

Towards crossing the borders in foreign language teacher training: A report on a pilot phase of the Tandem Learning for Teacher Training project

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Abstract:

The aim of the paper is to present the results of a pilot project for foreign language (FL) teacher education, in which trainee teachers' knowledge and awareness of intercultural and cross-educational similarities and differences between two cooperating institutions from socio-culturally and linguistically distant countries – Israel and Poland – are elicited. The data collected serves as a springboard for designing an international project for FL trainee teachers to be implemented as a part of a teacher training course. In the project the trainee teachers coming from geographically, culturally and linguistically detached backgrounds, Israeli and Polish, are to participate in tandem learning understood as paired sessions of knowledge and experience exchange between FL trainee teachers via online communicators. The pilot phase, therefore, is an initial but indispensable stage evaluating the extent to which trainee teachers are ready to confront and share their educational background, cultural and linguistic knowledge with their peers from a geographically and socio-culturally distant country. A group of fourteen trainee teachers of Opole University participated in the pilot project measuring the participants' readiness to engage in crossing the aforementioned borders with the help of a closed and open-item questionnaire focusing on the degrees of awareness of a number of aspects, for instance, culture and L1-based differences in approaching FL teaching. The application of the instrument generated quantitative and qualitative data, whose analysis supported the design of the final Tandem Learning Teacher Training (TLTT) program.

Keywords:

FL teacher training; intercultural awareness; tandem learning

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1. Introduction

In the face of constantly increasing global migration and the demand for communication in foreign languages (FL), particularly in English (EFL) with its status of a *lingua franca* of this millennium (e.g. Jenkins 2012), FL or EFL teachers need to be particularly sensitive to a number of subtle issues stemming from their learners' diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. They should also be aware of socially and culturally shaped language learning processes, taking place in specific contexts (Cross 2010). Therefore, FL teachers' knowledge, awareness and openness to various contexts within which L2 learning may be organized form the baseline for better understanding of the intricacies of an L2 teaching profession. Multicultural classrooms enforce an additional role that a FL teacher needs to be ready to embrace: the one of an inter-cultural and inter-personal mediator who knows how to solve learners' L1-generated problems. However, this role cannot be effectively performed without fine-tuned teacher training (cf. Eres 2016). Our proposal for this type of training follows the framework of tandem learning defined and discussed in the following section. In brief, Tandem Learning for Trainee Teachers (TLTT) program from distant geographical, socio-cultural, historical and political backgrounds may become a knowledge-building experience that feeds the trainee teachers' know-how and confidence in teaching a FL to multicultural learners. Nevertheless, this approach needs to be carefully planned and, therefore, it is preceded by the pilot project focal in this paper.

The two groups of trainee teachers – Polish and Israeli – are targeted in the TLTT project and its pilot phase for a number of reasons. Firstly, they represent nationalities for which historical events have triggered a number of mutual controversies or even prejudices (Bulska & Winiewski 2018) that may have had an influence on the trainee teachers' attitudes, which are later transferred onto the prospective learners. Secondly, cultures of the participants' countries are considerably influenced by religious beliefs, which are different in each country. These differences may result in biased opinions on a number of sensitive topics discussed in an L2 classroom. Finally, both institutions located in Poland and Israel confirmed their readiness to cooperate and create the conditions sufficient for the TLTT project, for instance, the access of the participants to the Internet and multimedia.

Following the premise that teachers' intercultural awareness, knowledge and attitudes affect teaching practices (cf. Al Harthy et al. 2013, Omolara 2015), the authors have designed the pilot phase with the intention to elicit potential topics for tandem discussions and measure EFL trainee teachers' readiness to engage in sharing their educational background and experience as well as cultural

and linguistic knowledge with their peers from the partner country. This readiness has been understood as the state of being aware of the intercultural and cross-educational differences. Therefore, the EFL trainee teachers' readiness to engage has been operationalized here as the levels of the participants' awareness regarding several aspects of cultural, educational and linguistic differences between the cooperating institutions. The initial stage, the results of which are presented in the present paper, precedes the design and implementation of the project based on tandem learning. Therefore, the concept of "tandem learning" is introduced before the objectives of the TLTT project and the pilot phase outcomes are delineated.

