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Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal
Revija Centra za študij edukacijskih strategij

The CEPS Journal is an open-access, peer-reviewed journal devoted to publishing research papers in different fields of education, including scientific.

Aims & Scope

The CEPS Journal is an international peer-reviewed journal with an international board. It publishes original empirical and theoretical studies from a wide variety of academic disciplines related to the field of Teacher Education and Educational Sciences; in particular, it will support comparative studies in the field. Regional context is stressed but the journal remains open to researchers and contributors across all European countries and worldwide. There are four issues per year. Issues are focused on specific areas but there is also space for non-focused articles and book reviews.

About the Publisher

The University of Ljubljana is one of the largest universities in the region (see www.uni-lj.si) and its Faculty of Education (see www.pef.uni-lj.si), established in 1947, has the leading role in teacher education and education sciences in Slovenia. It is well positioned in regional and European cooperation programmes in teaching and research. A publishing unit oversees the dissemination of research results and informs the interested public about new trends in the broad area of teacher education and education sciences; to date, numerous monographs and publications have been published, not just in Slovenian but also in English.

In 2001, the Centre for Educational Policy Studies (CEPS; see http://ceps.pef.uni-lj.si) was established within the Faculty of Education to build upon experience acquired in the broad reform of the national educational system during the period of social transition in the 1990s, to upgrade expertise and to strengthen international cooperation. CEPS has established a number of fruitful contacts, both in the region – particularly with similar institutions in the countries of the Western Balkans – and with interested partners in EU member states and worldwide.

Revija Centra za študij edukacijskih strategij je mednarodno recenzirana revija z mednarodnim uredniškim odborom in s prostim dostopom. Namenjena je objavljanju člankov s področja izobraževanja učiteljev in edukacijskih ved.

Cilji in namen

Revija je namenjena obravnavanju naslednjih področij: poučevanje, učenje, vzgoja in izobraževanje, socialna pedagogika, specialna in rehabilitacijska pedagogika, predšolska pedagogika, edukacijske politike, supervizija, poučevanje slovenskega jezika in književnosti, poučevanje matematike, računalništva, naravoslovja in tehnike, poučevanje družboslovja in humanistike, poučevanje na področju umetnosti, visokošolsko izobraževanje in izobraževanje odraslih. Poseben poudarek bo namenjen izobraževanju učiteljev in spodbujanju njihovega profesionalnega razvoja.

V reviji so objavljeni znanstveni prispevki, in sicer teoretični prispevki in prispevki, v katerih so predstavljeni rezultati kvantitavnih in kvalitativnih empiričnih raziskav. Še posebej poudarjen je pomen komparativnih raziskav.

Revija izide štirikrat letno. Številke so tematsko opredeljene, v njih pa je prostor tudi za netematske prispevke in predstavitve ter recenzije novih publikacij.

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REVIEWS

Editorial

Interventions at the structural, home, policy or school level is like searching for your wallet which you lost in the bushes under the lamppost because that is where the light is. The answer lies elsewhere – it lies in the person who gently closes the classroom door and performs the teaching act - the person who puts into place the end effects of so many policies, who interprets those policies and who is alone with students during their 15,000 hours of schooling. I therefore suggest that we should focus on the greatest source of variance that can make a difference – the teacher (Hattie, 2003, p. 3).

The thematic focus of this edition of the CEPS journal is "National vs. European trends within teacher education – possibilities and challenges", one of the questions recently often posed not only by policy makers, but also teachers and teacher educators.

One could agree that education has always been and probably always will be deeply rooted in national culture, history and identity, which is probably also the reason that the issue of teaching and teachers' quality was rarely a topic of international cooperation and comparative research before the 1990s. Today, teacher education is among the top priorities of European Union countries' education policies, and one of the top topics for international cooperation and comparative research. We are witnessing Erasmus, Socrates, Leonardo, Tempus programmes, stimulating cooperation among educational institution of different countries; networks such as ENTEP (European Network on Teacher Education Policies), ATEE (Association for Teacher Education in Europe) , TEPE (Teacher Education Policy in Europe) comparing and researching teacher education processes and policies; international analysis of quality of educational systems such as PISA, PIRLS, TIMSS, TALIS; strategies of the European Commission aiming at developing common frameworks and principles for developing national educational systems, including teacher education. The increased attention to teacher education of policy makers and other key stakeholders in the education sector has also been enhanced by accumulated research evidence indicating that "the teacher quality is significantly and positively related to the student's attainment […] and that it is the most important within-school aspect explaining student performance" (EC, 2007). Some of the key studies with the greatest impact on policy makers and educational experts have been the international comparisons, such as "Teachers matter – attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers" (OECD, 2005) or the so-called McKinsey reports "How the world's best performing school systems come out on top" (Barber &

Mourshead, 2007) and "How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better" (Mourshed, Chijiokee, & Barber, 2010). The main findings of these studies can be summarised in this sentence: "The quality of educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers" (Barber & Morushed, 2007), as also indicated in the quotation by Hattie above.

Thus, teacher education today is no longer seen only as a "national affair", but rather as a topic for international cooperation and comparative research, and is among the top priorities of education policies. It seems that internationalisation and globalisation, as well as the recent expansion of the use of the concept of the European Union as "a knowledge society", has also stimulated the processes of harmonization in the development of teacher education systems. The purpose of the above-mentioned networking and cooperation is to deepen insight into systemic solutions and experiences in various countries, which might encourage reflection in one's own country; however, one cannot overlook the expectation that national educational systems install transnational and European dimensions, resulting in a changing of educational systems as well as understandings about what qualitative education is and which competences teachers should acquire.

In the previous two decades, some points of convergence among European educational systems could be observed, but the gap between general European policy formulations and their translation into national practices remain; while in almost all the countries worldwide, regardless of their socio-economic contexts or differences in educational cultures and practices, some common challenges and problems in the field of teacher education could be observed, the answers to these challenges and problems are different even when they are inspired and guided by the same supranational educational policy initiatives. That is why questions regarding the role of national and transnational trends within teacher education remain. Moreover, this is also the question in this thematic issue of CEPS journal. We invited authors to deepen reflection and disscussions on the various aspects of European dimension/s in teacher education systems as well as on the "meaning" of European teacher. In our invitation to authors we stated that the purpose of this issue is to raise the question as to whether European teacher education is possible and how so; what constitutes a "European teacher", and more specifically which competences are needed within the framework of the new "European teacher professionalism"; the impact of international/European policy initiatives on national teacher education systems; the effects of teacher student exchanges (e.g. Erasmus programmes) on teacher and student formation; the understanding of international and European dimension/s in initial teacher education curricula; the impact of

international cooperation and comparative research on teacher education; intercultural education in teacher education.

As a result of our invitation, we present five articles discussing different aspects of national versus European trends within teacher education.

The first article titled "The European teacher: Transnational perspective in teacher education policy and practice" is authored by the Michael Schratz. In his paper, he examines the concept of the European teacher from various perspectives: five domains of teacher professionalism defined in the Austrian research project "Entwicklung von Professionalit t im internationalen Kontext" are explained as an example of the research efforts within a particular sociocultural context; lists of teacher competences are summarised as a product of the international cooperation of professionals in the field of teacher education; as a contribution to policy-making and future research and discussions, a list of domains that can be seen as an attempt to operationalize of the concept of 'European teacher' are offered. These examples show that the discussion about what constitutes the "Europeanness" in the teaching profession has been open at different levels, and some recommendations have been developed, but further discussions and research are still needed.

In the next article titled "Defining moments in policy development, direction, and implementation in Irish initial teacher education policy" the author, Teresa O'Doherty, examines Irish education's engagement with a supranational institution, the OECD. The paper explores the impact of significant OECD documents over the last half century on the evolution of Irish education policy, specifically teacher education policy, posing the following questions: to what extent did Irish policy makers depend on external reviews and guidance to spur policy development and reform; was the repeated intervention of the OECD required to legitimise policy development by the state in education and particularly teacher education, which was provided by the church? According to author, while engagement with the OECD cannot simply explain changes in Irish education, it has played a significant role in creating the context for change, stimulating internal debate and providing the foundation for national policy development.

The third article "Croatian teacher competencies related to creation and implementation of education policy", written by Vesna Kovač, Branko Rafajac and Iva Buchberger, is based on the assumption that the success of an education system and educational reforms depends largely on professional capacities and the willingness of teachers to implement new decisions in their everyday school practices. Deriving from that, the authors in the article present research in which they posed the question of how Croatian primary and secondary

teachers perceive the importance of the competences related to education poli-cies, their cognition and mastering of competences related to the education policies, and how they perceive their actual participation in the creation and implementation of educational policies. They concluded that greater emphasis is necessary to include the development of this competences as a part of initial teacher education; that teachers should be strongly involved in the process of creating education policy, with better appreciation of their professional com-petences and capacities; and that stronger involvement should start with the creation of better conditions for strengthening their role in decision-making process at the school level.

