In Search for the Pedagogy (Studies) Identity: The Croatian Context

Abstract: Until the 1990s, Croatian pedagogical theory and practice has featured developmental qualities of the so-called ‘Germanic circle pedagogy’. This means that it was a normative and empirical science focused on practical learning about upbringing. However, attempts to constitute pedagogy as a complete science about upbringing were not to be neglected. During the transition following the communist ideology’s collapse and the intensification of globalisation, pedagogy began to ‘Americanise’ terminology. This replaced the terms ‘education’ (Croat. ‘obrazovanje’) and ‘upbringing’ (Croat. ‘odgoj’) with ‘education’ (Croat. ‘edukacija’), while the term ‘educology’ was introduced to represent the science about education. Americanisation is visible through changes to the Croatian pedagogical tradition’s standard terminology, which generated doubts and discrepancies in both content guidelines and application. Regardless of the paradigm war, these and similar theoretical side-tracks do not ensure a sufficiently solid theoretical identity for pedagogy. This status is reflected in today’s study of pedagogy, which was designed according to principles of the Bologna process and the pedagogical profession, which is searching for space for practical action.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Pedagogical identity, History, Transition, The study of pedagogy, The Bologna process

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Introduction – Pedagogy’s Historical Development

The development of pedagogical science and practice needs to be placed in its context of time and space in order for the conditions that yielded its various conceptions and practical solutions to be properly understood. Aside from the search for scientific identity, pedagogy’s historical development is marked by frequent questioning of the relation between pedagogical theory and practice, which influenced various concepts of pedagogy as a scientific discipline. This disparity is not limited to Croatia, but is a common feature of many countries (Carr, Kemmis 2000; König, Zedler 2001; Lenzen 2002), especially the neighbouring ones (Skubic Ermmcn, Živković Vujićić, Spasenović 2015; PROTner, Vidmar 2016).

Its initial ideas, as well as practical solutions to certain issues that can be subsumed under pedagogical discourse, were found among priests who considered pedagogy to be an art of leading human souls towards God (Kujundžić 1996). This definition remained dominant until the time pedagogy was established as a scientific discipline.

During the 19th century, the Germanic culture’s pedagogical circle strongly influenced Croatian pedagogical theory (Batinić, Radeka 2016). This influence was a result of the priests’ and pedagogues’ education in Germany and Austria. They then transferred their experiences from abroad into their work in teacher education institutions, which gave impetus to the development of Croatian pedagogical thought. Along with organisational and content redesign, teacher education institutions later became faculties with pedagogy as an academic discipline (Munjiza 2009; Vrcelj 2007).

Different approaches to defining and implementing pedagogy became visible following the first lectures on pedagogy in 1874–1875 at the University of Zagreb’s Faculty of Theology, along with the Pedagogical Seminar and the Chair of Pedagogy as a theoretical and practical philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy and the Department of Pedagogy’s formation, first in Zagreb, and later in other Croatian cities (more in Previšić, Rosić, Radeka 2002, 2003; Batinić, Radeka 2016). Consequently, various institutions marked by pedagogical thought were opened, such as pedagogical grammar schools, pedagogical academies and faculties, and pedagogical
institutes. Until the 1990s, in Croatia, along with the faculties of philosophy, there were pedagogical faculties developing pedagogy as an academic discipline through graduate studies, post-graduate scientific master studies, and doctoral pedagogy studies. In addition, pedagogy has been taught at teacher education faculties as a part of pre-school and primary education. However, there are no pedagogical faculties in Croatia today, only pedagogy faculty departments at the faculties of humanities and social sciences in Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek, and Split, as well as Zadar’s university department.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Croatian pedagogy aimed to break bonds with the German cultural circle’s theoretical framework, all while attempting different research profiling and opening itself to other theoretically-methodological orientations. However, while acknowledging theoretically-methodological pluralism, such opening is not always suitable for adequately analysing specifically Croatian theoretical and practical issues, as the political and national context needs to be taken into consideration (Spajić-Vrkaš 2013). This further influenced the quest for identity, which had been torn into pieces during globalisation process due to different traditions’ various influences. Upon gaining independence and inclusion into the global processes—that is, during the period of transition—the Anglo-American understanding of pedagogy greatly influenced Croatian pedagogical theory and practice, which resulted in creating and partially accepting educology as education’s key science (Pastuović 1999). This also resulted in the introduction of terminology that significantly crippled (Croatian) pedagogical theory and practice. These issues will be dealt with in the second section of this paper.

