Global Collaboration for the Emerging English Foreign Language Teacher Competence Development

Globalinis bendradarbiavimas tobulinant pradedančių anglių kalbos, kaip užsienio kalbos, mokytojų kompetencijas

Inta RATNIECE, Diāna LIEPA, Aija DUDKINA
Riga Teacher Training and Education Management Academy
Rīga, Imantas 7. Līnija
LV- 1083, Latvia

Summary

European higher education by global collaboration should encourage researching and sharing practice for professional competence development in teacher education thus making a vital contribution in realising a Europe of knowledge that is highly creative, innovative and above all equity by intergenerational solidarity focused on. The emerging English as a foreign language teachers develop their professional competence better if they participate in global collaboration by informal studies involving global teaching/learning issues, which promote their professional competence thanks to Millennium Goals’ researching. Materials and methods: analysis of theoretical sources. Analysis of data change dynamics was performed and an assessment and generalization of results was conducted by using statistical methods, based on a data correlation study and with the help of the software for quantitative mathematical statistics SPSS 17.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Results: global learning discussed in master classes, lectures, case studies in schools, local community of the Project Intensive Programme host country, text books for learning English compared. Conclusions: global collaboration by intergenerational solidarity brings valuable knowledge needed for professional competence development on teaching/learning due to inclusion of global learning.

Keywords: global collaboration, professional competence development, global learning.

Santrauka

Introduction

“In the decade up to 2020 European higher education has a vital contribution to make in realising a Europe of knowledge that is highly creative and innovative... Europe can only succeed in this endeavour if it maximises the talents and capacities of all its citizens and fully engages in lifelong learning as well as in widening participation in higher education” (Ministers responsible for Higher Education in the countries participating in the Bologna Process, Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, April 2009).

Globalization has powerful economic, political, cultural and social dimensions. How to connect it with sustainable development? Global and also local connections in contemporary higher education involve the diffusion of ideas, practices and technologies. Already in 1990 Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1990, 64) has described globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. This involves a change in the way we understand global and experience localness. As well as offering opportunity it brings along considerable risks linked, for example, to innovative educational and technological changes. Global and local changes are swirled into higher education, namely, teacher education as well.

European higher education by global collaboration should encourage researching and sharing practice for professional competence development in teacher education thus making a vital contribution in realising a Europe of knowledge that is highly creative, innovative and above all equity by intergenerational solidarities. Already in 1990 Anthony Giddens (Giddens, 1990, 64) has described globalization as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”. This involves a change in the way we understand global and experience localness. As well as offering opportunity it brings along considerable risks linked, for example, to innovative educational and technological changes. Global and local changes are swirled into higher education, namely, teacher education as well.

The aim of the research is to analyze competence development by informal studies inclusion into the formal studies of the emerging English as a foreign language teacher. To help both the emerging English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and their teacher trainers develop competences more professionally if they participate in global collaboration projects involving global teaching/learning issues, which develop their socio-professional competence through links to Millennium Goals’ researching.

Materials and methods

Participation in the Erasmus project EquiTiFoLa with the three consecutive Intensive programmes (IP) EquiTiFoLa, CiTiFoLa and SoliTiFoLa by twelve higher education teacher training institutions on ESD and active citizenship has promoted both formal and non-formal education. Global learning/teaching has been discussed in master classes, workshops, case studies, where twelve text books for learning English have been compared.