The fourth article titled "Effects of German language teacher profes-sional development on pupils' learning outcomes in intercultural competence" written by Ana Šenjug Golub, is based on the evidence that development of intercultural competence is increasingly being perceived as a key goal both in the European education policy and in the national education policies of Euro-pean countries, since its purpose is to establish and improve relationships and bring about mutual understanding and respect among members of different cultural and social groups. However, according to research results, it is evident that teachers often face difficulties in achieving the aims related to intercultural competences in the classroom. As a result, the study was designed to determine whether teacher professional development in the field of intercultural compe-tence influence the achievement of goals set in the foreign language curricular documents. The results reported in this paper confirmed that foreign language teacher professional development in the field of intercultural competence had positive effects on pupils' learning outcomes, especially in the cognitive compo-nent of intercultural competence. However, it seems that when designing such programmes, particular emphasis should be placed on the problem of stereo-types and prejudices, which are much harder to tackle.

The article written by Karin da Rocha: "Europe's Got Talent: Setting the Stage for New Teachers by Educative Mentoring", presents a project titled "Sup-porting new teacher at the beginning of their careers in primary schools" in which local mentors support novice teachers. This project references develop-ments in other European countries and emphasizes the need for local variety and refraining from overly restrictive standards. The article focuses on the mentor's role, its challenges and duties, taking into account the value of educa-tive mentoring for professional learning communities and individual learning processes. The author concluded that, in contrast to the wider perspective, con-cepts like mentoring must also be considered on a regional or even local level. As the author states, "It is necessary to keep an eye on cultural contexts and

fitting when transferring one model to another European nation. Values and traditions of assessment or the definition of good teaching vary greatly and the acceptance of such models differs accordingly. This complex bridge between European and national concepts demands the respect of individual countries' needs."

In the Varia secton, two papers are presented. The first, written by Seyyed Hatam Tamimi Saʾd and Zohre Qadermazi, entitled "Refusal Strategies of Iranian University English as a Foreign Language and Non-English Learners in Native Language", presents a comparative study with which the authors attempt to examine the possible effect that exposure to English has had on the use of refusal strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in comparison with those of non-English learners when refusing to do something in their native language, Persian. The results indicated that non-English learners used refusal strategies considerably more frequently than the EFL learners did, while the EFL learners utilized more adjuncts to refusals than the non-English learners did. However, the differences were not statistically significant. The results can be considered as evidence that the effect of the second language on the native language might not be at work in the pragmatic aspects of language learning.

The second paper, "Encouraging Family and Parent Education: Program Development and Evaluation in the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg, Germany", presented by Sandra Landhäußer, Stefan Faas and Rainer Treptow, presents a report that details the conceptualization and evaluation of a federal state program in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, which was launched in 2008 to encourage family and parent education. The results show that main goals of the program were reached.

At the end, a review Jana Bacevic's book "From Class to Identity / The Politics of Education Reforms in Former Yugoslavia" (2014) is given by Darko Štrajn.

Vlatka Domović and Mojca Peček Čuk

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The European Teacher: Transnational Perspectives in Teacher Education Policy and Practice

Michael Schratz[1]

∾ The future role of teachers in Europe will contribute to raising the awareness of a new expectation of what it means to be a "European Teacher". If there is unity in diversity through national identities, the question remains: what makes a teacher "European"? Answering this unusual question, one encounters several aspects that have strong national traits of what it means to teach in a particular country (e.g. political culture), which still does not enable teachers to easily move their employment from one country to another because of differences in career structure, teacher education, selection and recruitment, etc. However, there are many similarities in general teacher competences that are required throughout Europe and beyond. This paper looks at teacher professionalism from various perspectives, attempts to discern the "Europeanness" in teachers' work and mobility as a goal, and highlights particular policy development areas necessary to stimulate further discussions. The depiction of a European Doctorate in Teacher Education concludes the paper.

Keywords: teacher professionalism, European dimension, mobility, teacher education and competences, teacher education policies

1   Dept. of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Innsbruck, Austria;
     michael.schratz@uibk.ac.at

Evropski učitelj: nadnacionalni pogled na politike in prakse izobraževanja učiteljev

Michael Schratz

〜 Vloga učiteljev v Evropi bo v prihodnosti pomembna tudi pri dvigovanju zavedanja o tem, kaj pomeni biti »evropski učitelj«. Čeprav smo si edini, da med državami obstaja raznovrstnost, ostaja vprašanje, kaj naredi učitelja »evropskega«. Pri odgovarjanju na to nenavadno vprašanje lahko naletimo na več različnih vidikov, ki so močno nacionalno zaznamovani, in sicer s tem, kaj pomeni poučevati v določeni državi (kot na primer politična kultura). Prav to – razlike v zaposlitveni strukturi, izobraževanju učiteljev, selekciji in v zaposlovanju itn. – učiteljem še vedno ne omogoča, da bi se brez težav zaposlovali v različnih državah. Vendar obstaja veliko podobnosti v generičnih kompetencah učiteljev, ki so zahtevane v vsej Evropi in tudi drugje. Prispevek z različnih vidikov predstavlja profesionalizem učitelja, skuša zaznati »evropskost« učiteljevega dela in mobilnost kot cilj ter poudari določene politike, katerih razvoj bo pomemben pri spodbujanju nadaljnjih razprav. Prispevek se konča s predstavitvijo evropskega doktorata v izobraževanju učiteljev.

Ključne besede: profesionalizem učitelja, evropska dimenzija, mobilnost, izobraževanje učiteljev in kompetence, politike s področja izobraževanja učiteljev

Introduction

In many ways, Europe has become an increasingly important reference point in the field of education, ranging from exchange programmes at the school level to policy development initiatives across Europe (Bauer & Ortner, 2008). While in the economy the influence of the European Union on national policies can be traced in everyday encounters, in education national policymaking has been safeguarded against excessive "Europeanization" (Heidenreich, 2014). Although many teachers work within a European context through exchange programmes and other transnational activities, we know very little about their "Europeanness", i.e. what constitutes a teacher within an understanding of European professionalism.

The first discussions on this topic started during a meeting in the European Network on Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP), which was formed at the initiative of the Portuguese minister of education in 1999 and has offered a transnational space for intensive debate concerning critical teacher education policy issues. During the first meeting, the question was asked "Does something like a European teacher exist?" and attendees seemed to be puzzled by the expectations of such a concept. "Do you want to create a standardized teacher model within Europe?" or "Should we give up our sovereignty of the individual member states of the European Union?" were only two of the many questions giving voice to anxieties of too much influence on educational matters on the national level with reference to the field of tension between transnational integration and national disintegration within European society (Münch, 2008).

Since then, the question "What is a European teacher?" has opened up room for further discussions about future roles of teachers in Europe and has contributed to raising awareness for a new expectation of what constitutes a European teacher, i.e. a teacher working within a European context of professionalism. Since its foundation in 1999, ENTEP has created a "European space" that develops opportunities for country representatives to learn from other members on teacher education policies (Valenčič Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2011), by analysing and comparing policies and issues, as well as by sharing good practices through different kinds of activities. The network uses an open frame of reference for informal exchange and shares knowledge on the basis of written and oral presentations related to specific challenges and issues on teacher education policies.[2] Among the topics covered were research-based teacher education, induction, teacher evaluation, quality assurance, continuous profes-

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2   For further information, see: http://entep.unibuc.eu/. Parts of this article were first published in Schratz, 2010.

sional development of teachers in EU member states, and others (see Gassner, Kerger, & Schratz, 2010). Although the Lisbon Strategy of the European Union influences national policies in many ways, creating unity in diversity through national identities, the question remains: what makes a teacher "European"?

Teacher competences in a national context

If we examine teacher professionalism in general, we come across research findings that expound on the complexity of teaching and teacher education. The historical overview of the advances of the past thirty years in research on teaching in Craig, Meijer, and Broeckmans (2003) highlight traits such as self-awareness and reflection, professionalism in dealing with diversity and uncertainty, collaboration, and cultivating the teachers' image, which seem to be cross-competences that a teacher should acquire. They read like variations of the following criteria from an Austrian research project EPIK[3], which worked on a concept for professionalism in teaching, taking into account the increasing international context of the education area within an international perspective (Schratz, Paseka, & Schrittesser, 2011). The findings of the research by representatives from universities, university colleges of teacher education and school inspectorates in Austria were summarized under the umbrella of the following framework of five *domains of teacher professionalism.*

Reflection and Discourse

Sharing knowledge and skills refers to the capacity of regarding oneself and one's environment with emotional involvement and with a critical and detached eye, as well as the ability to analyse one's actions in a systematic way from different perspectives (practical experiences, theories of education, methodology, one's own biography, etc.), and the ability to develop alternative strategies accordingly. The language for discourse requires the ability to be focused and to see things clearly by putting them into words, to be able to use a shared language for communication among colleagues.