2. Tandem learning for teacher training

Little (2001) explains that tandem learning takes place when "two people with different mother tongues work together in order to (...) exchange additional knowledge – e.g., about their professional life" (31). International tandem foreign language (L2) teacher training may therefore create a unique opportunity for sharing various educational experiences, in order to gain expertise and become professional language teachers who are sensitive to the needs of multinational students, including those with specific learning difficulties.

The tandem learning approach has an immense potential to provide several benefits to L2 teachers' professional training. Following this approach, pre- and in-service teachers from diverse countries increase their chances for exchanging their experiences and knowledge as well as reflecting upon their intercultural awareness and teaching practice that may lead not only to increased professional excellence (Tomlison 2016), but also to developing reflective approach to teaching (Salomão 2011), and even to creating tangible products, for instance didactic materials or guidelines for teachers (cf. The European Trainer Teacher Tandem 2017). Nevertheless, the degree to which the tandem participants will benefit from the experience depends, among other issues, on the organization and an autonomous content selection of the tandem learning experience.

In its original form tandem learning has been organized as a face-to-face interaction, during which two participants collaborate with the intention to contribute equally to the learning process (Little 2001). The idea of reciprocity, therefore, entailing a balanced mutual support and involvement of the trainee teachers, promises effective tandem learning for teacher training. Moreover, it appears relevant to consider whether this experience is designed as an isolated experience or embedded in a larger unit of learning or a teacher training program, for instance as a part of the two-semester course in the TLTT project. In the case of

the latter, trainee teachers may have additional opportunities to share their tandem learning outcomes with their peers and the teacher trainer from the same cultural and institutional background.

The new millennium has offered growing possibilities in the use of an online synchronous and/or asynchronous communication for learning purposes that, in turn, has given rise to introducing alternative forms of tandem learning (e.g. Lewis & Walker 2003; Marta, Mureşan, & Băgiag 2016). Particularly, computer-mediated communication in tandem learning has recently been placed in the limelight (Kötter 2002, Piego 2011). Following this line, the TLTT project is designed to exploit the synchronous communication tools. Paired trainee teachers from the cooperating institutions are to take part in an exchange tandem learning sessions via Skype, which enables a direct audiovisual interaction.

3. Towards the TLTT project

The main objective of the TLTT project is to provide trainee teachers from Kaye College, Beer Sheva, Israel, and Opole University, Poland, opportunities to reflect upon their experiences, share knowledge and learn from the partners from divergent linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In computer-mediated communication, L2 trainee teachers from Israel and Poland, among other actions, define their objectives with regard to L2 teaching skills, learn about the origins of L2 learning problems (e.g. Kormos & Smith 2012), reflect on current practices and research, and are encouraged to exchange culture-specific issues deriving from two different educational and linguistic systems. Since the project is an innovative approach to EFL teacher training in both partnering institutions, it requires a detailed planning before its application.

For the purposes of implementing tandem teacher training between institutions from different countries, a clear understanding of the teacher training systems plays a role in designing this practice. The qualifications that a trainee teacher needs to obtain in order to become an L2 language teacher in Polish state schools are specified in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education (2017). A more detailed outline of the objectives is included in the institutional syllabus of the teacher training course, which provides information on specific knowledge, skills and social competences required to complete the course. For instance, students are expected to possess a broad and in-depth body of knowledge on how applied linguistics and psychology, pedagogy, sociology interact, and they should be able to specify priorities adequate for accomplishing their own and others' objectives.

