

GLOBAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES IN LANGUAGE FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES TEACHING

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Abstract

In the present-day globalized and multicultural world, an individual cannot exist without the relevant communicative competence. When teaching a language for specific purposes, it is necessary to take into account the existing conditions of language usage and its purpose. Management and economics students will work in a business world that requires language knowledge not only limited to grammar and vocabulary, but also the knowledge of cultural background of communication in the targeted language. Therefore, it is necessary to develop both, the global and intercultural competences as relevant soft skills. In general, the knowledge of cultural specifics of selected language community is necessary to understand which way of communication is preferred (a part of communicative competence), which non-verbal and extra-linguistic aspects enter the conversation (a part of global competence), and also justifies and explains the existence of intercultural differences (a part of intercultural competence). The teaching material for management and economics students has to be designed concerning all these competences. LSP teaching can make use of the understanding of the processes of globalization and cultural learning in various ways: lectures, role-plays, field trips, discourse analysis, etc. In the paper, the course designs at the Faculty of Management and Business at the University of Prešov in Prešov (Slovakia) is presented to illustrate and justify the importance of global and intercultural competences improvement activities as a part of LSP teaching of management students.

Key words: global competence, globalization, intercultural competence, intercultural communication, LSP, management and economics students

1. Introduction

Teaching language for specific purposes to management and economics students has its specific characteristics. The situation is not influenced only by the purpose of the foreign language use, but also by the teaching conditions and students' motivation. At the Faculty of Management and Business of the University of Prešov in Prešov (Slovakia), foreign languages are taught as a part of soft skills development and improvement. Taking into account the reality of present-day international business, foreign languages are seen as being a part of global and intercultural competences.

The term *competence* is defined differently in professional discourse. Kostková (2012, p. 22) derives it from Latin *competere*, which means also the ability to do some activity. In English, the situation with the meaning of the word is even more complicated because of the existence of the word in holistic and analytic meaning: *competence* vs. *competency*. Kostková (2012, pp. 42-43) also mentions the distinction between Chomsky's competence and performance and DeSaussure's *langue* and *parole*, which both denote the difference between an abstract system and its actual use. The State Pedagogical Institute (Štátny pedagogický ústav, 2017, pp. 14-17) defines competence as "a sum of knowledge, abilities, skills and characteristics that enable an individual to act", and includes among them, for instance, empirical, theoretical, and practical abilities, one's individuality, character and worldviews, but also the ability to learn. When these abilities are used in a specific communicative situation, it is a realization of one's communicative competence (Štátny pedagogický ústav, 2017, pp. 13-14). Průcha (2010, pp. 124-125) understands communicative competence as a combination of verbal and non-verbal abilities enabling an individual to reach their aims in social contact. To sum it up, communicative competence is viewed in the context of the article as the knowledge but also ability to communicate in the specific context.

The aim of the paper is to introduce and describe the English language for specific purposes teaching as it is practised at the Faculty of Management and Business at the University of Prešov in order to justify and illustrate the importance of global and intercultural competences within foreign language teaching of management students. The paper deals with theoretical concepts of global and intercultural competences and connects them with the context of language teaching to offer pedagogical possibilities. Description of the process of teaching and its implications contribute to the ongoing discussion about the usefulness of language for specific purposes teaching of non-philological students.

2. Global competence

The concept of global competence reflects a need for specific competence in a dynamic rapidly globalizing world. Reimers (2009) asserts that globalization is changing the situation in which people live to a great extent. Those who understand and can cope with the changes, i.e. those who are globally competent, can benefit from globalization; the others will encounter many difficulties. The development of global competence is considered to be useful not only for economic purposes but also for strengthening democracy and citizenship.

For these reasons, the concept of global competence has been on the agenda of many institutions, policy makers, managers, scholars, academics and teachers for several decades. However, the understanding of the concept still varies considerably from author to author. Li (2020) distinguishes four different perspectives on how global competence is identified.

In an *adaptation-change mode*, global competence is defined as “an intercultural capacity focusing on students’ adaptation to cultural differences in values, beliefs, and behaviors in response to a global environmental change” (Hunter, as cited in Li, 2020, p. 98).

In an *input-output mode*, global competence “concentrates on the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of international issues (input attributes) and then gaining ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively (output features) in an interdependent world community (output features)” (Nussbaum, as cited in Li, 2020, pp. 98-99).