Professional Awareness

To experience oneself as an expert refers to the realization of what makes a teacher's work a profession in its own right. The knowledge of one's own ability and expertise in a clearly defined field and the ability to switch from

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3   *„Entwicklung von Professionalität im internationalen Kontext".* A research project initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education and Culture in 2005 developing a framework for professional competences for Austrian teachers within an international context.

involvement to analysis requires beneficial organizational structures in schools, sufficient scope for professional development, and career options.

Collaboration and Collegiality

The productivity of cooperation encourages professionals to intensify collegial dialogue, to appreciate and make use of the professional community as a place for communication and collaboration, and to deepen social skills for dealing with colleagues. Collegiality asks for new organizational formats, i.e. structures that promote a culture of openness, as well as for time and place for professional collaboration.

Ability to differenciate

The ability to deal with differences large and small encompasses the realization of the different learning dispositions of students, the knowledge of how to deal with different learning styles, with communication and integration difficulties, and the skills of personalized learning. It requires practices that help to use "diversity" as a resource and to create an institutional framework for dealing with heterogeneity.

Personal Mastery

Continuous reflection on experience creates a sense of mastery by building on the principles and practices that follow a personal vision. The power of individual prowess shows (through clear ideas about one's personal objectives) the ability to use one's knowledge and skills adequately in a specific situation as well as to link theory with practice in finding one's own way in strategic development. Personal mastery requires structures that allow and accept mistakes and make genuine personal learning possible and gratifying.

The five domains focus on cross-cutting issues, which strongly characterize professional attitudes and practice, although research shows that the dimensions are less distinctive in teaching practice. The five domains can be described as a classification of *competence areas for the teaching profession*, theoretically independent of subject matters or school types. However, in practice, the related-to-school types, subjects and their specific didactics are prevalent, and termed the "sixth discipline" within the EPIK concept. "It is the discipline that integrates the disciplines, fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice" (Senge, 1990, p. 12). The sixth discipline forms the context in which the domains appear.
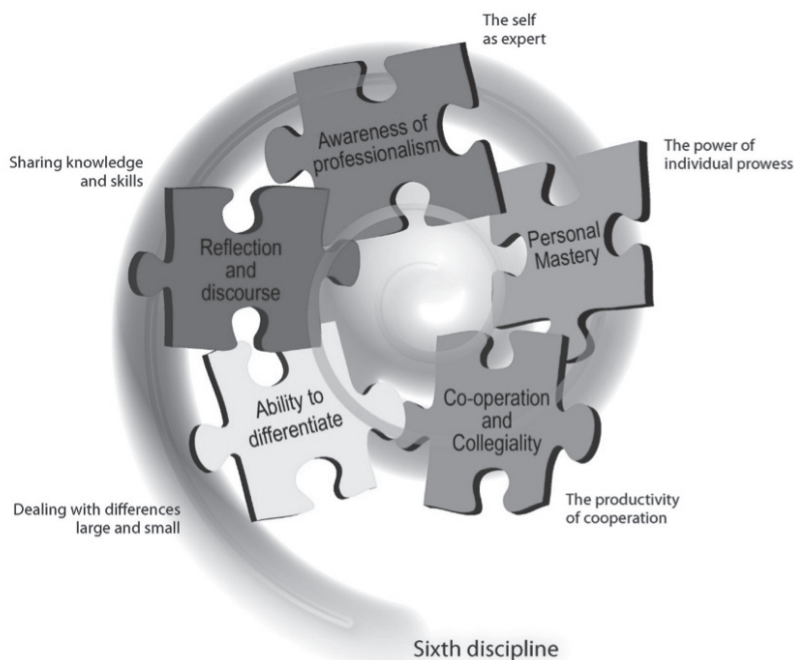
Figure 1. The five domains of professionalism and the sixth discipline (from Schratz, Paseka, & Schrittesser, 2011, p. 26).

For example, the context-specific aspects of teaching refer to the type of school, the subject area taught with the methods involved in practice. In Figure 1, the sixth discipline is shown in the form of a spiral, which indicates that the five domains have relevance for all aspects of the context on different levels. The puzzle shows the multi-perceptivity of the domains, symbolizing their inter-relation and overlapping. Therefore, dealing with difference might occur differently in a math class on the primary level, from differentiation on the upper secondary level or in a different subject such as physical education. The subject matter taught plays a significant role in this understanding of context, since recent research studies show that teachers must have profound knowledge of her/his subject area and the skills to teach students[4] successfully. Since a teachers' knowledge and skills depend on their continuous learning and development, they should deal with current research and be aware of the individual and social changes. Change forces play a vital role on all levels of the education system. Therefore, the European Union has installed particular working groups with a view towards a common transnational understanding, which will be dealt with in the following section.

4   In this paper, the terms "pupils" and "students" are used interchangeably.

The European Union's perspective

Whereas national research and development projects, such as the Austrian one presented in the previous section, build on the knowledge and experiences within a particular socio-cultural context, the European perspective is not in the foreground.

Within the EU, among others, an Expert Group of Teacher Education was installed as a response to issues of student intake, teaching environment, and contextual factors including general social trends and developments in the labour market. Its members were asked which changes in teachers' competences were formally required of teachers in their countries in recent years. They were also invited to identify possible changes that were likely to be required by teachers in the coming years in response to student intake and other issues mentioned above. The following items were summarized by this expert group in a synthesis report.[5]

Impact of social change
Promoting new learning outcomes
- Contributing to citizenship education of students/trainees
  Such as
  - Living in a multicultural, inclusive and tolerant society
  - Living according to sustainable lifestyles regarding environmental issues
  - Dealing with gender equity issues in family, work and social life
  - Living as European citizen
  - Managing his/her own career development
- Promoting the development of competences of students/trainees for the knowledge and lifelong learning society
  Such as
  - Motivation to learn beyond compulsory education
  - Learn how to learn/learning in an independent way
  - Information processing
  - Digital literacy
  - Creativity and innovation
  - Problem-solving
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Communication
  - Visual culture
- Linking the development of new curriculum competencies with school subjects

Diversity of student intake and changes in the teaching environment
Working in restructured ways in the classroom
- Dealing with social, cultural and ethnic diversity of students
- Organising learning environments and facilitating learning processes
- Working in teams with teachers and other professionals involved in the learning process of the same students

Working "beyond the classroom": in the school/training centre and with social partners
- Working in the school curriculum, organizational development and evaluation
- Collaborating with parents and other social partners

Integrating ICT in formal learning situations and in all professional practice

Increasing levels of teaching professionalism
Acting as professionals
- Acting in an investigative or problem-solving way
- Assuming greater responsibility for their own professional development in a lifelong learning perspective

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Figure 2. Changes in teacher and trainer competences. Synthesis report EU Expert Group on Teacher Education (2003).

This (by no means complete) list indicates essentially general (new) competences required by any (future) teacher. The European dimension is mentioned under citizenship education for students under the heading of "Promoting new learning outcome", but does not appear under "Increasing levels of teaching professionalization". Therefore, ENTEP started a discussion among the member countries' representatives on the question of what "Europeanness" could comprise in teacher professionalism in the European Union with a particular view on mobility within the European education area and suggestions for policy-making implementation (Snoek, Uzerli, & Schratz, 2008).

"Europeanness"

Teachers in the European Union not only educate future citizens of their particular member state, but also support them in becoming future generations of European citizens. They work within a national framework, which emphasizes the need for a national identity as a basis for transnational awareness within European society. The term "European Dimension" has been used to balance national and transnational values in educational policy making.

