

INCORPORATING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION INTO ELT COURSES: PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Received:	13/3/2023	Aiming to gain insights into the perception of pre-service teachers toward the incorporation of global citizenship education into English language teaching courses, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, this study applied the phenomenological design method with a semi-structured interview as a main tool of data collection. Analysis from interviews with 9 student teachers revealed that participants mostly referred to the “value” dimension of global citizenship. Despite limited understanding, prior experience, and training about global citizenship education, most participants believed in the potential of integrating global citizenship education into English language teaching courses by selecting content and creating relevant learning experiences. In such scenario, those teachers saw themselves as guides and inspirers. Furthermore, aligning learning outcomes with teaching materials and assessment, providing teachers with proper training, and dealing with learners’ reluctance were the three most prominent perceived challenges. Finally, judging the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on global citizenship education, the majority of participants perceived the experience to be conducive to global citizenship education in terms of raising individuals’ awareness of their responsibility for global issues and promoting active learning skills. Implications for integrating global citizenship education into English language teaching courses were then suggested.
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TÍCH HỢP GIÁO DỤC CÔNG DÂN TOÀN CẦU VÀO CÁC KHÓA HỌC GIẢNG DẠY TIẾNG ANH: CẢM NHẬN CỦA SINH VIÊN NGÀNH SƯ PHẠM

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THÔNG TIN BÀI BÁO		TÓM TẮT
Ngày nhận bài:	13/3/2023	Nhằm tìm hiểu sâu hơn về nhận thức của người tham gia đối với việc tích hợp giáo dục công dân toàn cầu vào giảng dạy tiếng Anh, nghiên cứu này sử dụng phương pháp thiết kế hiện tượng học với công cụ chính là phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc cho việc thu thập dữ liệu từ 9 sinh viên ngành sư phạm. Kết quả cho thấy, các sinh viên này chủ yếu đề cập đến khía cạnh “giá trị” của công dân toàn cầu. Hầu hết người tham gia các điều tin vào tiềm năng của việc tích hợp bằng cách chọn nội dung và tạo ra trải nghiệm học tập phù hợp, và họ xem mình là người hướng dẫn và truyền cảm hứng. Ngoài ra, việc điều chỉnh để tạo ra sự phù hợp giữa đầu ra môn học với tài liệu giảng dạy và đánh giá, cung cấp cho giáo viên chương trình đào tạo phù hợp và khuyến khích sự tích cực của người học là ba thách thức lớn nhất. Cuối cùng, phần lớn những người tham gia nhận thấy Covid-19 có lợi trong việc nâng cao nhận thức cá nhân về trách nhiệm của họ đối với các vấn đề toàn cầu và thúc đẩy các kỹ năng học tập tích cực. Bài báo cũng đề cập tới ý nghĩa của việc tích hợp giáo dục công dân toàn cầu vào các khóa học giảng dạy tiếng Anh.
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TỪ KHÓA		
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1. Introduction

The fast pace of globalization process that ties people and countries together into a single globalized marketplace and village has become an important impetus for the popularity of global citizenship education (GCE) [1], [2]. The necessity of educating young generations to be effective global citizens has been well acknowledged in many countries. Therefore, it has been set as an important educational goal followed by various actions to incorporate it into current educational systems.

1.1. The construct of global citizenship and its key elements

The concept of “global citizenship” was mentioned for the first time in literature since the time of ancient Greece. However, in modern times, with the acceleration of globalization, its meaning has been renovated and defined in different ways, and in fact its definition has not reached consensus among scholars [3]. According to UNESCO, global citizenship education (GCE) refers to an ethos that includes knowledge of “global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations” [4]. Another popular definition of global citizenship was proposed by OXFAM which describes a global citizen as someone who is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen; respects and values diversity; has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically, and environmentally; is outraged by social injustice; participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from local to global; is willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place and, and takes responsibility for their actions [5].

According to Cates, the aims of global education are divided into four aspects: knowledge about world countries and cultures, and about global problems, etc; skills of critical thinking, co-operative problem solving, conflict resolution, etc; attitudes of global awareness, cultural appreciation, respect for diversity, etc; and action like thinking globally and acting locally [6].