In the same vein, various influences are visible in pedagogical studies’ organisation. Nowadays, the study of pedagogy is organised and structured according to the European standards of the Bologna process. Under-graduate and graduate studies are organised into five year (three plus two) durations. This change respects the principles of one semester subjects and the competency approach, which has significantly segmented and articulated the pedagogues’ profile, reducing it to mostly skill development. These are followed by the post-graduate doctoral studies of pedagogy conducted in Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek, and Zadar. The influence of the Bologna process, as well as its learning outcomes and competency agenda, have led to re-questioning pedagogical identity and examining the relations between university level theoretical and practical pedagogue education (Skubic Ermenc, Živković Vujisić, Spasenović 2015).

### Searching for the Pedagogy’s Identity – The Transitional Context

During the communist ideology’s dominance, pedagogy, as well as other social and humanistic sciences, were considered close to the ruling ideology (Lavrnja

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1 In Croatia, teacher education faculties were and remain independent faculties focused on educating preschool and primary school teachers.

2 Faculty department is an entity within the faculty, while the University Department represents an independent organisation unit of the university.
forming a democratic society without silencing, wherein you can critically question yourself and others and where social injustices are minimal (Gur-Ze’ev 1998). In the 1990s, while cleansing terminology in an attempt to de-ideologise pedagogy, Anglo-American terminology and concepts were introduced and pedagogy was Americanised, replacing one (social-communist) doctrine with the other.

Bearing the burden of theoretical underdevelopment and a national lack of awareness (Previšić 2013), pedagogy found itself at the crossroads between German (continental European) tradition and Anglo-American global invasion of ‘educational’ disciplines and terminology. In order to open the space for other scientific paradigms, as well as to decrease the German tradition’s influence marking both the field of pedagogy in Balkan countries (Spasenović, Živković Vujisić, Skubic Ermenc, 2012) and Croatian pedagogy (Batinić, Radeka 2016), new terms were introduced into the existing pedagogic scientific terminology, though they have not been well contextualised in the Croatian context. However, despite these terms not being perfectly clear or unambiguously defined in their countries of origin, they have acclimatised relatively quickly into Croatian theory and practice.

‘Curriculum’ (Cro. ‘kurikulum’; ‘kurikul’) was one term that gained a place and importance during the transitional terminology’s invasion (Smajić & Vodopija 2008). Croatian pedagogues have not discussed the consequences of its implementation in the Croatian educational system (Vujčić 2013), but it was believed that its acceptance would contribute to education’s democratisation and modernisation, as curriculum was considered a sophisticated plan and programme (Mijatović 1996). There are over 120 curriculum definitions in the relevant literature from the 1990s, which supports the idea that curriculum is still not defined as a realistic, palpable, and real entity (Oliva 2005). This content diversity is reflected among Croatian researchers as well (Bašić 2000; Bognar, Matijević 2005; Cindrić, Miljković, Strugar 2010; Jelavić 2003; Jurić 2004; Lavrnja 1998; Mijatović 1996, 1999; Mijatović, Previšić, Žužul 2000; Pastuović 1999; Previšić (ed.) 2007). They consider curriculum to entail implicit determinants guiding upbringing and the educational process towards goal-oriented tasks and content. However, they also view it as an organisational form, working mode, and performance assessment procedure. Curriculum further implies a precise planning system for upbringing and education, as well making a schedule based on a planned time of work, overall student and teacher activities, detailed goals, content, and method plans. It also includes a social-pedagogical learning process in an educational institution. Despite being used for quite some time, it appears to be causing more disagreement than providing a common theoretical and practical framework. However, it can be said that there is a relative consensus on what curriculum entails, namely: intention (why), content (what), time (when), place (where), method (how), and participants (who). Overall, curriculum defines educational outcomes and content, their learning chronology, the amount of time utilised, teaching institutions’ characteristics, and learner experiences, all with a constant emphasis on a variety of subtleties of student-student and student-teacher relations. Despite content diversities and a lack of consensus on curriculum, it has become a conceptual framework for reforms and innovations in the Republic of
Croatian.\textsuperscript{5} Curriculum implies vision, values, goals, competencies, and learning outcomes, as well as the upbringing and education system’s structure, the principles of the educational process’s organisation, and the principles of learning, teaching, and evaluation. In this way, a part of curriculum’s subtle relations are lost, being greatly reduced to palpability and quantifiability.