The discussion on the European teacher goes further by looking closer at what constitutes the "Europeanness" in the teaching profession. From this perspective, the European dimension is composed of many different facets deeply rooted in the socio-political and cultural context of a growing European community beyond the competition paradigm in the realm of education (Münch, 2010). From a policy perspective, the overview which follows does not aim at creating the format of a "European super teacher", but intends to indicate European issues that are potentially of particular significance in future discussions.

a) *European identity*: The question of who Europeans are and what has led to European identity can be answered from different angles (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009). Since the 1980s, the identification with Europe has become more politicized through the formation of the EU. Exchange programmes, scholarships and other transnational initiatives have taken teachers "beyond" the national curriculum. He/she would see himself/herself as someone with roots in one particular country, but simultaneously belonging to a greater European whole (Hilligus & Kreienbaum, 2007). This co-existence of national identity and transnational awareness provides a valuable perspective on questions of heterogeneity. Diversity within unity is, therefore, a key aspect of a developed European identity with an open mind toward the world at large.

b) *European knowledge*: European knowledge can be viewed from different perspectives. On the governance level, there is knowledge about Europe that is

expected from an educated European citizen and is already taught at primary level (see, for example, Hatzky & Struve, 2005). On the higher education level, there is debate regarding "a Europe of knowledge", which has reflected the synergies and tensions between European research and higher education policies (see, for example, Chou, 2014). In the realm of teaching, the question arises of whether a European Teacher has to have some knowledge of other European education systems and, possibly, of educational policy matters on the EU level. Does s/he value his/her own education system and view it in relation to other European ones? Does s/he have a knowledge of European and world affairs and is s/he aware of European history (histories) and its (their) influence on contemporary European society?

c) *European multiculturalism*: A European Teacher engages with the multicultural nature of European society. He/she has an active relationship with his/her own culture and is open towards other cultures. He/she knows how to behave in other cultures in a confident and non-dominant way. He/she works with heterogeneous groups, sees heterogeneity as valuable and respects any differences. He/she copes with the challenges of the multicultural aspects of the knowledge society and works to promote equal opportunities.

d) *European language competence*: A European Teacher speaks more than one European language with differing levels of competence. He/she experiences other languages in initial and further teacher education and is able to teach subjects in languages other than his/her first language. He/she spends some time in a country with a language different from his/her first language, and also communicates in a number of languages with colleagues and people from abroad.

e) *European professionalism*: A European Teacher has an education that enables him/her to teach in any European country. He/she has a "European" approach to subject areas in his/her teaching and links up cross-curricular themes from a European perspective. He/she exchanges curricular content and methodologies with colleagues from other European countries. He/she pays attention to and learns from different teaching and learning traditions. He/she uses examples of research from other countries to understand and explain professional issues and teaches accordingly.

Influenced by European initiatives (research, publications, expert groups, etc.) in many countries, teacher education has been inspired by a new professionalism with a European perspective (e.g. it does not restrict teaching practice to national boundaries) embracing the value of *Bildung* (Girmes, 2012). The German word *Bildung*, which has its origin in the educational school of Greek society, was adopted in Humanism and Enlightenment until it "became one of the central of the modern Western educational tradition. Central to this tradition

is the question of what constitutes an educated or cultivated human being" (Biesta, 2006, p. 100).

Many teaching subjects already build on the rich history of the European tradition, and this can be usefully exploited. Joint programmes and degrees offered by educational institutions in European countries can enhance the development of European professionalism, as can many of the opportunities offered by modern technology.

f) *European citizenship*: A European Teacher should act as a "European citizen". He/she should show solidarity with citizens in other European countries and shares values such as respect for human rights, democracy and freedom. His/her critical teaching should foster autonomous, responsible and active citizens of a Europe of tomorrow. Aspects of the school curriculum may be developed in a teaching area, possibly entitled "European Studies", or "Europeanness" could be integrated across the curriculum.

g) *European quality measures*: If there is something like a European Teacher, there must be some way of comparing the formal features of Europe's teacher education systems. Suggestions reach from formal assessment of systems to informal exchanges and cross-cultural visits. The Bologna process is a major step towards academic comparability and achieving an overarching qualification framework across Europe. An increase in compatibility between European qualifications and in transparency of graduate achievement is central to the Bologna/Copenhagen processes, and would also remove obstacles from teacher mobility.

Easy mobility as an added value of expanding teacher professional identity with the European dimension

As an ideal, a European Teacher experiences the benefits of the European Union in part through easy mobility. This mobility encompasses studying abroad and learning languages as well as becoming acquainted with the cultures of other EU countries. He/she may seek employment in other countries and use exchange programmes offered by the European Union. This contributes towards the creation of a Europe of different languages and cultures, and nurtures cultural diversity as a vision for living together in the future.

A European Teacher facilitates mobility among his/her students by enabling them to have physical and virtual contact with peers in other European countries. Classroom or school exchanges and EU programmes are means to enrich the process of mutual learning and growing toward a new understanding of European citizenship. This helps in preparations for Europe-wide employability and, eventually, workplace mobility.

Modern information and communication technologies (ICT) enhance mobility by offering useful tools for communicating across linguistic and cultural borders, enlightening the staid and predictable classroom routines produced by monocultural approaches. Virtual mobility in finding and disseminating information is seen as a vital prerequisite for physical mobility and is also very effective in transnational communication. European identity builds on the future citizens of the European Union. Therefore, the notion of the European Teacher can increase the students' practical knowledge of transnational issues and intensify their experience with intercultural encounters.

The diversity and multicultural make-up of schools can help children feel at home with Europe's developing complexity and pluralism. It is part of the teacher's role to prepare students for community life and work. Learning about multicultural values means acquiring an extensive general and artistic culture, learning foreign languages and developing some knowledge of European and world affairs.

A European Teacher who has experienced the value of mobility encourages students to develop this general culture, along with a critical perspective, so that they may become autonomous, responsible and active citizens. This culture forms the basis for the acquisition of skills that enable students to move around, live and work in different European cultures. As well as familiarity with different cultures, a European Teacher also needs to be able to analyse complex intercultural issues in order to enhance cross-cultural learning processes.

Policy Development

During the Portuguese Presidency of the EU in 1999, ENTEP was created to promote cooperation among European Union Member-States regarding their role in initial, in-service and further teacher education policies, in order to contribute to:

- Raising teacher education quality so as, in turn, to raise the quality of education and training in the European Union in a way that responds to the challenges of lifelong learning in a knowledge-based society.
- Developing a European dimension of education in teacher education programmes.
- Improving the public image of the teaching profession and mutual trust in the teaching qualifications awarded by Member-States.
- Promoting teacher mobility in the European Union (Gassner, 2012, p. 14).

Since ENTEP has taken an active role in dealing with those and other issues with a transnational perspective for fifteen years, the question of what

constitutes a European Teacher has increasingly became an issue. However, beyond ENTEP, it could be a starting point for further discussions about future roles of teachers in Europe and could contribute to policy issues on different levels towards a European development of teacher professionalism. With this perspective in mind, the following areas can be regarded as relevant to be explored on various levels.

a)   *European level*
  – European qualifications framework[6]
  – Common European Principles[7]
  – Recommendations to member states in teacher education[8]
  – European programmes (SOCRATES)[9]

b)   *National*
  – Content of teacher education programmes
  – Definitions of competences and how they are evaluated
  – Evaluations of initial/continuing progressive development (What is evaluated?)
  – Accreditations of studies in other European countries
  – How to use European programmes bilaterally

c)   *Institutional*
  – Institutional policies on European/international cooperation
  – How to ensure "ownership" of projects at institutional level
  – How to promote mobility programme and ensure credits/recognition
  – Joint programmes, masters/doctorates
  – Content of programmes

Through the participation in various working groups within the different European programmes and exchanges, the representatives from the individual member states have acquired new knowledge on the topics above, which has contributed to an increased transnational understanding towards Europe as a "knowledge society". Therefore, teacher quality can no longer be seen as a national affair, but rather as a topic of international cooperation and research.

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6   See http://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/en/content/descriptors-page
7   See http://www.atee1.org/uploads/EUpolicies/common_eur_principles_en.pdf
8   They are sent to member states, e.g. in form of so-called policy handbooks. For example, see http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/handbook0410_en.pdf
9   The Erasmus programme was an educational initiative of the European Commission to strengthen the European dimension of education at all levels such as the Comenius programme relating to primary and secondary education, the Erasmus programme relating to higher education, the Grundtvig programme relating to adult education, the Lingua programme relating to education in European languages and the Minerva programme relating to information and communication technology in education.

Among the various aspects of European dimensions in the education arena, the question of the meaning of the term "European Teacher" remains. Many discussions on this controversial issue have helped to stimulate further elaborations on this topic.

Such discussions, meanwhile, lead to a transnational review of some of the areas mentioned above by ENTEP which revealed:

- disparity across EU teacher education lifelong curricula due to a range of organizational, cultural and pedagogical issues;
- problems for mobility of teaching professionals, due to discretion on the type of doctoral programmes offered by institutions between and within countries;
- obstacles for teaching professionals to enter education science PhD programmes, due to specific entry criteria;
- potential negligence of knowledge from the field in conventional PhD programmes.