We have witnessed, there is a new interest in the concept of non-formal education for sustainability. Even if it comes from a very different arena - Western post-industrial societies, and from a very different source - the discourse of lifelong learning/education.
for sustainability. When one constructs education as a unitary activity which exists throughout life, then it becomes important to find new ways of breaking it into manageable units for handling the concept. The former divisions into primary, secondary and higher are precisely what lifelong learning/education wants to get rid of. Lifelong learning/education sees learning as taking place not simply in schools and colleges but throughout the whole of life, in many different locations and times enhancing sustainability both at the local and the global range. In order to embrace the totality of all forms of education under the rubric of lifelong education bringing forth sustainability, the discourse of lifelong learning by collaboration and cooperation speaks of education “formal and non-formal” (sometimes with “informal” education or learning thrown in as well). Since lifelong learning/education for sustainable development has itself been co-opted by the states to two main aims, helping economic growth and promoting active citizenship, then the interest of the state and other agencies in formal and non-formal education is widely researched in the third millennium, for instance, by Field and Leicester, 2000; Burbules&Torres, 2000; Castells, 2001; Aspin, Chapman, Hatton, and Sawano, 2001; Smith, 2002; Rogers, 2004; Tiļļa, 2005; Rauhvargers&Dementjeva, 2006; Špona, 2006; Liepa&Ratnice, 2011, and many more.

In 2004 Rogers calls the researchers to make sure not fall into the problems created by classic studies. Rogers maintains that they are really speaking about „informal learning”, not “informal education”. Like everybody else, they define “education” as planned and purposeful learning; but they call “informal education” all that learning that goes on outside of any planned learning situation - such as cultural events. He draws a distinction between education and learning and extends the “continuum in this way: informal learning being that entire incidental learning, unstructured, unpurposeful but the most extensive and most important part of all the learning that all of us do everyday of our lives” (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Relationships among formal, non-formal, participatory education and informal learning (Developed by Ratniece from Rogers, 2004)

These are not, of course, categories. The boundaries between each of these ‘sectors’ are very fuzzy indeed. But the distinctions are very real. Learning is the keystone. It is the original matter out of which all education is created. Somewhere along the learning continuum, we come to purposeful and assisted learning for sustainability /education in its widest sense/ (Smith, 2002; Rogers, 2004; Hopkins&McKeown, 2002; Liepa&Ratniece, 2011). When we control this and individualise it, learn what we want for as long as we want and stop when we want, we are engaging in informal education. When we step into a pre-existing Education for Sustainable development learning programme but mould it to our own sustainability circumstances, we are engaged in non-formal education for sustainability. When we surrender our autonomy and join a programme for sustainability and accept its externally imposed discipline, we are immersed in formal education for sustainability.

Thus, it can be either local or global or both - „bringing the global dimension into development education is about investing in people here in the European Union – children and adults alike – who have invested in us so that, in return, we can assist them in becoming truly global citizens in a globalized world. And in turn, through their actions and engagement, we will be investing further in our fellow human beings in the developing world still striving to pull themselves out of poverty” (Piebalgs at the Hearing on Development education, European Parliament, Brussels, 2011). Development education, social constructivism and human pedagogy perceive each learner as a unique individual with unique needs and backgrounds. The learner is also seen as complex and multidimensional (UNESCO, 1972; Inman, Buck, 1995, EU Memo, 2000; Fox, 2001; Hopkins&McKeown, 2002; Schelhaas, 2003, McEvoy, Hayton, Wrnck, Mumford, Hanks, Blaha, 2005; Špona, 2006; Oebel, 2009; Wells, 2010; Liepa & Ratnice, 2011). In common the socio-cultural approach both in contemporary pedagogy and in psychology argues that we should focus not only on agent but also on mediational means when we analyze human action and development. In this approach, mediational means includes not only technical tools but also psychological tools, such as language. We should focus on the style of mediational
means when we discuss the building of communication between teacher trainers and emerging teachers from the perspective of socio-cultural approach in psychology as well as in pedagogical psychology. Development education encourages pursuing the global dimension incorporating the "key concepts of global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development and values and perceptions. It explores the interconnections between the local and the global (UNESCO, 1972; Hopkins & McKenna, 2002; Bartram, 2005; Wells, 2010). It builds knowledge and understanding, as well as developing skills, attitudes, competencies and leads to increased competence.