In Croatian pedagogical theory and practice, there is a dominant American conception of curriculum aimed at leadership, guidance, and school system control, as well as at creating a national and institutional curriculum that is measurable by educational standards and learning outcomes (Palekčić, 2007; Bašić, 2007). Even though curriculum provides a pliant theoretical framework for analysing multiple transparent and hidden educational phenomena, both in Croatia and beyond, curriculum ends up reduced to a so-called ‘behavioural approach’ encouraged by an audit culture.

Adopting scientific terminology from various milieus does not necessarily—and, in fact, did not—influence de-ideologisation, which it was intended to do. De-ideologisation of pedagogy and its practices has not been achieved, nor is it attainable in practice because, despite the curriculum’s content variety, similar to the term used before it—teaching plan and programme—it is the result of an agreement and contract between the country and educational policy stakeholders determining relevant or desirable educational experiences that students need during specific periods of their lives (Cantoni, Yuchtman 2013). Educational theorists recognise an element of curriculum that is part of the ideological and political struggles immanent to every society, which gives education purpose according to criteria set by the ruling (political) elite (Posner 2004). Education experience consists of politicians’ wishes, and it focuses on test results. Joining curriculum with learning outcomes and students’ standardised test performance, politicians have gained control over what needs to be learned, and in the process, over curriculum itself. A curriculum that is guided by tests decreases the value of teachers as practitioners and intellectuals, repositioning them into a ‘technician in the service of the country’. Ultimately, political socialisation replaces education and upbringing (Pinar 2004, p. 2). This political dimension, which is not solely a Croatian phenomenon, manifests through the elite (political) power determining valid knowledge (Bernstein 1999). The theoretical contribution of the Americanisation of Croatia’s curriculum-related theoretical space is in acknowledging different pedagogic paradigms, yielding problems that had not been previously discussed, such as minority groups. Acknowledging the existence of a hidden curriculum switched attention to the existence of verbal and non-verbal messages built into education (and classroom) practices, as well as existing within the official curriculum content, which might be discriminating against the Roma, Serbs, women, people with different sexual orientation, and others.

There are Croatian researchers who intend to keep pedagogy’s identity understood as a unique science about education and upbringing; however, there is a significant number of those who accept the pedagogy’s Americanisation. This Americanisation of (Croatian) pedagogy is visible in the use of the word ‘education’

V iskanju identitete (študija) pedagogike – hrvaški kontekst/
In Search for the Pedagogy (Studies) Identity: The Croatian Context

(Cro. ‘edukacija’)⁶, as it aims to include ‘education’ and ‘upbringing’ and to replace ‘pedagogy’ with ‘educology’ (Pastuović 1996, 1999; Perica 2013; Vujčić 2013). However, these alterations are not adequate, as certain terms lose their original cultural meaning in translation. Some Croatian researchers, such as Pastuović (1996; 1999), are more oriented towards Anglo-Saxon literature and terminology, while neglecting and misunderstanding German concepts and pedagogical thoughts despite them being closer to the domestic (Croatian) spiritual space (Palekčić 2015). The question of applying different terms is not only lexical in nature, it also interferes with pedagogy’s conception and theoretical-methodological foundations.

In Anglo-American discourse, the term ‘pedagogy’ neglects a wider understanding of the term ‘education’, significantly reducing pedagogy as a science about education and upbringing. Comparing the Anglo-American discourse’s understanding of the term ‘pedagogy’ with the centuries-long understanding present in continental Europe (the German tradition), we can observe a kind of a pedagogical paradox. In the Anglo-American area, the term ‘education’ implies a narrower understanding of the Croatian term ‘obrazovanje’ (Eng. ‘education’), often neglecting ‘upbringing’ (a word that is close in content to the Croatian word ‘odgoj’). These terminological and content ambiguities demonstrate the specificity involved in understanding education, upbringing, and pedagogy in countries that have not dominantly accepted the Anglo-Saxon tradition. In the United Kingdom, for example, ‘pedagogy’ is not often used unless in the context of classroom and formal education (Petrie et al. 2009). In other words, in pedagogy, education and upbringing are intertwined; pedagogy is viewed as a science about children’s upbringing and education in the widest sense (Murphy 1996; Petrie et al. 2009). We need to bear in mind that education and upbringing is different from the organisation of educational activities (schooling). By contrast, other sciences have the status of auxiliary sciences because they investigate only certain aspects of education and upbringing. Similarly, in French and other Latin-based languages (such as Italian and Spanish), the term ‘l’éducation’ implies wider meaning and can be equated with the term ‘pedagogy’, which is used in German and Nordic countries.