New approaches to the promotion of the European dimension in teacher professionalism

As a consequence of the curricular disparities, mobility problems and obstacles to entry into PhD programmes, a consortium of five universities from the field of European higher education initiated the "European Doctorate in Teacher Education" (EDiTE)[10] Project, which

- aims to develop an original, transnational and inter-disciplinary joint doctoral programme in teacher education;
- creates a closer link between practice and theory in teacher education;
- moves transnational research in teacher education nearer to national educational institutions;
- provides a forum for sharing theoretical knowledge and good practice from a European perspective;
- promotes standards, procedures and unifying principles for the design, organization and development of doctoral study programmes in teacher education (generative model).

The discussion of these issues among the members of the consortium was enriched by an ongoing consultation process with teacher education experts in Europe. By September 2013, 38 experts had been interviewed and asked about their expectations and aspects such as quality criteria, target group, job profiles, competences of graduates, research fields. These findings were used in the following curriculum design process.

The curriculum (180 ECTS) of the planned European Doctorate in Teacher Education is structured in two consecutive modules: The *Advanced Studies Module:* a comprehensive learning programme, consisting of three thematic sub-modules. 1) Advanced Pedagogical Studies, 2) Transversal Studies, 3) Research Methodology and Management; the *Individual Research Module*: an intensive research programme that creates a general framework for students to realise their individual research and makes their active involvement possible in relevant research on teacher education. EDiTE graduates become multipliers in their national, regional and local contexts, shaping new kinds of intersections between academic and vocational knowledge and competence.

Conclusion

A puzzling feature of teacher professionalism in European countries emerges from two widely shared assumptions that are contradictory and incompatible. The first is that contemporary teaching has become increasingly assimilated through the backwash effect of global large-scale assessment activities, such as PISA (Prenzel et al., 2013) under the new governance regime of evidence-based policy making (Gunter & Fitzgerad, 2013) or through making teaching and learning more responsive through ground-breaking books such as Hattie's *Visible Learning* (2009, 2012), which seem to make teachers' professional work look very similar across country boarders. The second is that in the European educational field transnational activities of teachers and students increase steadily, but little has changed nationally with a cultural perspective towards Europe in mind (Seashore Louis & van Velzen, 2012).

The argument has offered transnational perspectives on European teacher professionalism from various angles and has aimed at finding out about the "Europeanness" in teachers' work and mobility as a goal. In most countries, as an overarching theme, there seems to be a longing for creating a closer link between practice, policy and research with a view to innovative teaching in the context of the standards movement and new public management. If we compare the situation of the European Union with the composition of states in the USA, the notion of a "European teacher" will never come close to what

is understood by an "American teacher". Nevertheless, this paper has shown that there is an interplay between European educational policy and a shared understanding of practice throughout the member states of the EU. What we can learn from each other to improve education is organizational learning facilitated by shared leadership, tight coupling and "boundary spanning" activities (Millward & Timperley, 2010) across countries, within countries, between teacher education policy and the teaching profession.

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Biographical note

Michael Schratz, dr., is a Professor of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Innsbruck, Austria, and a Research Director for Teaching, Learning and Leadership, at the National Leadership Academy. As the present Dean of the School of Education he is responsible for teacher education reform programs nationally and internationally and has been policy consultant for various governments. He is the present Speaker of the Jury of the German School Award. His main research projects are in educational leadership, learning and teaching as well as policy development. His publications have been translated into several languages.

Defining Moments in Policy Development, Direction, and Implementation in Irish Initial Teacher Education Policy

Teresa O'Doherty[1]

∼   This paper explores the impact of significant OECD documents on the development of Irish education policy, specifically teacher education policy, over the last half century. While other commentators have argued that Irish education has been predominantly influenced by policy developments in the UK, US or Europe, this paper identifies the OECD as a significant trigger for domestic policy reform and discusses key reports/publications that have influenced both ideological and structural reforms of Irish education. Long before the growth of evidence-based reform or the emergence of a global education policy field, Irish policy makers invited the newly formed OECD to review Ireland's provision of education; this review generated base-line data and highlighted both the inequity of Irish education as well as its inadequacy in providing for the future needs of the Irish economy. Thus began a long-term relationship with the OECD, which has served to prompt and guide policy revision and reform at critical decision points over five decades. While engagement with the OECD cannot simply explain changes in Irish education, it does, however, provide a valuable perspective on domestic policy making.

Keywords: gifted education, talent support, Germany, federal states, foundations, associations, enrichment, acceleration

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1   Faculty of Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland; teresa.odoherty@mic.ul.ie

Opredelitev mejnikov v razvoju, usmerjenosti in v implementaciji politik na področju izobraževanja učiteljev na Irskem

Teresa O'Doherty

V prispevku so analizirani vplivi pomembnejših dokumentov OECD na razvoj irske izobraževalne politike, še posebej na izobraževanje učiteljev, v zadnje pol stoletja. Medtem ko drugi menijo, da je bilo izobraževanja na Irskem predvsem pod vplivom razvoja politik v Veliki Britaniji, Združenih državah Amerike ali Evrope, prispevek identificira OECD kot pomemben vzvod za nacionalne zakonodajne reforme; razpravlja o ključnih poročilih/publikacijah, ki so vplivali/-e na ideološke in tudi strukturne reforme izobraževanja na Irskem. Veliko pred razmahom reform, osnovanih na raziskavah, ali pojavom globalnega polja izobraževalnih politik so irski politiki povabili novo oblikovani OECD k pregledu izobraževanja na Irskem. Ta je vključeval generalizirane podatke, med ugotovitvami pa sta bila poudarjena neenakost v izobraževanju in neprimernost za zadovoljevanje potreb irskega gospodarstva v prihodnje. Tako se je začelo dolgoročno sodelovanje z OECD, ki je omogočalo sprotno posodabljanje zakonodaje in nudilo smernice pri reformah v kritičnih točkah odločanja zadnjih pet desetletij. Pregled sodelovanja z OECD sicer ne more nuditi razlage sprememb izobraževanja na Irskem, lahko pa ponudi pomembno perspektivo na nacionalno nastanjanje nacionalne politike.

Ključne besede: OECD, politike na področju izobraževanja učiteljev, reforme, Irska

Introduction

Teacher education policy Ireland, as in all European states, has been shaped by the historical, political, economic, cultural, religious and linguistic characteristics of the nation (Coolahan, 2001). The extent to which developments in any education system are the subject of policy borrowing, transfer, and copying, is an enduring debate. David Limond (2010) in his paper "[An] historic culture … rapidly, universally, and thoroughly restored? British influence on Irish education since 1922", has suggested that "a post-colonial overhang affects Irish policy-makers and bureaucrats in their educational policies and practices". It is Limond's thesis that Irish education has been more influenced by developments in Britain than elsewhere in Europe and that, "A self-satisfied patriotism or "banal nationalism" remains the common currency of Irish political and social discourse, making it difficult or even impossible for politicians, or policy-makers of any kind, to concede that Ireland has anything to learn from anywhere else – least of all from Britain". O'Donoghue and Harford (2012) robustly contest Limond's theory on British influence in Irish education since 1922. In their response, they illustrate comprehensively that European, and possibly American, influences have greater on contemporary Irish educational developments than those of the nation's nearest neighbour. Both papers provide a useful springboard for a discussion on the nature of influences on Irish policy and practice; acknowledging the complex interplay of global reform forces on Irish education, which has been developed by others (Conway, 2013; Conway & Murphy, 2013), this paper examines the history of Irish education's engagement with the supranational institution, the OECD. It is uncontested that the decision to invite the OECD to undertake a statistical review of Irish education in the 1960s fundamentally reshaped the nature and purpose of education (O'Sullivan, 2005). What is less clear is how this early engagement with the OECD, which pre-dated the global education reform movement (Sahlberg, 2011) and the associated benchmarking of education systems, has continued to shape and guide domestic policy in later decades. Acknowledging that "context and history matter deeply and cannot be borrowed" (Sellar & Lingard, 2013, p. 722), this long-frame review examines the impact of significant OECD documents from 1965, 1991, 2005 and 2009 on the evolution of Irish education policy, specifically teacher education policy. To what extent did Irish policy makers depend on external reviews and guidance to spur policy development and reform? Was the repeated intervention of the OECD required to legitimize policy development by the state in education and particularly teacher education, which was provided by the churches?

This paper establishes the nature of teacher education in the decades before the publication of the *Investment in Education Report* (OECD, 1965), and thereafter chronologically examines the impetus provided by OECD documents in subsequent decades, to domestic education policy development.

