoothness and spontaneity of flow) were perceived as being equally important during studies by 50% of respondents. Next in

order of importance was pragmatic competence (functional use of language, e.g. speech acts) with 26.9% and the lowest number of respondents considered sociolinguistic competence (awareness of social norms in communication) as the most important – 11.5%. Novice teachers rated these components almost identically at the time of the survey: fluency was chosen to be the most important feature by 53.8%. Next was accuracy – 46.15% (11); pragmatic competence was chosen by 26.9% and sociolinguistic by 23.07%. With regard to the upgrading of communicative competence, reading professional articles and books was the first choice of novice teachers, followed by face to face and online language courses.

In analogy to these perceptions, they all considered that they needed more training in the development of fluency when asked about the areas of their professional career in which they needed additional support. There was a comment by one teacher that the best way to improve it would be by participation in projects with native speakers of English. They also mentioned the need for methodology training in spite of the fact that it was not stated among the options. So, “organizing the phases of the lesson”, “methods to achieve learner-centeredness”, and “stimulating development of ideas”, were some of the requests for training.

The inquiry about the use of English during teaching compared to the mother tongue showed that English was much more present in class when asking questions (96%). Explaining and eliciting followed as mostly carried out in English and then almost identically used in both languages were giving instructions, giving feedback and managing interaction patterns.

Novice teachers seemed satisfied with the adequacy of English for Teaching Purposes (ETP) training received during studies. However, the answers also indicated a necessity for improvement. 50% said that it had been adequate, 42.3% thought it had been somewhat adequate and 7.6% found it inadequate. When asked to rate their own mastery of the ETP in 6 different categories, according to the CEFR scale (2016), majority felt the most confident in making public announcements to students, followed by stimulating development of ideas, managing plenary and group interaction and addressing audiences. In general, they rated themselves very high in all categories. However, the general view was that none of these areas had been given enough chance to increase in the undergraduate program.

Conclusion

Novice teachers are very conscious and informed about their own needs and lacks. They believe that mastery of the English language, that is, being accurate and fluent in speaking is the most important feature of their communicative competence. This has been identified as the area in which they need more training. The research has also revealed that most of the activities carried out during English classes are in English and this is one more argument why teachers should be able to use the language accurately and fluently. Not many opportunities are offered to teachers to improve their language skills after graduation. The results show that this is mostly achieved through reading professional books and articles and is left to the individual will and initiative rather than being carried out in any organized manner. With regard to the English for Teaching Purposes (ETP) and its different components,

there is greater confidence among novice teachers for using English in teaching compared to their general accuracy and fluency, but on the other hand, they are not quite satisfied with the amount of practice they received in this area during studies.

A general conclusion is that in circumstances where English is taught as a foreign language and especially in the non EU countries, where there are no admission criteria for enrolment at English teaching programs neither at state nor at private universities, more attention and resources should be allocated to the English proficiency development of future teachers during studies. Setting enrolment criteria can also be an alternative, but even in that case some components for developing and practicing ETP should be included in curricula whether as a separate course or as a part of methodology courses. Language and language development is subject to continuous change due to different kinds of influence. It is a live matter that will stop growing if not nurtured constantly. English teachers' professional development should also be focused on proficiency development besides methodological training. We do not want to find ourselves in situations in which our students' English is better than ours. There will always be mixed ability classes, weaker and stronger students, but teachers have to address the needs of all of them. One has to possess and has received something in order to be able to transfer it. English communicative competence should be well developed and the language mastered and only then teaching will be successful.

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Appendix 1. Survey questions for novice teachers with up to 5 years of experience (adapted from Sesek, 2007)

1. Which aspect of communicative competence did you perceive as the most important for an English teacher to develop **when you were a student**? (Please number from 1 to 4 in order of priority)

accuracy (grammatical, lexical and phonological control)	
fluency (smoothness and spontaneity of flow)	
pragmatic competence (functional use of language, e.g. speech acts)	
sociolinguistic competence (awareness of social norms in communication)	

2. Which aspect of English teachers’ communicative competence do you consider the most important **now**? (Please number from 1 to 4 in order of priority)

accuracy (grammatical, lexical and phonological control)	
fluency (smoothness and sponatneity of flow)	
pragmatic competence (functional use of language, e.g. speech acts)	
sociolinguistic competence (awareness of social norms in communication)	

3. Which of these aspects (from questions 1 and 2) do you feel you need more training in? Please specify what type of training.

4. State which types of language activity you carry out in English and/or in your mother tongue (tick the appropriate box/es).

activity	carried out in English	carried out in the mother tongue
giving instructions		
explaining		
eliciting		
asking questions		
giving feedback and correcting		
managing interaction patterns		
other (please specify)		

5. Reflect on the English for teaching purposes (ETP) training (i.e. the classroom English of EFL teachers) you received at the University by ticking the appropriate box.

	adequate	somewhat adequate	inadequate
ETP training			

Explain your choice: _____

6. How do you upgrade your English language skills? Tick the appropriate box(es).

attending face-to-face language courses for teachers	
attending online courses for teachers including webinars	
reading professional articles and books	
networking with colleagues	
other	

If you have ticked *other*, please specify

7.

	1.very confident	2.somewhat confident	3.not confident at all	4.Specify what has contributed to your feeling of confidence or lack of confidence
1.MANAGING PLENARY AND GROUP INTERACTION e.g. organizing a varied and balanced sequence of group, pair and individual work ensuring smooth transitions between the phases of the lesson, etc.				
2. STIMULATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS e.g. effectively guiding critical thinking and further development of ideas in a group; implementing more open-ended questions logically and frequently which will enhance cognitive skills (hypothesizing, predicting, etc.)				
3. READING FOR INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT e.g. understanding in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in the teaching profession, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.				
4. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS e.g. introducing lesson topics, task instructions, activities, change of focus, exam-related announcements; announcing review activities, homework assignments; facilitating in-class discussion				
5. GOAL-ORIENTED CO-OPERATION e.g. developing activities to engage students in arguing on various topics by instructing them to support their ideas with facts				
6.ADDRESSING AUDIENCES e.g. presenting complex topics, ideas, linguistic forms to learners adapting metalanguage to meet their needs.				

8. Which of the following aspects of ETP (based on CEFR 2016) have you had the chance to develop during your undergraduate studies?

		<i>Never</i> 0	<i>Rarely</i> 1	<i>Sometimes</i> 2	Explain your choice
	<p>1. MANAGING PLENARY AND GROUP INTERACTION e.g. organizing a varied and balanced sequence of group, pair and individual work ensuring smooth transitions between the phases of the lesson, intervening diplomatically in order to redirect talk, prevent one person dominating or to confront disruptive behavior.</p>				
	<p>2. STIMULATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDEAS e.g. effectively guiding critical thinking and further development of ideas in a group; implementing more open-ended questions logically and frequently which will enhance cognitive skills (hypothesizing, predicting, etc.)</p>				
	<p>3. READING FOR INFORMATION AND ARGUMENT e.g. understanding in detail a wide range of lengthy, complex texts likely to be encountered in the teaching profession, identifying finer points of detail including attitudes and implied as well as stated opinions.</p>				
	<p>4. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS e.g. introducing lesson topics, task instructions, activities, change of</p>				

	<p>focus, exam-related announcements; announcing review activities, homework assignments; facilitating in-class discussion articulately and confidently, using stress and intonation to convey finer shades of meaning</p>				
	<p>5.GOAL-ORIENTED CO-OPERATION e.g. developing activities to engage students in arguing on various topics by instructing them to support their ideas with facts</p>				



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