According to a *willingness-tolerance mode*, global competence “requires that students are willing to cultivate multicultural insights and attitude toward international cultures by recognizing the advantages of acquiring multicultural knowledge” and that they are tolerant to cultural diversity (Reimers and Green and Olson, as cited in Li, 2010, p. 99).

A *learning-competence perspective* refers to “a conceptual model for the in-depth understanding of rationales of the relationship between global competence and global learning” (Li, 2010, p. 99).

Some authors emphasize that the understandings of global competence also vary geographically and are influenced by the geopolitical position of a particular country (Glass, 2021). European countries tend to view global competence “as a response to population changes due to immigration in order to promote new forms of citizenship that produce greater social cohesion” (Oxley & Morris, as cited in Glass, 2021, p. 174) and, therefore, they focus more on “equal rights and regional harmonisation” (Engel, Rutkowski & Thompson, 2019, p. 7). In the United States, global competence tends to be

understood as “a strategic response to the shifting economic and political landscape in order to preserve its status as a global leader” and the emphasis is put on the personal development of an individual (Buckner and Stein, as cited in Glass, 2021, p. 174). In Latin America, global competence concentrates on “civic knowledge and rule of law” (Engel, Rutkowski & Thompson, 2019, p. 7). In the Asia-Pacific region, global competence is considered as “a response to shifting economic and political landscape but adds an emphasis on stronger ties with the West and the role of English in order to compete in the global economy” (Pan, as cited in Glass, 2021, p. 174); it also emphasizes “self-cultivation and moral development” (Engel, Rutkowski & Thompson, 2019, p. 7).

The understanding of global competence in Slovakia is influenced mainly by the country’s membership in international institutions and organizations, such as the UN, UNESCO, EU, OECD. In 2018, Slovakia participated in the OECD’s Programme for international students’ assessment (or the so-called PISA programme) measuring global competence. The PISA 2018 Global Competence Framework defines global competence as “the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and the world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development” (OECD, 2018). The article follows this understanding of global competence.

3. Intercultural competence and communication

It is not possible to exist without the relevant intercultural communicative competence in present-day globalized multicultural Europe (Kostková, 2012, p. 9). Lustig and Koester (2010, pp. 1-3) add that in the post-millennial world, people cannot choose not to communicate or cooperate with members of other cultures, but they have to learn how to communicate effectively.

As a result of globalization pressures on communicative competence, intercultural competence is increasingly examined. Zelenková (2014, pp. 14-16) describes it as the ability to act and communicate in intercultural settings without compromising their integrity, and which manifests itself in cognitive, affective, and behavioral areas. Similarly, Pondelíková (2020, p. 57) describes intercultural competence as the ability of an individual in an intercultural environment to respond appropriately and effectively. Slušná (2012, p. 16) states that it is intercultural competences that facilitate intercultural contact and emphasizes the fact that in every intercultural contact, the existence of invisible or hidden differences is assumed, as well as communication as a necessary condition for effective cooperation. Slušná (2012, p. 16) argues that there are special methodological procedures in intercultural education that contribute to

the development of intercultural competencies and that the teachability of culture is an important aspect of it.

According to Průcha (2010, pp. 46-47), intercultural competence can be understood in the psychological-pedagogical sense as the individual's ability to communicate effectively using acquired knowledge of the cultural specifics of different nations or ethnic groups and to cooperate with members of other cultures while being able to perceive and understand the difference between the respective cultures and to respond adequately without rejecting own cultural identity. Průcha (2010, p. 46) also considers language knowledge and cultural tolerance of an individual to be a prerequisite for intercultural competence.

Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (2007, p. 13) argue that linguistic differences in interpretation in everyday life are not only a matter of grammar and semantics but also depend on the context of the social situation. It is the knowledge of conventions associated with the context of a given situation that can only be gained through interactive experience in an intercultural environment.

In the context of the article, intercultural competence is viewed as the knowledge and the ability to communicate effectively in any intercultural situation.

4. Course design

Foreign languages at the Faculty of Management and Business are taught as a part of managerial competences. Communicative skills are considered an important part of soft skills necessary for the successful completion of managerial tasks. The students of the Management and Economics at the Faculty can choose from among three foreign languages, which are taught during one or two classes per week dependent on the year of studies. Generally speaking, the management and economics students dominantly opt for the English language course – Applied foreign language for managers 1 – 5 (English).