"Competence is an individual combination of abilities and experience based on the opportunities of gaining experience. In terms of a process it is progressing continuously, since the development of abilities is a lifelong process, experience is being enriched, and new opportunities of getting experience keep arising. Competence as a result manifests itself in the level of the quality of an activity in a particular situation." (Tiļļa, 2005:39). The conceptual definition of the foreign language contents comprises the concept of competence, which was devised in the workshop of Flemish Community in 2001 and defined within the framework of OECD DeSeCo project: Competence: integrates knowledge, awareness, skills and attitudes, may develop in diverse situations: formal, informal, deliberate, unintentional, facilitates reaching a solution in diverse situations, presents itself as an indispensable prerequisite for productive performance in diverse real-life situations (Definition and selection of competencies: Theoretical and conceptual Foundation DeSeCo, Country report for Flemish Community of Belgium, OECD, 2001). In conformity with the current global developmental tendencies the notion of competence is complemented by a novel behavioural aspect which suggests the necessity of creative activity. Apart from skills and qualifications as major constituent parts of the concept of competence, the notion of a competent person is being viewed from a new perspective. Competence can be detected and evaluated only when being engaged in some kind of activity, in reaching creative solutions in diverse situations which, in their turn, are based on innovatively developed self-experience, self-reflection and self-assessment. Wider significance keeps being attached to the study process the ultimate goal of which are competences that testify to students’ abilities to successfully perform in diverse situations. The qualification of higher education in the majority of European countries is still judged by entrance regulations, the length and the contents of the study programme. Information of this kind does not satisfy either national or foreign employers, either students themselves or the society on the whole with adequate insight into the qualification obtained, since it does not provide them with the information about study results, skills and competencies. Foreign language study contents corresponds to foreign language acquisition needs which, in their turn, are determined by the ultimate goal: acquisition of language and professional competences (a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, experiences, awareness and values) which would provide for competent use of a foreign language in communication, sustainability, encouragement, interplay of cultures in modern society, in professional activity and other real-life situations. The attitude towards a student as an active subject of the study process lays the basis for the organization of the foreign language acquisition process and content selection. Each student’s needs, ambitions, language proficiency level, interests and experience differ. Being aware of students’ current learning and life experience contributes to the identification of their needs, objectives, choice of relevant and significant contents. The evaluation activity (both self-appraisal and that of others) is of paramount importance which enables one to compare one’s own performance. Foreign language learning, acquisition and usage entails activities when being engaged in them humans as individual and social beings achieve diverse competences for following professional careers, for promoting Millennium Goals by local and global intergenerational collaboration and sustainability.

**Results**

The results of the research have been gained due to the analysis of the results of an Erasmus project EquiTifoLa with the three consecutive Intensive programmes (IP) EquiTifoLa, CitiFoLa and SoliTifoLa by twelve higher education teacher training institutions on ESD and active citizenship, where global learning/teaching had been discussed in master classes, lectures, case studies, text books for learning English compared by intergenerational collaboration. The lessons had been conducted by international trainee teacher teams on global learning, sustainable development (SD) and equity by intergenerational collaboration. The lessons had been conducted by international trainee teacher teams on global learning, sustainable development (SD) and equity by intergenerational collaboration as well. Some results disclosing the reactions of the participants had been analyzed and included. Lesson planning and conducting experi-
ence developed. Findings and results provide valid knowledge on education for sustainable development gained by the teacher trainees and the academic staffs of the twelve participating higher education initial teacher training and retraining institutions. A strategy promoting global learning (ESD, SD, intergenerational collaboration and equity) is suggested and conclusion is obvious – global collaboration by intergenerational solidarity brings along professional competence development on teaching/learning, on inclusion of global learning, education for sustainable development into the emerging English as a Foreign Language teachers professional competence. Consequently, in foreign language studies by the emerging English as a foreign language teacher’s evaluation criteria, indicators and levels of integrated foreign language acquisition, learning and professional usage skills should be applied (see Table 1). The sequence of establishing criteria, indicators and levels is shown in the model (see Figure 2). Exploration of students’ real L2 needs, lecturers’ as well as learners’ own assessment was carried out based on integrated assessment criteria, levels and markers which reveal learners’ L2 acquisition skills, their ways of learning and their professional use of L2. The assessment was performed while analysing the results within learners’ study process as well as diverse assignments during the first 2 sessions (see Figure 3). Using statistical methods the results were analysed on the basis of the examination of the interplay of data by means of the quantitative statistical program SPSS 17, 0 (Statistical package for Social Sciences). Assessing L2 professional competencies: partly comprehend the content related to their professional field; 108 learners have obtained high comprehension level but 1 student comprehends the content perfectly.