The origins and development of teacher education in Ireland

A popular commitment to and interest in education was well established before the state gave support to schooling in Ireland through the establishment of the National School System in 1831. The educational census of 1824 recorded that there were over 9,000 schools in existence, catering for two out of every five children of school going age at the time. (Coolahan, 2011b). Formal teacher education was also established in advance of state intervention; in 1811, the Kildare Place Society (KPS), a voluntary organization committed to the education of the poor, initiated its first programme of teacher training (Hyland & Milne, 1987) and the first state grants for teacher education were provided to the KPS in 1815. After 1831, the government-appointed Commissioners of Education provided for teacher education at their premises in Marlborough Street. Within the framework of the United Kingdom, the system of education promoted cultural assimilation and socialization, and control over teacher education, curricula and textbooks enabled the systematic erosion of the Irish language and culture while normalizing the values and traditions of the imperial power (Harford, 2008, p. 76). The Commissioners provided programmes on a "mixed education (religious) principle" but as the concept of a schooled society grew during the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church became "intimately involved" in the development of the national school system, and viewed teacher training as an area over which it wished to exercise control (O'Donoghue, 2006, p. 7). In 1884, following much agitation, the state agreed to finance denominational training colleges; this decision represented in many respects a defeat of the core principle non-denominational provision within the national system of education (Harford, 2009, p. 56). The teacher education programme was extended to two years and by the turn of the century approximately 50% of primary level teachers were formally trained (Coolahan, 1981, p. 32).

Following Independence in 1922, the structure of Irish education was characterized by a high level of continuity in which the ownership and management of schools were retained by the religious denominations, while the state concentrated on curricular change. Five denominational colleges (four Roman Catholic and one Church of Ireland) offered a two-year teacher education

programme. Just as teacher education was viewed as a tool for cultural assimilation during the nineteenth century (Harford, 2010), it was valued post-1922 as a mechanism of the state to secure the revival of Gaeilge (Irish) as a living language, thus underpinning the cultural identity of the nation. For the first four decades of the new state, the promotion of the Irish language was prioritized within teacher training colleges; the language of instruction and all social interaction was in the medium of Irish. The emphasis on the Irish language was reinforced by the inspectorate who controlled the content of the programme, set and corrected examinations, and inspected the lecturers (Coolahan, 2013, p. 11). While the state financed teacher education and regulated the content and curriculum, the churches provided teacher education in single-sex residential colleges where students were carefully supervized.

University provision of teacher education for secondary teachers was established in 1912. Rooted within classical humanism, the Higher Diploma in Education was a one-year postgraduate programme. Trinity College created the first chair of Education in 1905, while the constituent colleges of the National University appointed professors of education during the subsequent decade. The Registration Council for post-primary teachers was established in 1918; however, registration was not a pre-requisite for appointment to a teaching position and given that many of the teachers were members of denominational congregations, for many decades almost 50% of secondary teachers were unregistered.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the infrastructure of university teacher education provision remained underdeveloped and in 1967 the *Report of the Commission on Higher Education* recorded that while the four large universities had 722 Higher Diploma students, they had a total of 14 full-time academic staff, only four of whom were above junior lecturer status (Coolahan, 2004, pp. 6–7). Few students undertook master's degrees in education, and very little research was published.

Investment in Education Report 1965 – the key to reshaping Irish education

Following independence, Ireland was "more concerned with the preservation of the past than with the future" (O'Connor, 2014, p. 197), and by the 1960s Ireland was in a "disastrous economic situation"; protectionist economic policies had failed, creating a large balance of payments deficit, and the country had lost 400,000 people though emigration between 1951 and 1961 (Loxley et al., 2014, pp. 174–175). Evidence of a new direction in economic planning was apparent in

T.K. Whitaker's *Economic Development*, published in 1958, further expounded upon in the *Programme for Economic Expansion*, published later in the same year. Ireland's attendance at the 1961 Washington Conference (O'Sullivan, 2005, 135 ff) changed the course of Irish education and by 1963, education and "human investment" were tightly coupled; "Since our wealth lies ultimately in our people, the aim of educational policy must be to enable all individuals to realize their full potential as human persons" (*Second programme for economic expansion*, p. 13, cited by O'Sullivan, 2005, p. 135). Within a global discourse in which education and human capital production were inextricably linked, acceptance of the role of education in the salvation of the economy required a paradigmatic shift on the part of Irish politicians and educationists alike.

The decision to participate in the "Investment in Education" project under the auspices of the then recently formed OECD, was to bring the deficiencies and gross inequalities of the Irish system to "unprecedented international scrutiny" (Walsh et al., 2014, p. 119); it also represented a move by the state in "elbowing the churches to one side and committing itself to provide proper resources from the public purse" (Farrell, 1998, p. x). The baseline data that the audit generated highlighted the inadequacy of system to meet the needs of a modern society and served to shift the domestic policy from one of cultural nationalism to one that prioritized human capital production; the capacity of schooling to contribute to economic development became the driving purpose of education during the following decades (O'Sullivan, 2005)

While first and second level education experienced expansion and radical reform in the decades that followed, the decade from 1965 to 1975 also was the last period of fundamental revision in teacher education (Coolahan, 2007). The *Investment in Education Report* was followed by the *Commission on Higher Education Report* (1967), and the Higher Education Authority (HEA) *Report on Teacher Education* (1970). As a consequence teacher education courses were revized: programmes for primary teachers were restructured and extended, and the colleges assumed greater independence from the Department of Education. Staff numbers increased, libraries were improved, and colleges became co-educational, with the requirement for student residence ceasing. Colleges became affiliated with universities, and the introduction of the three-year BEd degree programme in 1974 ensured that teaching became an all-graduate teaching profession (Coolahan, 2007, p. 3). The study of the Foundation Disciplines (philosophy, sociology, history and psychology of education), pedagogy of curricular areas, and "Teaching Practice" formed the core of the programme, while students also studied an "academic subject". The programmes were subject to the normal quality assurance processes associated with their affiliated university,

and the Inspectorate of the Department of Education annually examined 10% of final year students on Teaching Practice. While the concurrent programme was the major route into primary teaching, a consecutive postgraduate programme was introduced at various times when a shortage of primary teachers occurred.

A binary approach to second level teacher education developed in the 1970s, reflecting the academic/ vocational dichotomy (Gleeson, 2004, p. 49). The Higher Diploma became a full-time postgraduate programme, catering for the "academic" subjects. The education departments of the universities were expanded, new professors were appointed and more fulltime staff employed. New master's programmes and research associations were developed: the Reading Association of Ireland (1975) and the Educational Studies Association of Ireland in 1976. Although incremental adaptations were made by individual institutions to the content and approach of the Higher Diploma, it remained a one-year programme for more than 100 years, until September 2014 (Coolahan, 2013, p. 10). Prompted by the HEA *Report on Teacher Education* (1970), the provision of concurrent teacher education programmes for specialist second-level teachers expanded significantly during the 1970s; Thomond College of Education, Limerick was established in 1971, specializing in preparing teachers for physical education and vocational areas such as materials technology (wood), engineering, and science education. The National College of Art and Design, which offered art education programmes became more autonomous, and the specialist colleges for home economics in Sligo and Dublin became associated with universities. The provision of concurrent teacher education programmes has increased, and 32% (n=464) of all second level teachers qualified in 2011 came through concurrent programmes (Hyland, 2012, p. 12).

OECD 1991 Review - a landmark in the development of policy in Irish education

Although the OECD was initially invited to examine teacher education at the end of the 1980s, its report, *Review of National Education Policies: Ireland* (1991) was far more expansive than anticipated (Galvin, 2009, p. 277). Affirming the quality and provision of teacher education, it stated:

> We visited nearly all the initial education institutions and were impressed with the quality and commitment of their staffs, the strength of the programmes […] initial teacher education is already of a good and appropriate standard […] Most important, the quality of teacher educators is high […] a well organised, effective and professionally and

academically sound structure for initial teacher education already exists (Coolahan, 2007, p. 6–7, citing 1991 OECD).

The OECD Report advocated investment in the continuum of teacher education, supporting the "3Is" perspective – good quality initial teacher education, followed by a structured form of induction and greatly expanded in-service teacher education. This report repositioned teaching as a complex profession and affirmed the government's prioritization of education as a "strategic force for the social, economic and cultural development of the state" (Coolahan, 2003, p. vi). The report became the springboard for a decade of policy development and legislation formation. The Green (policy proposal) Paper *Education for a Changing World* was published in 1992, followed by a highly consultative process, and generating a thousand written submissions. In order to distill and analyse these submissions, the National Education Convention (NEC) was convened; this two-week convention served to raise the public's awareness of the issues involved and demonstrated a "partnership approach to education policy-making" (Gleeson, 2004, p. 50). In her foreword to the White Paper, *Charting our Education Future* (1995), the minister acknowledged the contribution of this consultation process:

> […] for the first time [there was] structured multi-lateral dialogue among all the major partners in education on crucial issues affecting the development of education. They contributed substantively to enhanced mutual understanding and, I hope, have facilitated a more robust consensus in support of key changes (1995, p. 1).