Professional standards for English teachers in Israel are specified in the document *Professional Standards for English Teachers: Knowledge and Performance* issued by the State of Israel Ministry of Education (2003). In addition, the objectives are included in the institutional syllabus of the teacher training course – trainee teachers are expected to develop practical knowledge and skills in teaching EFL by integrating and applying theoretical knowledge and methodologies acquired in different courses in the college as well as develop reflective skills upon teaching. Further objectives are as follows: acquiring practical teaching experience, becoming familiar with the students' learning styles, developing teaching skills with the focus on diverse needs of students, also those with special educational needs (SEN), developing practical skills and strategies for teaching EFL and developing awareness of their attitudes and skills as teachers.

The above specifications create a tentative framework for the content of the TLTT project. However, more attention is intended to be given to the area of teaching EFL to SEN learners, mainly because of the insufficient training on EFL teaching to SEN students both in Poland (Nijakowska 2010, 2014) and in Israel (Russak 2016). More specifically, the study programs in teacher training colleges and universities in Poland and Israel lack systematically provided and extended courses on EFL teaching to SEN learners. This results in students graduating without sufficient knowledge about the nature and difficulties SEN learners encounter in acquiring an L2. Moreover, trainee teachers are not fully cognizant with either suitable teaching approaches and techniques or evaluation procedures (Nijakowska 2015). Thus, even qualified in-service EFL teachers continue to have mixed feelings about their own preparedness to educate students with disabilities in a general education setting. Russak (2016: 1196) concludes that "pupils with SEN in Israel are being taught, in many instances, by teachers with no training or knowledge in the field of special education". Consequently, due to the L2 teachers' blind application of teaching methods and techniques, language learning progress of L2 learners with SEN is largely inhibited. Apart from some scarce recent research (e.g. Kormos & Nijakowska 2017; Nijakowska, Tsagari & Spanoudis 2018), little is also known about the attitudes trainee teachers hold regarding the inclusion of students with SEN in the mainstream education. Tandem learning may offer therefore unique prospects for trainee teachers to share and reflect upon their attitudes towards EFL teaching to students with SEN.

One more crucial aspect needs to be considered in the preparation of the TLTT project: whether the target group of prospective teachers is willing and ready to participate in it. The TLTT pilot project aims to investigate this issue, which is presented in detail in the following sections.

4. Major objectives of the TLTT pilot project

The major objective of the TLTT pilot project is to verify the trainee teachers' readiness to engage in crossing teacher training multiple borders in order to promote high quality L2 teaching and reduce attitudinal barriers. More specifically, the pilot project aims to focus on the participants' levels of awareness of socio-cultural, institutional and linguistic differences before initiating the TLTT project with a cooperating institution. Additionally, this phase is initiated for the purposes of eliciting potential focal discussion areas and the needs of EFL trainee teachers.

Teachers' multicultural competence, defined as "the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to work effectively and ethically across cultural differences" (Pope & Reynolds 1997: 270), can shape their learners' performance and behaviour (e.g. Cortés 2016; Ulug, Ozden & Eryilmaz 2011). Therefore, investigating the trainee teachers' awareness of cross-cultural and cross-educational issues that they may encounter in a multicultural FL classroom seems to be the right direction in reducing several attitudinal barriers, which are, according to Block and Obrusnikova (2007), at the root of all environmental obstacles, and are the most difficult to change. These barriers may be reflected in misconceptions, stereotypes, stigmatization, fear of the unknown and resistance. For these reasons awareness of the existent discrepancies are particularly important in teacher development processes. Generally, trainee teachers' higher awareness of cross-cultural and cross-educational differences and their positive attitudes towards the TLTT project may forebode its success. The aim of the present paper is to focus on the results of the survey conducted in the pilot phase that discloses the participants' readiness to engage in the project and elicits topics for tandem learning.

5. Method

This section entails the description of the pilot phase, with an account of the participants, the instrument and the procedure. What follows is a presentation of the results combined with their discussion.

5.1. Participants

The trainee teachers who participated in the pilot phase were 14 female students of English Philology in their first year of M.A. program in Opole University, Poland. They were all enrolled in a two-year teacher training course providing qualifications for teaching English as a foreign language in state schools in Poland.