Similarly, OXFAM identified the key elements for developing active and responsible global citizenship including *Knowledge and understanding* (social justice and equity, identity and diversity, human rights, etc), *Skills* (critical and creative thinking, cooperation and conflict resolution, communication, etc), and *Values and attitudes* (respect for people and human rights, value diversity, concern for the environment and commitment to sustainable development, etc) [5].

Within the scope of this study, the definition and key elements of GCE proposed by OXFAM was applied for its specific description of outcomes which are similar to those in the curriculum of most subject areas [5].

1.2. The integration of GCE into ELT curriculum

Apart from the participation of social organizations, the implementation of GCE can mostly be undertaken through formal schooling [7] with various approaches and at different levels. In many countries, GCE are enhanced from national and institutional level with the adjustment of educational policy and goals [3] to micro ones including the provision of learning courses in GCE, the integration of GCE into different subject areas [8] or professional training for teachers [9].

It is argued by scholars that embedding the construct of global citizenship into the curriculum would help students develop democratic citizenship that is sensitive to local and global issues from moral and ethical perspectives [10], gain the tools to act responsibly toward their own country and humanity [11], be universally conscious, maintain their cultural heritage, and contribute productively to the world [12].

Among different approaches to implement GCE, integrating it with subject areas is a popular way so that key elements of active and responsible global citizenship can be comprehensively developed in learners [6]. English language teaching is a very potential subject area. It is argued that the main task of ELT instructors is not only to help learners develop language competencies but also provide them with the experience of thinking, valuing and behaving as a global citizen

[13]. In addition, foreign language courses have certain flexibility in subjects that are not available in other courses. ELT instructors, in fact, can choose topics in any subject matter to communicate about [14].

A number of suggestions have been made to integrate GCE into ELT courses. Viewing language as an instrument in learning the world, some researchers recommended addressing global issues with content-based instruction [5], [15]. In this way, GCE related themes and topics are the centers around which language competencies can be enhanced. Apart from infusing global content knowledge, skills and attitudes being necessary for a global citizen can also be cultivated via various class activities that promote cross-cultural experiences [16], experiential learning or critical thinking [17].

1.3. Pre-teachers' role in implementing GCE

To successfully infuse GCE into curriculum at any levels it is crucial to consider not only implementation approaches but also people who are responsible for it, among whom teachers may be the most influential agents, determining both the way and the extent to which it is implemented in classrooms [18]. Therefore, it is necessary to prepare teachers to work with an international student body and to teach global issues in order to prepare students to be global citizens [19], [20]. In fact, teacher education programs across the world have begun to consider how to equip teachers with knowledge and skills for teaching about complex global issues for GCE [4]. Specifically, it is claimed that pre-service teachers must enter the profession with an understanding, appreciation, and respect for their students [21], and possess a competency of global citizenship education and how to effectively disseminate and execute its themes and policies [22].

Despite the necessity of preparing teachers for the inclusion of GCE in formal schooling, research on teacher preparation for GCE revealed that limited opportunities were offered for pre-service teachers regarding critical literacy in global citizenship education [23]. They are often cross-culturally inexperienced and globally unaware, which presents challenges for them to meet the needs of their students [24]. Similarly, Varadharajan and Buchanan in their study claimed that pre-service teachers were found to be empathetic toward diverse cultures but largely misinformed about other cultures [25]. Researching perceptions of ELT instructors regarding GCE in Turkey, Basarir also concluded that ELT instructors have insufficient levels of knowledge, skills, attitude and actions related with global citizenship education [8].

In Vietnam, the concept of GCE has long been discussed; nevertheless, no official consensus has been made toward its definition. Several requirements for GCE have partly been presented in educational policies and guidelines for different subjects areas (at K-12 levels) and higher education programs (REF). However, there have not been any official criteria for GCE at any levels. In the same manner, apart from continuous professional training programs for teachers, GCE has not been included in the teacher education program as a requirement for pre-service teachers.