The use of the term ‘pedagogy’ in continental Europe and Croatia implies a more complete approach to working with children, by which a child is seen as a social being connected with others, all while gaining and constituting their own characteristic experiences and knowledge (Hamilton 1999; Petrie et al. 2009). Content and conceptual distinguishing resulted in ‘educational science(s)’ not being equivalent to the term ‘pedagogy’ in the same way that ‘education’ is not equivalent to the Croatian word ‘obrazovanje’ in the widest sense of that word. The word ‘education’ is comprised of two Latin roots; ‘educare’, meaning train, capacitate, shape, and mould; and ‘educere’, which means to take the energy or knowledge from the inside out (Bass, Good 2004). Even though these meaning differ, they are both represented in the word ‘education’. Therefore, there is an etymological foundation for multiple

⁶ When ‘education’ (Cro. ‘edukacija’) is replaced with one Croatian word, the advantage in public, law, and academia is given to ‘education’ (Cro. ‘obrazovanje’), not ‘upbringing’ (Cro. ‘odgoj’). ‘Education’ is considered an umbrella term including both ‘education’ and ‘upbringing’, and specific usage of ‘upbringing’ is considered unnecessary (Pastuović 2010, p. 8).
Due to its status, discussions about the need to de-ideologise pedagogy and all pedagogical artefacts\(^3\) were opened up following Croatia’s independence. After the collapse of communism, transitional changes were implemented in Croatia. However, these changes were not radical, since in formulating upbringing’s aim, traditional phrases like ‘versatile personality’ education and upbringing were replaced by new ones orienting the aim of education and upbringing towards developing a democratic personality that will responsibly cooperate in the society’s democratic development (Vrcelj 2005).

Considering the definition and understanding of pedagogy as a discipline that supports the leading ideology (Lavrnja 1996; Pravišić 2013), marginalisation and depreciation of pedagogy (and pedagogues) is visible in times that radically differ from the period of transition, such as today. Namely, pedagogues participate minimally in developing the Republic of Croatia’s strategic and operational documents, even though other approaches are ‘only weak surrogates of a humanistic pedagogy which should by re-conceptualisation return to pedagogy as original science about upbringing as soon as possible’ (Previšić 2013, p. 7). Amalgamation of pedagogy with (past) ideology is the reason for the emphasised need of its de-ideologisation, as sciences in transitional countries, especially social sciences, are exposed to subtle control by the political power centres (Mušanović 1996). The de-ideologisation began by content ‘cleansing’, and during the initial transitional period, despite a range of theoretical settings favouring the subject of upbringing and education, Marxist pedagogy was prescribed, which set the foundations for emancipation pedagogy.\(^4\)

The question of de-ideologisation in every society-related science opens the way for axiological dimension questions, while the issue is further complicated by science’s epistemological definitions not being clearly set. If these definitions are missing, there are options to overcome the ideologisation through new ideologisation, which comes from revitalising old ideologies and introducing new ones (Lavrnja 1996). However, an important question arises as to whether sciences about socially-constructed subjects should and can be de-ideologised (and valued neutrally)? As put by Giroux, ‘In order to adequately respond to challenges, it is crucial to recognise that pedagogy is less connected to the language of technology and methodology and more with the issues of politics and power. Pedagogy is a moral and political practice that is always implied within the relations of power and it needs to be understood as cultural politics offering a particular version and vision of civil life, the future and the ways we could construct the representations of ourselves, the others, and our physical and social environment’ (Giroux 2004, in Pavlić 2013, p. 78-79). Its scientific identity can be constructed by criticising (educational) ideology and focusing on better (educational) practices (McLaren 1995). The aim of education for (critical) pedagogy is social transformation and

\(^3\) The term ‘artefact’ was first used by Sir Julian Huxley (1964, in Tasiopoulou, Gras-Velázquez 2012), and it refers to every object or process that originated as a result of a human activity, and something that characterises a certain institution, individual, or period. It is used in the same manner in pedagogy.