Prior to the pilot phase they had been trained in teaching EFL methodology for approximately one semester, with the number of contact hours amounting to 60 in their first semester. Additionally, each of them had had a 30-hour experience of teaching English as a foreign language at a primary school level. All participants were motivated to finalize the course and to receive the EFL teacher qualifications. Their command of English was close to C1 level (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001) which is the university requirement to enroll in the M.A. program.

5.2. Instrument

For the purposes of eliciting the participants' readiness to engage in crossing the borders discussed earlier and the topics for tandem discussions, a two-part instrument with closed and open items regarding the TLTT project was designed. As mentioned earlier, this readiness has been operationalized as the levels of the participants' awareness regarding aspects of cultural, educational and linguistic differences between the EFL teacher training issues of the partner countries. Hence, the aim of the first part was to measure the participants' levels of awareness. This part was also intended to trigger the ideas that might have supported the participants' responses to the second part, the primary aim of which was to generate potential topics for tandem learning.

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of 15 statements whose responses were marked on a 6-point Likert scale (from 1 – not aware of to 6 – fully aware of). These statements referred to the awareness of culture differences (item 1: culture differences between Israel and Poland), institutional differences at the national (item 3: differences in educational systems in Israel and Poland) and university (items 2 and 4, e.g. differences in EFL teaching methodology courses offered by Kaye College and Opole University) levels, linguistic (L1-based) differences in approaching EFL teaching (item 5), and EFL teaching aspects focusing on EFL students, including those with special needs (items 6-15, e.g. teacher's role in teaching EFL to learners with special needs). The second part, qualitative in nature, aimed to elicit the participants responses to the following questions:

- Which of the issues listed in Part I would you like to learn more?
- If you had a chance to Skype with a trainee teacher like you from Israel, what English language teaching topics would you like to discuss?
- If you were supposed to teach English to children (also those with special needs) from various cultural backgrounds, what would you like to know to teach them effectively?

- What topics would you suggest for the TLTT project between Israel and Poland?
- What can you learn from Israeli colleagues?
- What can you share with Israeli colleagues?

In the rubric “other comments” the participants were allowed to add their own comments regarding the idea of the TLTT project.

5.3. Procedure

The pilot phase consisted of a workshop delivered by the EFL teacher trainers from the partner institution, Kaye College of Education, Israel, and the collection of the participants’ responses to the questionnaire. The aims of the workshop were multifold: to introduce the teacher training institution of a distant, cooperative country, to introduce the idea of teaching EFL to learners with special educational needs, to generate ideas for the TLTT project on intercultural differences and similarities in the area of EFL teaching. After the workshop that lasted approximately 90 minutes, the participants were requested to reflect and respond to the questionnaire, which they completed within 30 minutes.

6. Results and discussion

The outcomes of the quantitative part of the questionnaire revealed a considerable level of awareness of cultural, institutional and linguistic differences which the participants reported after receiving the input in the form of a workshop delivered by the partner teacher trainers (see Table 1). The mean indicating the level of awareness of cultural differences reached the value 5, whereas the average levels representing the participants’ awareness of EFL teaching methodology course curriculum were only slightly lower ($M=4.5$, $SD=.73$). Linguistic (L1-based) differences in approaching EFL teaching in Israel and Poland ($M=4.5$, $SD=.73$) were also quite evident for the participants. The lowest mean scores were calculated for the awareness of the differences in educational systems ($M=4.3$, $SD=.70$) as well as administrative and structural differences between the two institutions ($M=4.1$). Additionally, the responses to the latter were most varied in this group ($SD=1.25$).