Therefore, with an aim to gain insights into the perceptions of pre-service teachers on global citizenship education, this study specified its objectives to examine pre-service teachers' definitions of global citizenship education, their perceived approaches and potential challenges to incorporate it into English language teaching programs (ELT), and the perceived impacts of Covid-19 pandemic toward the teaching of GCE.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

In order to examine pre-service ELT teachers' perception toward GCE, a phenomenal research design was applied in this study. Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group.

Phenomenological studies require careful and detailed comprehension and definition of how individuals perceive, describe, feel, criticize and understand certain phenomena [26]. Within this study, the phenomenon investigated is integrating global citizenship education into ELT courses. By using phenomenological design, perceptions of the pre-service teachers about GCE, their tentative implementation approaches, perceived challenges and their awareness of the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on GCE have been tried to examine in depth.

2.2. Participants

The participants in this study consist of nine English pre-service teachers who are in their final year of the English language education program at a prestigious higher education institution. They have been interns at the International School of Vietnam National University, Hanoi (VNUIS) in the academic year 2020-2021. Convenience sample method was applied in this research for the reasons of speed and easy access. All nine participants are females aged 19-20. Apart from their experience as ELT interns at VNUIS, six of them had experience working as ELT teachers at several English training centers.

2.3. Instrument

Semi-structured interview method was used in the research. The researcher through literature review prepared the semi-structured form used in the interviews. In this interview form, there are six open-ended questions seeking for answers about (1) participants' definition of global citizenship; (2) their prior educational experience related to GCE; (3) their perceived role as ELT teachers to instruct GCE to students; (4) their suggestions of how GCE can be integrated into ELT courses; (5) perceived challenges of incorporating GCE into existing ELT courses; and (6) perceived impacts of Covid-19 pandemic toward GCE.

2.4. Data collection and analysis

The data was collected during the social distancing period because of Covid-19 pandemic so all interviews are conducted online via Zoom meeting. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. Each interview lasted on average 20 minutes. The recordings of all interviews were then transcribed into raw data texts for data analysis.

The data analysis was conducted in several consecutive steps. The first step involved reading the written transcript of each interview several times to gain a general idea about the views and ideas of the participants in each question asked. In the second step, thematic content analysis was employed. Each interview was read more carefully and annotated for key ideas; categories and subcategories were created by grouping the codes which were used during annotation. The frequency of important key concepts was also counted. In the final step, quotes were selected to relevant codes and then translated into English. Respondents were given numbers and when they were quoted these numbers (for example, respondent 1) were added at the end of the quotes.

3. Results

Regarding the respondents' understanding of GCE, fragmented rather than holistic definitions of GCE were mentioned. The most prominent perception of the participants about GCE relates to the promotion of values and attitudes (respect for people, acceptance of diversity, responsibility to global issues) referred to by 7/9 participants, while knowledge (understanding of current national and international affairs, cultural identities) and skills (critical thinking and adaptability) were mentioned by 5/9 in their definitions.

As to the significance of infusing GCE into English language teaching programs, despite limited prior knowledge and experience about GCE, most participants agreed that it is necessary to incorporate GCE in ELT courses and teachers should be both guiders and inspirer to introduce this issue into their class. Specifically, being undergraduates in prestigious English language education

programs, all interviewees reported limited learning experience about GCE in their curriculum. Apart from a course in intercultural communication where related issues were instructed and other debate or project-based activities in several courses, the concept or skills for teaching GCE were not officially mentioned. They did not often participate in related extracurricular activities such as exchange programs with foreign counterparts, either. When asked about their role as ELT teachers to infuse GCE in English teaching, while all respondents perceived themselves as a guider and inspirer to motivate students to cultivate their knowledge, skills and attitudes as global citizens, only two of them believed that it is essential for them to do so. For example, one interviewee confirmed: *“the role of ELT instructors in educating global citizens is very important because English is a tool to explore the outside world. Only when we have sufficient command in English, can we understand other cultures and thus respect the diversity”*.