![Figure 2: Criterion, indicator and level design model](image)

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>A level</th>
<th>B level</th>
<th>C level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Professional activity competence</td>
<td>3.1 Be able to partly comprehend the subject matter on the profession.</td>
<td>3.1 Be able to comprehend well the subject matter on the profession.</td>
<td>3.1 Be able to fully comprehend the subject matter on the profession.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>- Have difficulty in holding a dialogue on professional issues.</td>
<td>- Be well able to hold a dialogue on professional issues.</td>
<td>- Be perfectly able to hold a dialogue on professional issues.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Be able to construct a narrative out of professional issues following a pattern.</td>
<td>- Be able to construct a narrative out of professional issues partly following a pattern.</td>
<td>- Be able to creatively construct a narrative on professional issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Be able to write following a pattern: presentations, reports on professional issues.</td>
<td>Be able to write partly following a pattern: presentations, reports on professional issues.</td>
<td>Be able to write creatively: presentations, reports on professional issues.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The assessment was performed while analysing the results within learners’ study process as well as diverse assignments during the first 2 sessions (see Figure 3). Using statistical methods the results were analysed on the basis of the examination of the interplay of data by means of the quantitative statistical program SPSS 17, 0 (Statistical package for Social Sciences). Assessing L2 professional competencies: partly comprehend the content related to their professional field; 108 learners have obtained high
comprehension level but 1 student comprehends the content perfectly. 174 learners are able to conduct a dialogue associated with their professional issues with difficulties and can talk about the mentioned issues using a sample or a pattern. 37 learners can make appropriate dialogues on professional issues very well, indeed. 175 learners can write presentations as well as notices on professional issues following a sample or a pattern. 37 learners can partly carry out the above mentioned assignments, i.e., to write the necessary documents and fill in forms. If the assessment results at the beginning of the study course and the final period of the study course are compared, it can be concluded that all competencies have been developed. Most difficulties do not occur within the learning and teaching process but in real life situations, i.e., intercourse with exchange students, lecturers and representatives of related professions should be promoted on a larger scale. Insufficient writing skills are due to the limited number of L2 sessions that are planned for the acquisition of a foreign language written word (see Figure 4).

Figure 3. Assessment criteria, levels and indicators of students’ foreign language learning and professional usage integration at the beginning of the study course

Figure 4. Assessment criteria, levels and indicators of students’ foreign language learning and professional usage integration at the end of the study course
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So the global dimension incorporation has led to exploration of the interconnections between the personal, the local and the global through intergenerational collaboration in both the formal studies and the informal studies developing and coordinating the development of the emerging EFL teachers' professional activity competence incorporating foreign language content learning and usage competence, intercultural foreign language competence and communicative foreign language competence through involving the global dimension key concepts leading to the developed socio-pedagogical competence in particular.

The global dimension has helped all the learners involved (teacher trainers, trainee teachers, teachers and schoolchildren) to enter global cooperation through intergenerational collaboration on hot current issues, think critically and creatively about current and explore and make sense of the contemporary and innovative issues in the world, deconstruct events and issues and consider, experience, reflect on, reconsider by self-assessment and group assessment them from a range of perspectives, thus, communicate with people from a range of generations coming from twelve different countries and cultures from the EU and even beyond, develop self-awareness and positive attitude to difference, argue a case confronted with on behalf of themselves and and others. It has helped them to reflect on the consequences of their own actions now and in the future. They have developed their competence through the above mentioned and linking learning/teaching to taking responsible action. All of the learners and, in particular, the emerging English as a Foreign Language teachers have been participating in the local and the global society as active and responsible global citizens and development education competence discovering emerging professional educators.