Interesting as they are, the results show comparatively high levels of awareness ($M\geq 4.8$) of several aspects regarding EFL teaching, such as the values of equity, collaborative work and teacher-student relationship. The participants are highly aware of how they perceive learners with special needs ($M=5$, $SD=.76$), the emotional load EFL learners encounter in their process of EFL learning ($M=5.1$,

SD=.74), a teacher's role ($M=5.1$, $SD=.74$), the value of Multi-Sensory Learning (MSL) approach applied in teaching English as a foreign language ($M=5.2$, $SD=.56$) and the value of creative thinking in EFL teaching ($M=5.2$). Interestingly, the responses to the last item were quite dispersed ($SD=1.52$). Somewhat lower but still high scores were obtained for the items regarding different skills and abilities that EFL learners from Poland and Israel are equipped with ($M=4.8$, $SD=.77$), how others perceive SEN learners ($M=4.8$, $SD=.67$) and the value of collaborative work in EFL teaching ($M=4.9$, $SD=.83$). Generally, in this part the participants exhibited high levels of awareness of the multi-layered differences between Israel and Poland. Their readiness to engage in sharing their socio-cultural perspective has been revealed in the subsequent part of the pilot study.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the levels of the participants' awareness regarding cultural, institutional and linguistic differences between the EFL teacher training issues of the partner countries, and those concerning EFL teaching to learners with special needs.

Item No.	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
1. culture differences between the two institutions- Kaye College and Opole University	3	6	5.0	.76
2. structural/administrative differences between the two institutions	1	6	4.1	1.25
3. differences in educational systems in Israel and Poland	3	5	4.3	.70
4. differences in EFL teaching methodology courses offered by the two institutions	3	5	4.5	.73
5. linguistic (L1-based) differences in approaching EFL teaching in Israel and Poland	3	6	4.5	.73
6. different skills and abilities EFL learners from Poland and Israel are equipped with	3	6	4.8	.77
7. value of equity in EFL teaching	4	6	5.0	.65
8. value of collaborative work in EFL teaching	3	6	4.9	.83
9. value of creative thinking in EFL teaching	3	6	5.2	1.52
10. value of teacher-student relationship in EFL teaching	3	6	5.2	.77
11. how you perceive learners with special needs	3	6	5.0	.76
12. how others perceive learners with special needs	4	6	4.8	.67
13. teacher's role in EFL teaching	3	6	5.1	.74
14. emotional load learners encounter in their process of EFL learning	3	6	5.1	.74
15. the value of Multi-Sensory Learning (MSL) approach applied in EFL teaching	4	6	5.2	.56

Source: own study

In the qualitative part of the questionnaire the respondents acknowledged their willingness to expand and share their knowledge on a number of themes that emerged from the responses. They were mainly centered around sociocultural, linguistic and methodological aspects. The issues raised in the first part of the questionnaire, and those deriving from the workshop delivered by the Israeli teachers, frequently reappeared in the suggestions for the tandem learning topics.

The respondents were concerned about how the Israeli educational system and the partner institution – Kaye College, Beer Sheva – function, with their strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge would allow them to raise their awareness of the similarities and differences of the national systems and institutions in both partner countries. They also expressed their will to be more familiarized with general cultural issues of Israel. For example, tandem learning is expected to help them identify the teaching topics that may be inappropriate or even harmful in different cultures – *It is important to know how to deal with the topics that in different cultures may be harmful or inappropriate* (Trainee Teacher 1 – TT 1). Interestingly enough, a topic for tandem learning recurrently proposed in the questionnaire referred to the discussion on the differences in the curriculum of an EFL methodology courses between the partner institutions. This might imply a high level of involvement on the part of the participants in the process of becoming responsible, knowledgeable and culture-sensitive EFL teachers.

Moreover, the trainee teachers reported their interest in L1-based linguistic differences in approaching EFL teaching. What attracted their attention was the way the English alphabet, reading and writing were introduced at the beginner levels of EFL teaching in Israel. This is strongly related with the Hebrew script that is distant from the one used in both Poland and English speaking countries. In an informal discussion, Polish trainee teachers confessed that they had never thought that the English script might trigger problems to an EFL learner. This awakening experience instigated interest in finding further differences regarding EFL teaching methodology (e.g. *[I would like to discuss] various methods and approaches to EFL [teaching]*, TT 10). Furthermore, the participants were concerned about other problems EFL learners might encounter from an L1 perspective (e.g. *the problems the students encounter while studying English from L1 point of view*, TT 7).