As it was mentioned, the courses of foreign languages at the Faculty of Management of the University of Prešov are considered a part of global and intercultural competence. As a result of this “foreign language knowledge as a part of global and intercultural competences” philosophy of teaching and purpose of language learning, the course and teaching material designs of the Applied foreign language for managers 1 (English) were developed as follows:

1. Intercultural communication as a new interdisciplinary approach of a scientific research
 - 1.1 Delimitation of the concept of intercultural communication
 - 1.2 Methods of the study of intercultural communication
 - 1.3 Results of the intercultural communication research
(summarization of what has been studied within intercultural communication so far)
2. Specifics of British-Slovak intercultural communication
3. Specifics of American-Slovak intercultural communication
4. Development of global and intercultural competence within the teaching of English language

Each step of the course design was elaborated to explain the interconnection between language and culture. The concept of intercultural communication is explained within the language for specific purposes teaching by employing the activities, approaches and methods that contribute to and develop global and intercultural competences:

- sociocultural learning: scaffolding
- collaborative activities (writing)
- online collaborative spaces
- reading comprehension
- task-based learning
- discussions:
 - global perspective on local issues
 - intercultural differences in the classroom

These activities, approaches and methods were employed throughout the educational process to support personal development of every student. By employing this course of teaching, new communicative skills could be acquired, developed and strengthened. For example, when scaffolding reading, by previewing the text, discussing professional vocabulary and providing visual aid, students could develop reading comprehension skills, but also writing skills by asking them to write a short summary or argumentative essay. When reading the text about doing business in the United Kingdom, students could be asked to find additional information about Brexit and its effect on the European Union countries. By discussing the effects of Brexit, students could collaborate and prepare a group presentation with contrastive analysis of the business practices in their countries. This would give them global perspective on local issues. As the students

themselves can be from different countries (Slovak, Ukrainian, Belarusian), they discuss intercultural differences within the classroom.

5. Conclusion

The paper dealt with the competences relevant for language for specific purposes teaching in the context of managerial skills development. Global and intercultural competences combined with the foreign language knowledge can prepare students of management to meet the reality of international business and multinational labour market. The described course design and activities, approaches and methods aim to develop selected competences. By the description of the process of teaching the language for specific purposes as it is practised at the Faculty of Management and Business at the University of Prešov in Prešov (Slovakia), the importance of global and intercultural competences within foreign language teaching of management students was stressed, illustrated and justified.

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GALE UND INTERKULTURELLE KOMPETENZEN IM FACHSPRACHENUNTERRICHT

In der heutigen globalisierten und multikulturellen Welt kann ein Individuum ohne entsprechende Kommunikationskompetenz nicht existieren. Beim Fachsprachenunterricht müssen die bestehenden Bedingungen des Sprachgebrauchs und sein Zweck berücksichtigt werden. Studenten des Managements werden in einer Geschäftswelt arbeiten, die Sprachkenntnisse erfordert, die nicht nur auf Grammatik und Wortschatz, sondern auch auf den kulturellen Hintergrund der Kommunikation in der Zielsprache beschränkt sind. Daher ist es notwendig, sowohl die globalen als auch die interkulturellen Kompetenzen als relevante Soft Skills zu entwickeln. Kenntnisse über bestimmte Kulturen sind erforderlich, um zu verstehen, welche Art der Kommunikation bevorzugt wird (Kommunikationskompetenz), welche nonverbalen und außersprachlichen Aspekte in die Konversation einfließen (globale Kompetenz) und das Vorhandensein interkultureller Unterschiede (interkulturelle Kompetenz) zu rechtfertigen. Das Unterrichtsmaterial für die Studenten des Managements muss in Bezug auf all diese Kompetenzen gestaltet werden. Der Fachsprachenunterricht kann das Verständnis der Globalisierungsprozesse und des kulturellen Lernens auf verschiedene Weise nutzen, z.B. durch Vorlesungen, Rollenspiele, Exkursionen, Diskursanalysen usw. In dem Beitrag werden Kurs- und Materialdesigns an der Fakultät für Management der Universität Prešov vorgestellt, um die Bedeutung globaler und interkultureller Kompetenzverbesserungsaktivitäten als Teil des Fachsprachenunterrichts von Managementstudenten zu veranschaulichen und zu begründen.

Schlüsselwörter: Fachsprachenunterricht, globale Kompetenz, Globalisierung, interkulturelle Kompetenz, kulturelle Intelligenz, Managementstudenten