\(^4\) Even though prescribing was not explicit, the contents of the Study of Pedagogy did not include Marxist or critical pedagogues. Marxism was abolished in secondary schools at the beginning period of transition.
discussions on ‘education’, as this term determines various conceptions (at least two). The first, ‘educare’, refers to the preservation and transfer of knowledge, as well as modelling young people according to the socially acceptable ‘mould’ of their parents, institutions, and those who are considered responsible, with the main assignment being reproducing knowledge and preparing good workers (Bass, Good 2004). Conversely, ‘educere’ defines ‘education’ as preparing the new generation for the upcoming changes, as well as finding solutions for problems that are still unknown; therefore, it emphasises the relevance of questioning, thinking, and creating. However, it is often assumed that institutions are in charge of and suitable for ‘educare’, which is why ‘education’ is reduced to ‘school education’, which is considered to be the system for preparing ‘obedient citizens and good workers’ (Parsons 1959, p. 298-304).

The Anglo-American scientific tradition is not familiar with pedagogy7 as a unique science that critically deliberates on education and upbringing’s theory and practice (Mušanović 1996). Rather, it determines pedagogy to be a science of teaching (Hamilton 1999), which is close to ‘didactics’ in Croatian. The term ‘didactics’ is not used in Anglo-American discourse because it is considered to have negative values, as it denotes formalistic educational practices comprised of a combination of ‘dogma’ and ‘stultification’ (Hamilton, Gudmundsdottir 1994, p. 135), which is characteristic of didactical (Church) inheritance from the 17th century. Due to such negative connotations, the term ‘didactics’ is aspired to be altered with the concept of ‘curriculum studies’, and it is in this context that the relevant question posed is: ‘What should students know?’ instead of ‘What should students become?’.

It is in this perspective that upbringing and education are understood as visions of the future and the development of an individual (Murphy 1996; Hamilton 1999). Prevalence of the question ‘what should students know’ reduces the understanding of a student as a whole personality and implies orientation towards learning outcomes/competencies and teaching methods. However, education, schooling, and teaching are much more than methods and recipes for successful teaching, which is best illustrated by McLaren’s statement that ‘pedagogy must be distinguished from teaching’, or that ‘pedagogy (points to) integration in practice, especially integration of content and curriculum design, teaching strategies and techniques, methods, evaluation and purpose. All of the aspects of education and upbringing in practice are joined together in the reality of what is actually occurring in the classroom. These aspects enable insights into how a teacher’s work within the institutional context specifies a certain version of what kind of knowledge is of the highest value, what does it mean to know something and how we could constitute a perception of ourselves and the others, as well as our physical and social environ-

7 Many Croatian pedagogues determine pedagogy to be a ‘hybrid science, or as descriptive-normative (or normative-empirical) science of upbringing’ (Vujčić 2013, p. 51). Vukasović (1990) claims that pedagogy is the only science about upbringing in all its shapes and manifestations. Through this, he does not negate the need for various research on upbringing from different perspectives, but he does negate the thesis that upbringing is a joint focus of research from different scientific disciplines. He returns pedagogy to Herbart’s understanding of it being a ‘descriptive-normative science because it is constantly seeking solutions that would enable accomplishing better results and more advanced upbringing’ (Vukasnović 1990, p. 19).
ment’ (McLaren 1998, p. 165). However, a growing demand for re-defining pedagogy has been given various meanings in different cultures, namely, those consisting of implicit assumptions about teaching and education and those given to the process of education (Murphy 1996).

The presently common inconsistency in the terms ‘upbringing’ (Cro. ‘odgoj’), ‘education’ (Cro. ‘obrazovanje’), and ‘education’ (Cro. ‘edukacija’) is not just a lexical question. This is visible in the establishment of the term ‘educology’\(^8\) in the Croatian scientific pedagogic field. According to Pastuović (1999), the reasons for introducing educology can be found in the need to ‘systematize knowledge about education that is a part of different theories or different educational sciences’ (Pastuović 1999, p. 26), with educology understood as an integrative science about the system of lifelong learning with an emphasis on empirically scientific orientation. As he further explains, ‘Empirically integrative educology by definition integrates the perceptions of all empirical educational sciences, and these explore education/upbringing as both dependent and independent variables, which is what educology should do if it aims at integrating them’ (Pastuović 1999, p. 104).