The reflections show that for major innovations modernizing the formal studies by informal studies inclusion a project like the discussed should be accessible to more students. At present, in case of successful project designing by the twelve pedagogical teacher training institutions, only 3 - 4 emerging teachers from each institution can participate in the Intensive Programme. The research results have led to conclusions that the above mentioned (the associations in reflections and presentations after IP, the opinions of experts) mostly refer only to one part of the problem – the theoretical content of the subject. Development of the socio-pedagogical competence as a process, steadily increasing education level, updating the unity of knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes, mutual correlation have not been analysed enough as causes, reasons or results for possible radical alternatives yet (See Figure 5).

Figure 5 reveals schematically grouped the emerging teacher actions and collaboration in informal studies in global environment leading to updated learning self-experience that initiates a new higher development cycle of creative self-cognition and cognition by collaboration, namely, to a higher developed professional socio-pedagogical competence of the emerging teacher.

Competence development due to the teacher collaboration as socio-pedagogical action phenomenon, respectively, involves creative self-cognition and cognition by collaboration, self-analysis and group analysis, self-reflection and group reflection, self-assessment and assessment by others, self-regulated development, actualized learning/teaching experience, which produce secondary self-experience, new cognition collaboration cycle. The above mentioned is involved in the sphere of sustainable development environment. Special meaning is provided by the enclosed arrows, which determine impact and development directions of continuous determined action. They show the teacher opportunities. Communication and collaboration skills directly influence the creative cognitive collaboration, self-analysis directly shapes the group analysis, self-reflection directly shapes the group reflection, self-assessment correlates with assessment by others, and self-regulated development in correlation actualizes teaching/learning experience and vice versa, as the cycle is not terminated. By the emerging EFL teacher entering collaboration...
at any stage of the creative cycle shaped by arrows, the correlation can be experienced – the cognitive action stimulates creative collaboration, creative action itself is collaboration directed. The secondary self-experience does not exist in parallel with the primary self-experience, it is innovative, developed self-experience, introduction to sustainable development.

The values created by socio-pedagogical action and intergenerational collaboration unite traditions, ideas, definitely sustainable development ideas, their acquisition, maintenance, protection, ability to appreciate them, include them into personal value scale and use purposefully. The next cycle, when the informal studies’ gains are incorporated into the formal studies, brings along further competence improvements as there is created innovative motivation updating the emerging teacher into a creative positive local, moreover, global society transformer. In consequence, appear an updated socio-pedagogical performance level due to increased personal, inter-generational social, psychological and pedagogical professional competence. By this correlation link of action and collaboration emerges promoted development serving as the trainee teacher’s creative competence fostering socio-professional competence contents.

Conclusions

• Integration of the global dimension and foreign language acquisition components contributes to students’ acquiring knowledge and skills intended to provide the accomplishment of the anticipated objectives and results, establishment of positive relationships, proactive and productive performance in diverse real-life situations.
• There exists difference between a language skill and its usage. Language use should be treated in connection with interlocutors of particular communicative situations and the changing environment dependent upon place and time via sustainable development by intergenerational collaboration.
• The result of a foreign language learners’ performance is the transfer of competences, ability to use a foreign language in diverse situations, attitudes and values upon each student, in particular, the emerging EFL teacher and their collaboration partners from other generations as well.
• The development of foreign language competence occurs due to integrating components of the target language and those of other study courses, subject, problem or a particular issue arising also from informal studies (in particular incorporation of the global dimension) inclusion into the formal studies.

• In foreign language studies integrated assessment and self-assessment criteria, indicators and levels of students’ foreign language skill acquisition, learning and professional usage are usable for further professional competence development in the framework of the formal studies and beyond – by inclusion of global informal studies.

Literature


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