


Chapter 5

Towards Global Competence through Graphic Novels

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ABSTRACT

The chapter studies whether adolescent foreign language learners' global competence differs before and after the programme of implementing authentic graphic novels on intercultural themes as teaching and learning material. An online survey with a questionnaire adapted from OECD 2018 PISA Global Competence Assessment (OECD, 2020) was completed before (n = 120) and after (n = 56) the two-month programme. The results showed that the participants' post-programme attitudes to four global competence constructs were more positive and statistically significant for the constructs of Awareness of intercultural communication and Interest in learning about other cultures. Also, statistically significant difference was found for girls' more positive attitudes towards all four global competence constructs. It is concluded that effective EFL practices for developing intercultural competences of adolescents depend on targeted PD of EFL teachers for enhancing teacher in-

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-0040-5.ch005

tercultural sensitivity and their reflective approach to introducing innovation, as components of their intercultural pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic world, characterised by growing cultural and linguistic diversity both in societies and classrooms, global competence (GC) has been recognised as a skill that empowers individuals from diverse cultural contexts to communicate respectfully and live harmoniously together (Byram et al., 2001; Porto et al., 2017). Formal foreign language (L2) classroom is a plausible landscape for developing GC because "foreign languages can provide access to a multitude of perspectives on contentious and debatable topics, which are not readily available through the mother tongue" (Byram et al., 2023, p. 3). This calls for highly responsible L2 teachers who are aware of their own role in providing learners with opportunities to strengthen their cultural and intercultural awareness while simultaneously developing their linguistic and communication skills (Bolitho & Rossner, 2020; Porto et al., 2017; Schleicher, 2018). However, L2 teachers often fail to support the development of GC in their classrooms, the main reasons being insufficient training and absence of adequate teaching materials (Bolitho & Rossner, 2020; Savić & Prošić-Santovac, 2022).

The aim of the chapter is to explore the possibility of developing GC in the Serbian primary English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom by involving the use of authentic graphic novels as teaching and learning material. We focused on the effects of adolescent learners' critical reading of authentic graphic novels dealing with social issues, and of their participation in culture-based tasks and activities. There is a gap in research of sustained use of graphic novels on adolescents' attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills needed to understand global issues in today's highly interconnected, diverse, and ever-changing world. In this chapter, we will first explore global competence and its development and assessment in the school context. We will then investigate the use of authentic graphic novels for developing GC in the adolescent EFL classroom. Then, we will describe a professional development (PD) programme for EFL teachers to apply graphic novels and a set of related GC activities in the Serbian EFL context. Finally, we will report on a study of adolescent learners' GC development related to their critical reading of authentic graphic novels in English, introduced to them by the EFL teachers previously trained to implement graphic novels as EFL teaching materials.

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