The quantitative approach—or over-quantification and infatuation with statistics—win in the ‘paradigm war’, considering educology’s emphasis on empirical orientation (Previšić 2013). Pedagogy’s theoretical-methodological status in Croatia today is marked by positivism and the aspiration for pedagogical phenomena quantification, which has led to a complete separation of pedagogical theory and practice (Bognar 2007). Imitating natural sciences’ methods has been emphasised in pedagogy, as these are considered to be both more scientific and the golden standards of research (Smith, Keiner 2015). Empirical research in pedagogy continues to create a variety of standards that, in specific pedagogical concepts and approaches, would function as general laws in order to operationalise education and upbringing as a variable that is independent from national and cultural tradition. It is considered that, by creating standards, pedagogy will gain research momentum through gaining support in terms of international comparisons of specific pedagogical issues (of a certain country). In such an approach, as indicated in the spiritual-scientific pedagogy, a significant difference is neglected, specifically, the difference between the realities explored by natural sciences and those explored by social and humanistic sciences. In the case of natural sciences, the primary concern is establishing the cause and effect relations, while social sciences focus on comprehension; however, these approaches do not exclude one another in the discourse of pedagogical phenomena (Bognar 2012).

The crisis in science seems legitimate and, accordingly, crises produce new sciences and scientific paradigms (Kuhn 2013). There is currently a need for new pedagogies; the German conception is in crisis in Croatia (Vujčić 2013), which can

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\(^8\) Pastuović founds educology on Brezinka’s understanding of education as a relationship of ‘means-ends’. However, as opposed to Brezinka, who treats education as an independent variable, Pastuović claims that it should be treated as both an independent and a dependent variable, with educology investigating education holistically or as a whole. According to this, the educological approach aims to repress pedagogy from science about education and upbringing in order to underestimate ‘practical’ (descriptively-normative) knowledge about education (Vujčić 2013).
be proved by various attempts to redefine it and to introduce normative pedagogy, as well as empirical, practical, critical, and holistic science about upbringing and education. The existing approaches have not yielded a terminological and conceptual consensus. Such conceptual juggling—that is, theoretical and methodological wanderings of pedagogy—as well as a lack of plausibility, are the result of the distance between pedagogy and its subject, in addition to the lack of a sufficient theoretical foundation for adequate theoretical reflection about education and upbringing. Despite pedagogy’s longevity, it is still burdened with various questions, such as: Is it necessary to differentiate the problems in pedagogy from those in anthropology, sociology of education, economy of education, philosophy of education, and other sciences?; In other words, is it possible to completely, clearly, and unambiguously explore the subject of pedagogy solely from the aspect of pedagogy, or is an interdisciplinary approach desirable since pedagogy demonstrates a deep and complex connection with the social environment, which is the research subject of other sciences?

Overcoming this crisis, as well as making pedagogy scientific, has been attempted by separating pedagogy from other disciplines’ terms and theories, relying instead on the tradition of pedagogical thought from the German speaking area, which is the theoretical and historical foundation of Croatian pedagogy (Palekčić 2015). Pedagogy’s contemporary status as a science is marked by a lack of clear pedagogical scientific perspective (differentia specifica) towards other sciences related to a common field of research—education and upbringing—or by adopting scientific viewpoints, theories, models, and terms from other disciplines. The existence of a categorical, conceptual, and theoretical approach to a research subject is considered relevant; there must be a conceptual, categorical system before questioning the empirical traits of what this system implies. From the pedagogical perspective, this means that the idea of upbringing precedes the research on upbringing (Palekčić 2015).

