Preparing Chinese EFL Preservice Teachers with Digital Competence: A Critical Analysis of Policies and Curriculum

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English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers need to be equipped with digital competence to work in education systems that are increasingly digitalised, and their experience in initial teacher education programs can play an important role in this. To date, research on how initial teacher education programs develop EFL teacher's digital competence remains scarce, especially in the Chinese context. Therefore, this study examines the way that Chinese national policies and university curricula address EFL preservice teachers' digital competence. Drawing on Starkey's (2021) framework, it analyses three national documents and curricula from 15 top-ranked universities on teacher education. The findings reveal a misalignment between required competencies and curriculum offerings. While the importance of generic digital competence and digital teaching competence are recognized, professional digital competence is often overlooked, such as advanced digital pedagogies and ethical practices. The findings underscore the need to redefine digital competence, offering potential solutions to meet the challenges of present-day digital advancement in education.

Keywords: EFL teacher education; pre-service teacher training; digital competence; TPACK

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