In terms of how to incorporate GCE into ELT courses, except for one respondent who suggested infusing it into extracurricular activities, all others agreed that GCE can be included by adapting learning topics such as human rights, cultural diversity, gender equality, environmental, educational and other social problems. Class activities should also be varied to sharpen global citizens' skills such as presentations, debates, Model United Nations. Minor teaching techniques including questioning or eliciting students' reference of each learning topic to authentic national and international situations were also considered to be effective to promote GCE. For instance, one respondent contended, *“even from a simple topic about family, by questioning teachers can always elicit students' authentic answers, encouraging them to explain and analyze it from different perspectives...that is one way to motivate them to read more, explore more and be more creative...that is important for a global citizen”*.

Despite the potential of embedding GCE into the existing ELT curriculum, the interviewed pre-service teachers identified challenges from three main aspects. Firstly, in terms of curriculum, the most obviously perceived difficulty is the lack of official regulation toward the inclusion of GCE in the ELT curriculum. Although related topics have been introduced in several teaching materials, as for the respondents, it is important to state key elements of GCE as learning outcomes and thus include it in assessment; otherwise, teachers may find it hard to allocate time to teach knowledge and skills about GCE while suffering pressure from preparing their students to pass their language exams. Secondly, without official training and authentic experience in GCE, ELT teachers will not be confident to infuse it into their teaching as one interviewee responded, *“it is an abstract concept and teachers need to have sufficient knowledge and pedagogical skills...they need to experience it first”*; or another claimed *“I do not know much about it...I haven't experienced that much so actually I am not confident to teach”*. Thirdly, three student-based problems were also mentioned including their lack of reading culture, lack of readiness if GCE is abruptly infused and lack of interest because of pressure to pass exams. For instance, one participant showed her concerns that *“our programs focus on preparing students for exams so if the global issues are not included in assessment, it seems that students will not be interested in”*.

Finally, all the participants perceived the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on GCE in a positive way. The most significant effect as to 6/9 pre-service teachers is the change in learners' attitude. As Respondent 2 explained *“Experiencing the pandemic, students will change their attitude to global issues, to the mutual connection and help between countries rather than individuals”*. It was also argued, *“they will be aware that they need to contribute something to the world”* (Respondent 8). Furthermore, study skills were also believed to enhance during the time of pandemic because students *“have to be more active and more independent in learning”* (Respondent 4). Online related skills such as information literacy will be developed when students have to *“search and filter information in relation to the discussion topics which were raised in class”* (Respondent 7).

4. Conclusion

This research was conducted by interviewing nine ELT pre-service teachers in an English language education program at Vietnam National University, Hanoi to examine their perception regarding incorporation of global citizenship education into ELT. Results from thematic data analysis showed diverse understanding of the concept “global citizenship”. Participants also reported their lack of knowledge and prior experience of GCE in their undergraduate program. However, they still see themselves as guiders and inspirers in educating their students to be global citizens. In terms of approaches to infuse GCE into existing ELT curriculum, the prominent way proposed by participants was through content-based instruction with related global topics to be included. Another suggested way was through various class activities to create authentic learning experiences. However, official infusion of GCE into curricular, teachers’ inefficient knowledge and skills in GCE and learners’ resistance were perceived to be the main challenges for incorporating GCE into ELT. Regarding the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic to GCE, positive perceptions were acknowledged as most participants agreed that they themselves and students would be more aware of global issues as well as their responsibility to the world. The enhancement of study skills in the virtual world was also claimed possible by the participants.

The findings of the research carry several implications for the incorporation of GCE into ELT. First, despite diverse definitions of GCE, its key elements should be made clear when being infused into existing curriculum, so that learning outcomes and other related components in curriculum including content, learning experience and assessment can be made aligned. Second, for ELT as a specific subject area, the infusion of GCE via content-based instruction can be considered to be the prominent approach thanks to the flexibility in selecting learning topics of language teaching discipline. Finally, global competence should be set as a new imperative for teacher education so that pre-service teachers will be well prepared for the mission of educating students to be global citizens when they enter the profession. For further studies, similar research with larger samples with mixed methods can provide significant reference to clarify the subject in larger groups. Also, empirical studies and action research that integrate global citizenship education with ELT courses will also make a great contribution to the field.

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