The *Report of the National Education Convention* became the foundation document for the White Paper, and the number of references to and direct quotations from the NEC is notable. The White Paper reaffirmed the teaching career, "as a continuum, involving initial teacher education, induction processes and in-career development opportunities, available periodically throughout a teacher's career" (NEC, p. 85, cited in the White Paper, p. 128). This was further endorsed by reference to the *OECD Review* (1991) which identified the challenges facing the teaching profession in Ireland as, "how to address in a comprehensive way the needs and aspirations of talented and well-educated young teachers [...] as they progress through their careers" (OECD, 1991, p. 98, cited in White Paper, p. 135).

 The White Paper also reiterated the call made by the NEC for the establishment of a Teaching Council, that would "give the teaching profession a degree of control over and responsibility for its own profession and allow for

its closer engagement in the process of change" as well as acting as the agent for implementing the European Union directive in relation to the "mutual recognition of teacher training qualifications" (p. 146). Throughout, the White Paper recognized that "Ireland's development is now linked in an integral way with the development of Europe. This poses no threat to our national identity. Rather it offers significant opportunities for growth and development" (p. 215) and committed that, "Ireland will continue to contribute fully to education initiatives within the European Union" (p. 216). The White Paper directly influenced curricular reform for all stages of the school system as well as spawning a raft of major educational legislation including the Universities Act (1997), the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Equal Status Act (2000-2004), the National Qualifications Authority Act (2001), the Teaching Council Act (2001), and the Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004). It is evident that while the White Paper and subsequent legislation was solidly rooted in the work of both the National Education Convention, it was also cognisant of the pragmatic and strategic importance of the international landscape. In parallel with the policy drive of the 1990s, some actions were taken which demonstrated a commitment to policy change. These included the establishment of the In-Career Development Unit (1992) within the Department of Education to provide co-ordination and direction in relation to in-service education. When preparing for the National Development Plan (1993), the government successfully secured £45 million in EU funding under the Human Resources Operational Program and the European Regional Development Fund to support inservice education and to develop the network of teacher centres, both of which were essential to the roll-out of revized curricula at primary and post-primary level (Egan, 2004, p. 12; Coolahan, 2007, p. 10).

Policy drift

While the minister was clear that the White Paper represented "a comprehensive agenda for change and development" (1995, p. 1), no explicit plan for educational change was developed. Critical of the capacity of the Department of Education to be a key policy actor, O'Sullivan described the process of policy development as "pragmatic gradualism", where things move forward "on a gradual path, testing responses, slowing down or speeding up as circumstances permit" (O'Sullivan, 2005, p. 175, citing Coolahan, 1989). Given the level of engagement of policy makers in education review and debate during the 1990s, expectations of the teacher educators for change were heightened: "the stage was now set for early direct action to implement these key dimensions of

government policy on teacher education. However, this was not the case and the impressive momentum which had built up […] lost its urgency, and, what might be termed, a period of policy drift set in" (Coolahan, 2007, p. 16).

Action was deferred, and instead, two reviews of initial teacher education were commissioned (Byrne, 2002; Kellaghan, 2002). Speaking in 2004, Dr Kellaghan, Chair of the primary teacher education review group observed that the rapid rate of change in Irish society presented serious challenges for the education system, which had obvious implications for teacher education; "The Group realised at an early stage that its deliberations might result in a call not for minor adjustments, but for a root and branch reform based on a reconceptualization of teacher education" (Kelleghan, 2004, p. 20). However, the Kellaghan Report was met with an official silence and two years later it was not clear to the Chair if the report's basic tenets, or any of its 61 recommendations, had been accepted by the Department (2004, p. 26). A similar delay was evident in the establishment of the Teaching Council: although legislation was enacted in 2001, the Council was launched in spring 2005 and not formally established on 1 March 2006, eleven years after the government's decision to establish the Council was announced in the White Paper.

The capacity of the Department of Education to make and implement policy decisions was the subject of criticism in the *Review of the Department's Operations*, completed in 2000. In his conclusions, Cromien, the former Secretary in the Department of Finance, recognized that policy development was haphazard:

> This lack of clarity in policy formulation leads to educational policy often being determined elsewhere, for example, through negotiations with interest groups or under national agreements or, indeed, in the courts, through criticism of the lack of adequate provision for e.g. children and young people with special needs. This in turn has led to a certain passivity in the Department in relation to new developments (2000, p. 4).

Referring to this lack of progress, the Minister for Education, Ruairí Quinn noted, "A remarkable policy agenda had been nurtured and developed through the 1990s […] But the impetus for reform faltered and what was missing in the past decade was the political will and vision to champion change" (2012).

Teacher education was not moribund during this time; the number of providers and programmes proliferated; by 2012, there were 19 publicly funded providers of teacher education (Hyland, 2012). Programme renewal was underway as the impact of reports, recommendations and directives from an increasingly powerful and integrated European Union were being felt on

campuses; arising from the Bologna Declaration (1999) all third-level institutes were required to present their programmes in terms of learning outcomes and to adopt the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), to ensure comparability of awards across Europe. Teacher educators were part of the TUNING project (2001–2008) (Drudy, 2004, pp. 35–36), and Ireland was the leading country (of 48 higher education systems) in terms of the implementation of the Bologna goals and objectives (Gleeson, 2013, p. 923). While individual teacher education institutions updated and reviewed the quality of their teacher education programmes, adjusted them to incorporate reflective practice, action research and technological advances, there had been no widespread review of the structure of teacher education. Curriculum overload was a concern, and educationists were aware of the urgent need to extend the duration programmes (Harford, 2008, p. 90).

One of the few teacher education developments of the first decade of the 21st century was the recognition by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 2003 of a blended learning, part-time programme for primary teacher education offered by a private for-profit agency, Hibernia College. This was "an unexpected development in teacher education" (Coolahan, 2007, p. 22) and while the numbers of students undertaking teacher education programmes in state supported colleges are capped by the DES, no cap is applied to this private provider. As a consequence, Hibernia College has become the dominant route for graduate entry to primary teaching; in 2011, of 914 graduate candidates qualifying as teachers 713 (78%) came from Hibernia College, representing almost 38% of all primary level teachers qualifying in that year (Hyland, 2012, p. 12). During the period 2007-2011, Hibernia College qualified 2585 teachers, and the College has now expanded to provide teacher education for the post-primary sector. Anticipating the current over-supply of teachers, Harford described it as "one of the most troubling developments to emerge in recent years" (2008, p. 89).

Teachers Matter: Attracting Developing and Retaining Teachers, OECD, 2005

Ireland was one of twenty-five countries participating in *Teachers Matter*, which was launched in 2002 and, in the absence of any advancement in teacher education policy, the foreword to Country Background Report (2003) underlines the contribution of the OECD as a stimulus to progress: "the great value of this OECD research project is the stimulation it provides to diagnose and reflect on these [problems] from a policy perspective, enriched by some best practice procedures from international experience" (Coolahan, 2003, p.

vii). Ireland took a leading role in this review and hosted a meeting of the OECD Education Ministers in Dublin in 2004, chaired by then Irish Minister for Education, Noel Dempsey. The summary of this meeting was the foundation document for the final report of *Teachers Matter,* which served to highlight the centrality of teacher policy on national agendas and to chart the route by which Education Ministers could achieve the agreed goal of raising the quality of learning for all. The report identifies the pivotal role the teaching profession must take in this process, and within this context, the forthcoming Teaching Council in Ireland was cited as an exemplar of good practice in "profession-led standard setting and quality assurance in teacher education, teacher induction, teacher performance and career development" (OECD, 2005, p. 216). At the launch of *Teachers Matter* (2005), the then Minister for Education and Science, used the platform to query the quality and relevance of initial teacher education programmes for primary teachers:

> I would question whether the range of content covered on pre-service programmes has adequately kept pace with the changing demands that now face teachers[…] I have concerns that the focus of provision has shifted too far towards academic studies at the expense of core teaching methodologies, teaching practice and the wider educational science skills (Hanafin, 2005, pp. 3-5).