The aforementioned problems, as well as others, point to the fact that pedagogy is (still) in search of identity. What’s more, this search becomes more difficult the more globalisation processes are emphasised, which is reflected not only in the analysis of pedagogical practices, but also in pedagogy’s very essence and (self-) understanding. The domination of theoretical and methodological research from other sciences and research fields directs attention at (re)defining pedagogy’s ‘methodological identity’. However, the necessity of connecting with other sciences points to pedagogy’s complexities, which are especially shown in contemporary conditions that have yielded various theoretical and ideological orientations (different feminist theories, post-structural and post-modern theories, etc.). From the methodological point-of-view, there is a question that remains open: What are the new scientifically relevant issues’ implications for pedagogy and its methodology? Perhaps it is possible to overcome the crisis in epistemological relativism, which opens a wide array of educational and social phenomena exploration from the pedagogical perspective.
The Study of Pedagogy – From the Perspective of the Bologna Process

A radical separation of theory and practice can be observed when referring to today’s status of pedagogy, as well as its influence on multiple pedagogical and educational reforms, and this causes changes in practices that are politically imposed, not theory-based (Croatian National Educational Standard (CNES), the Bologna process, civic and health education, etc.). The reason for this is the aforementioned burden that pedagogy bears from the past times. Analysing pedagogy’s influence on the reform of university level education and the Bologna process, we witness pedagogical, didactical, and methodical issues being left on the process’s margins, indicating pedagogy’s marginalised status in the creation of educational politics. Moreover, the Bologna process (regimentation and administration) barely uses pedagogical terminology, so we can justifiably question the process’s quality, since pedagogical questions were not pedagogically analysed. On the contrary, elements from other fields of research, especially economy, have been implemented in the analysis. The Bologna process’s introduction marked the ‘era of globalisation of higher education, where knowledge is primarily considered to be a market good, and the market rules regulate the approach to that knowledge in accordance with the neoliberal logic that disintegrates centuries-long foundations of the European studies’ (Kurelić 2011, p. 173).

Even though the process’s aim was to satisfy the market rules, the organisation of studies that do not have a stronghold in Croatian economy was not critically analysed. In the same manner, terms like ‘bachelor’—an ingenious brainchild that ‘accidentally’ has a militaristic terminology overtone—were not problematised. Similarly, the theory and practice of the so-called ‘learning outcomes and competencies’ are focused on training a usable workforce that would best satisfy the capitalist economy in precarious conditions (Vrcelj, Mušanović 2013). In line with this, defining learning outcomes for potential employers implies desirable competencies coming from Taylorism and the (industrial) efficiency ‘cult’ (Razdevšek-Pučko 2005). In addition, defining learning outcomes alongside precise activities and their accompanying numerical values represents a contract where an institution holds a monopole in learning outcomes. It is difficult to determine learning outcome achievement, as such has been affected to at least a degree by learning outside of the institution. In this case, one important fact should not be neglected, namely, that learning is always an individual process. Learning surpasses education because the latter is an institutionalised group of activities, roles, and organisations by which a certain group or society strives to guide the learning of some or all members towards acceptable goals.

Pedagogy studies were also created under such conditions, and they were burdened with a lack of relatively stable theoretical and methodological support in pedagogy. Therefore, it can be claimed that the marginalisation of pedagogy as a science has been reflected in the study of pedagogy and pedagogues.

Pedagogy’s marginalisation is visible in pedagogues’ lack of recognition as experts (especially outside of the school system), with creators of educational politics turning to non-experts and non-pedagogues to deal with pedagogical issues. The
reasons for this can be found in the ambiguities in pedagogues’ main responsibilities and activities, as well as their widely profiled education, which implies a wide area of expertise and is the reason for pedagogues being referred to as general practice experts (Jurić 2004). This broad understanding of their expertise is considered a weakness in the study of pedagogy, where students are being educated to become a ‘versatile’ expert that is trained in everything but an expert in nothing. Even though certain responsibilities and activities for pedagogues are based on the concept of developmental pedagogical activity (Ledić, Staničić, Turk 2013), in practice, due to the lack of a team of expert associates, pedagogues are assigned jobs that they are not experts in (e.g. psychology, special education, etc.), and they are often valued as a universal cleanser, which significantly disrupts the profession’s reputation. Simultaneously, on the other hand, many pedagogy-related activities are performed by other people, and if really necessary, they can be performed by pedagogues. This is further supported by the fact that, in secondary schools, pedagogues’ responsibilities and activities can be carried out by a person with five-years of experience working in educational institutions. The lack of a professional association of pedagogues, as well as very weak professional solidarity among pedagogues, practitioners, and researchers, also contributes to pedagogy’s current status.