Apart from the focus on institutional and linguistic differences, the participants expressed their readiness to center their discussions around the topics concerning culture and EFL teaching issues. They were interested in the role of a teacher (e.g. *What is their [Israeli trainee teacher's] attitude towards the role of the teacher*, TT 4), particularly in the multicultural environment, for instance, how to cooperate with students from various cultural backgrounds (e.g. *[we can*

*learn more from Israeli colleagues about] cooperating with students from various cultural backgrounds, TT 8), how to minimize limitations that cultural differences may impose on an EFL teacher, and how to maintain discipline in a multicultural classroom (e.g. *the cultural matters connected with the discipline, TT 4*). In tandem teaching special attention was proposed to be given to comparing experiences in EFL teaching and learning (e.g. *compare my and his/her ideas; compare the experiences how he/she was taught English and how I was, TT 5*), to the use of EFL teaching materials and books in both countries (e.g. *preferable materials and books used for teaching, TT 7*) and generating ideas on how to conduct an interesting lesson (e.g. *the ideas of how to conduct an interesting class, TT 5*).*

Some consideration was given to the topic of EFL teaching to learners with special needs and student-teacher relationship (e.g. *how to encourage pupils to cooperate with me, TT 5*). Particularly, the trainee teachers wanted to discuss the value of a teacher-student relationship in EFL teaching, in particular to learners with special educational needs, and how the perception of these learners shapes this relationship (e.g. *[how to] behave and react to various situations [while teaching learners with special needs], TT 2; how to create a good teacher-student relationship, TT 3*). In tandem learning they proposed to discuss characteristics of SEN learners, how to identify and preliminarily diagnose them (e.g. *I'd like to learn more about students with special needs and how to cope with them, TT 9*), how to teach EFL skills and language aspects, such as grammar, to those learners (e.g. *How to teach grammar to children with special needs, TT 3*) – and how to include them in the group of other learners (e.g. *[how to] encourage pupils to cooperate despite those differences, TT 3*).

Generally, the participants expressed their positive attitudes to the TLTT project and found the pilot phase enriching. As a result, five major themes have emerged for tandem learning of the EFL trainee teachers: teaching contexts, L1 interference in EFL learning, culture differences, aspects of EFL teaching, and teaching EFL to learners with special educational needs. The first penetrates similarities and differences of the two countries' educational systems and teacher training curricula. The second focuses on characteristics of L1s that may affect the processes of L2 learning. The third inspects how to approach culturally sensitive topics in a multicultural EFL classroom. The next one delves into teacher-student relationship and, finally, the last topic concentrates on similarities and differences in EFL teaching to SEN learners in order to enhance building an inclusive classroom environment. All these topics are interrelated and reflect trainee teachers' interests in identifying, sharing and perfecting professional knowledge, skills and abilities.

7. Conclusions

The results of the pilot phase of the TLTT program show that the EFL trainee teachers of English Philology in their first year of M.A. program in Opole University, Poland, who participated in research are generally aware of cultural, institutional and linguistic differences between the two cooperating parties, which translates into their readiness to engage in tandem learning with the purpose of exchanging knowledge and experience on the topics of their interest which focus on teaching contexts, L1 interference in EFL learning, culture differences, aspects of EFL teaching, and teaching EFL to learners with special educational needs. Therefore, it may be concluded that the participants of the TLTT pilot project are ready to cross multifold borders. Firstly, they are willing to cross their culture-specific zone in order to gain more knowledge about a distant culture, for instance, about the culture-sensitive topics and how to cope with them in the classroom. They express their readiness to engage in tandem learning which goes beyond the traditional teacher training classroom course. By discussing L1-based EFL learner problems, the participants may infiltrate cross-linguistic borders that they would probably never experience without the TLTT project. Moreover, exploring the systems of education of their own and that of the partner country provides them with a greater awareness of institutional similarities and differences with the spectrum of their strengths and weaknesses. Finally, they would be able to enter the domain of the on-line synchronous communication that in an instant crosses geographical borders.