Disunity of pedagogy is visible in the curricula of pedagogy studies. A study of pedagogy was carried out in five universities in the Republic of Croatia (Zagreb, Rijeka, Žadar, Osijek, and Split) that lack curricula coherence regarding the core curriculum subjects of the study’s under-graduate and graduate levels. The approach based on pedagogical disciplines in accordance with the national classification for scientific fields, areas, and branches, was used as the basis for courses within pedagogy studies before the transition to and implementation of the Bologna process. This process has been mostly replaced by the combination of thematically and problem-based courses, especially in higher levels of university studies. Pedagogical discipline fragmentation is visible in the curricula, with subject names that are more adequate for discussion topics in volunteer and non-governmental organisations than serious university contexts. The result is that ‘mini pedagogies…which resemble pseudo-science’ are omnipresent in pedagogy studies. As Previšić explained, ‘With their ephemerality, they are definitely not capable of directing education and upbringing in the direction of wider globally-scientific topics, cultural movements and public expectations’ (Previšić 2013, p. 15).

Aside from difficulties in defining the core curriculum for the study of pedagogy in Croatia, it is also difficult to establish what pedagogues qualify for upon completing under-graduate and/or graduate levels of study. Pedagogy and pedagogues are further degraded by the study’s artificial separation into under-graduate and graduate levels, as well as by ignoring an integrated study of pedagogy, which is the result of the Bologna reform. Even 10 years after the Bologna process’s introduc-

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10 Regulations on scientific and artistic areas, fields, and branches (Official Gazette 118/09, 82/12, and 32/13) http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2009_09_118_2929.html.
tion, with regard to the market requirements, it is still not clear what pedagogues’ work options are after completing under-graduate levels of study.

There is a visible difference in one-subject and two-subject courses of pedagogy study at under-graduate and graduate levels (only departments of pedagogy in Rijeka and Zagreb have one-subject courses of study). Two-subject courses of study should not be rejected or considered a poor variant; however, based on the unpublished results of internal student evaluation and experiences in working with students at Rijeka’s Department of Pedagogy, it has been observed that those students often choose pedagogy as their minor study because they consider the contents of that study to be easier.

Pedagogy’s unattractiveness is apparent in the teaching studies as well, with students being identified as experts in their field, not as teachers with the necessary pedagogical competencies. Even though teaching is not most students’ first choice, it has been noticed that a large number of students, especially in humanistic and social sciences, believe that they will not be working in school, instead planning to work in non-teaching professions (though most of them end up working in schools after all). In their academic discipline, they consider education (their subject) to be the most relevant, as opposed to pedagogical and psychological content (Vizek Vidović 2005). Moreover, a pedagogical group of subjects for future teachers is carried out in different institutions (non-teaching studies) that lack personnel conditions for conducting such activities, which further degrades pedagogy.

The (self-)understanding of pedagogy, as well as the study of pedagogy and pedagogues, is encouraged by discussions (within some departments of pedagogy) about the Department of Pedagogy’s name in English. For this purpose, as well as for better recognisability of the pedagogy department and pedagogy as a research field at an international Anglo-American level, the department in Rijeka, for example, uses the term ‘education’ instead of ‘pedagogy’ in its translation, which reduces pedagogy’s scientific dimension and emphasises its practical dimension.

**Conclusion**

In Croatia, the pedagogy’s developmental path as science and practice has long been influenced by the German tradition. The recent period of transition has begun an understanding of different theoretical and methodological approaches with Anglo-American model characteristics. While searching for identity, Croatian pedagogy has become more Americanised, and it has become defined as a practical discipline within the field of educology. The Americanisation attempts are visible in the acceptance of terms that are not contextualised and that have significantly impoverished pedagogy’s identity as a science. These approaches have not yielded a terminological consensus, but they have contributed to pedagogy’s estrangement from its subject and the lack of a single theoretical foundation that would be adequate for theoretical thinking about the phenomena in upbringing and education.

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Such theoretical wanderings are reflected in today’s study of pedagogy according to the Bologna process, as well as pedagogues’ inadequately valued status as widely profiled experts on upbringing and education.

Some of the requirements for creating and repositioning a stronger pedagogical identity—which would remove the service science stigma—are the critical reflection of social conditions, critical research, and changing educational practice. A critical approach would affirm the type of pedagogy that can change the social values of upbringing and education, educational practice, and educational policy under the assumption that human beings should act in the outside world because of its changes, but also for the purpose of changing its nature. In addition, this approach can contribute to the professionalisation of pedagogues.

References