Despite insightful results that the study generated, the limitations must be addressed. One of the major weakness is a very small number of the participants coming only from one of the two countries involved in the future tandem project. Therefore, further investigations are needed in order to supplement the pilot project with the data provided by the Israeli trainee teachers before the final shape of the TLTT project is outlined. The second limitation refers to the very design of the data collection tool, especially its first part with the Likert scale items, which could be improved in order to yield more reliable results. More specifically, the instrument should have targeted the cross-cultural and cross-educational issues in a more refined manner, providing more detailed items, particularly those regarding aspects of EFL teaching.

The design of the TLTT project requires a number of further actions to be taken into consideration before its implementation. To mention a few, there is a need for a coherent and consistent framework, ensuring the effective running of the project. The project's administration requires clear specifications of available time frames, technical aspects of channel of communication, and pair matching

of the participants. The action plan should also include tools for tracking the progress of the project and its evaluation, such as models of supervision enhancing reflectivity (cf. Salomão 2011).

Tandem learning implemented in the area of professional skills development between trainee teachers whose first languages and cultures are distant from one another and from the language they use for tandem collaboration enhances a number of competences: linguistic, social and intercultural. All of these competences augment the growth of an individual in his or her process of becoming a reflective, sensitive and knowledgeable L2 teacher who is ready to face the challenges of the new millennium foreign language classroom.

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W stronę przekraczania granic w szkoleniu nauczycieli języków obcych: pilotażowy projekt kształcenia nauczycieli w tandemie

Streszczenie:

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie pilotażowej fazy projektu skierowanego do przyszłych nauczycieli języka angielskiego, jako obcego, w której dokonują oni ewaluacji swojej wiedzy, podejścia i świadomości międzykulturowej oraz znajomości różnic i podobieństw pomiędzy współpracującymi ze sobą, a odległymi społecznie, kulturowo i językowo instytucjami kształcącymi przyszłych nauczycieli w Izraelu i Polsce. Zebrane dane stanowią podstawę do stworzenia innowacyjnego międzynarodowego projektu, wykraczającego poza ramy dotychczasowych kursów szkoleniowych dla przyszłych nauczycieli języka angielskiego w obu krajach. Projekt docelowo zakłada wykorzystanie uczenia się na odległość w tandemie, polegającym na regularnej wymianie myśli i doświadczeń na temat nauczania języka angielskiego jako obcego w obu krajach w celu uwrażliwienia uczestników szkolenia na tematy wynikające z różnorodności społeczno-kulturowej i językowej uczniów. Projekt pilotażowy stanowi więc początkową, niezwykle istotną fazę, oceniającą stopień, w jakim przyszli nauczycieli są gotowi przekraczać bariery społeczno-kulturowe, językowe i psychologiczne, niezbędne do współpracy w tandemie. Grupa czternastu przyszłych nauczycieli języka angielskiego z Uniwersytetu Opolskiego wzięła udział w projekcie pilotażowym, mierzącym gotowość do przekraczania ww. granic. Narzędziem pomiarowym był kwestionariusz, składający się z pytań zamkniętych i otwartych, dotyczących, między innymi, świadomości różnic w podejściu do nauczania języka angielskiego jako obcego w kraju partnerskim. Analiza pozyskanych danych ilościowych i jakościowych posłużyła do nakreślenia obszaru tematycznego w przyszłym projekcie Kształcenia Nauczycieli Języka Obcego na Odległość w Tandemie (Tandem Learning Teacher Training project – TLTT).

Słowa kluczowe:

uczenie się w tandemie, kształcenie nauczycieli języków obcych, świadomość międzykulturowa