Teachers Matter was complemented by the EU publication *Common European Principles for Teacher Competence and Qualifications* (2005), both setting a clear policy direction for the newly established Teaching Council. Expectations for the Teaching Council were high and teacher educators welcomed the collaborative and professional approach of the Council (Nic Craith, 2014). The Council established a consistent and incremental work rate publishing the *Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers* (2007), *Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations* (2009), *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers*, (2011a), *Initial Teacher Education: Strategy for the review and professional accreditation of existing programmes* (2011b.), *Draft code of professional conduct for teachers*, 2nd ed. (2011c) and *Code of professional conduct for teachers* (2012). Eight teacher education providers volunteered to pilot programme reviews and in 2010 completed detailed pro forma, in addition to submitting extensive supplementary documentation, in advance of an accreditation visit. Teacher educators engaged in this process in a positive and constructive manner, despite concerns of that this process was evidence of creeping managerialism and compliance- and results- driven accountability (Conway & Murphy, 2013).

PISA – global benchmarking an opportunity for radical reform

Through its statistics, reports and studies, the OECD has achieved "a brand which is regarded as indisputable" and its policy recommendations are accepted as valid by politicians and scholars alike (Grek, 2009, p. 25). The introduction by the OECD of the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA) created international benchmarks that allow for the global comparison of education performance and achievement of 15-year olds, across a range of subjects. PISA has "radically changed the geography of education since it was first introduced in 2000" (Sahlberg, 2011, p. 119) and Grek has asserted that "no other empirical study managed to stir up the educational policy landscape in Germany in the way that PISA 2000 did; the "PISA-shock" has had major impact not only on policy-making, but most crucially on the public consciousness" (Grek, 2009, p. 30, citing Pongratz, 2006).

While Ireland's strong performance in PISA 2000 and 2003 was perceived to affirm the high quality of the education system, "the results of the OECD's PISA 2009 tests were a shock for the Irish educational system. The decline in the reading and mathematics scores of students in Ireland compared to previous PISA tests was unexpected" and the Chief Inspector described as "sobering […] the fact that PISA suggests that 17% of all fifteen years olds and almost one in four teenage boys lack the literacy skills to function effectively in today's society" (Hislop, 2011, p. 18). Ireland's PISA performance attracted negative media attention and questioned assumptions about the quality of education in our schools; Cosgrove and Cartright (2014) examined the reporting of PISA results in the Irish media citing one headline that stated, "Shattering the myth of a world-class education system" (*Irish Times*, December 8, 2010), while a web-based forum *Education Matters* described the results as "an urgent call to action" (December 14, 2010). The government responded by publishing a draft literacy and numeracy strategy in November 2010, which generated 480 detailed written submissions and 60 oral presentations (Hislop, 2011). The revised literacy and numeracy strategy, *Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and for Life* was published in July 2011. Embedded within this document was the most complete policy on teacher education issued since the White Paper of 1995; spanning just four pages, the policy restated its commitment to the continuum of teacher education and affirmed the "sound basis" provided by the Teaching Council to implement the required developments (p. 33). The thrust of the policy was distilled into a short pull-out message in the margin: "We have to improve the quality and relevance of initial teacher education" (p. 32). The

policy statement was followed by a detailed action plan to "improve teachers' skills in the teaching, learning and assessment of literacy and numeracy". This action plan included the "dramatic" announcement (Coolahan, 2013, p. 20) that the BEd programme (primary teachers) would be extended in duration to four years and reconfigured to replace the "academic elective" with programmes more closely related to education; this revised programme was to be offered to new entrants in 2012-13. Similarly, the graduate programmes for primary and post-primary teacher education were to be extended to two years for new entrants in 2014–15. The overall content of ITE programmes was specified to include an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with enhanced provision ICT, special education, and assessment; in addition, the plan included directions on the duration and nature of school placement within the programmes. The policy was far more direct, focused and specific than experienced heretofore. While the extension of programmes was a much-awaited decision (Coolahan, 2013), the implementation date followed by the subsequent publication of *Initial Teacher Education Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (August 2011) and the *Strategy for the Review and Professional Accreditation of Existing Programmes* (September 2011), created a stressful timeframe for those involved in the reconceptualization of the concurrent BEd for primary level teachers. This intensive and unnecessarily rushed process was undertaken at a time when teacher education institutions were experiencing harsh austerity measures, which included significant year-on-year budget cuts and reductions in staffing.

Speaking in 2011 the Chief Inspector, Harold Hislop, described the PISA results as an opportunity to introduce long-desired reform of the system:

> In 2010, we had a unique opportunity to galvanise the political and educational systems and the wider public into tackling long-standing issues and challenges in Irish education. The formulation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy was designed to harness this energy for the long-term improvement of the educational system (p. 18).

It is evident that the PISA (2009) results were utilized as a springboard for and justification of radical change in teacher education; at a time of deepening economic crisis and under the "leadership of a reform-oriented Minister of Education", Conway and Murphy (2013) describe this as the "perfect storm", which has met the "rising tide of accountability" in higher education.

The reform of the content of initial teacher education was closely followed by a review of the associated institutional structures. In line with the Higher Education Authority's (HEA) strategy for the consolidation of higher education institutions and enhanced collaboration and coherence between

institutions, the Minister asked the HEA to "engage with the initial teacher education sector so as to identify possible new structures for teacher education based on a reconfiguration of existing provision […] to envision innovative strategies so that Ireland can provide a teacher education regime that is comparable with the world's best" (Hyland, 2012). An international panel was established to review the structures of ITE and, while recognising the central role played by teacher education to "sustainable economic growth and prosperity" (Sahlberg, 2012, p. 6), the panel recommended that two teacher education providers be closed and that the remaining providers be consolidated into six clusters, thereby creating critical mass (Sahlberg et al., 2012). While one provider, Froebel College, had previously agreed to merge with and transfer to the NUI Maynooth campus in advance of this review, the Panel's report became the stimulus for other providers such as DCU, St Patrick's Drumcondra, Mater Dei and Church of Ireland College, to merge to form one institute of education. The recommendations of the Sahlberg report, underpinned by comparative education research and PISA data, have been accepted by the educational community at all levels without opposition or controversy. The infrastructure of teacher education is in transition, and while the ultimate shape of provision is far from clear, one of the by-products of this process is to diminish the denominational provision of teacher education. While this was never articulated as a desired outcome of the process, it would seem that this policy decision will dramatically alter the landscape of teacher education and significantly reduce church governance in its provision.

Conclusion

Irish education experienced "policy insulation" (O'Sullivan, 2005, p. 178) for the first half of the nineteenth century; its first exposure to international policy development was through the Investment in Education survey, which served to inextricably link education policy with economic development. The Hargreaves and Goodson framework of change over time (2006), provides a useful tool to review change in Irish education; it is evident that engagement with the OECD in the 1960s reflected the age of "optimism and innovation" that concentrated on economic growth and individual emancipation (Sahlberg, 2006, p. 260). Irish education experienced a new child-centred curriculum at primary level, universal access to free second-level education and the introduction of an all-graduate teaching profession. The period of 1990s was loosely aligned to the second age of "complexity and contradiction" where the establishment of legislation to govern Irish schools and schooling marked an

increased role for the state in the control of education, and diversity in schools created demands for greater inclusivity, with an emphasis on learning for all. The third phase, the age of "standardization and marketization", where data-driven decision-making, experienced in other cultures and contexts in the late 1990s-early 2000 period, characterizes much of the policy development post 2009. While Irish policy has reflected loosely international developments, the rate and intensity of the adoption of international policy has differed significantly. In recent decades, the OECD has become one of the most powerful agents of transnational education governance. Its influence elides national boundaries and has contributed to the emergence of a "global education policy field" (Grek, 2009, p. 28). While nations are located in a web of policy relations that exert influence on national policy, Grek asserts they are not powerless in this process. Writing on the balance between the national and international policies within teacher education, Musset has outlined:

> The design of the teacher education has to respond to specific needs of each system […] take into account that the way in which practising teachers learn depends on many factors – country's past traditions, existing institutions, way the educational system articulates as a system. Teacher education models are influenced by the character and the status of the teaching profession […] must be context-specific (Musset, 2010, p. 45).

While acknowledging the role of the OECD in "the seeding and orientation of education policy in Ireland for more than 40 years" (Galvin, 2009, p. 276), through extensive consultation and extended periods of gestation, international reviews and trends were mediated through an internal lens, to create national policy. The period following the 1991 OECD Review was a clear example of how external policy produced considerable national debate and discussion, resulting in an agreed trajectory tailored for Irish education, which formed the bedrock for policy development.

The drift between policy and action created a surge in legislation development with little implementation, and again the impetus for change was provided by *Teachers Matter* (2005). On this occasion, the external review provided the context for the establishment of the Teaching Council, which has become a significant internal policy actor within teacher education. Building on the policies in relation to the teaching continuum that had been in development for almost two decades, the Teaching Council began a process of consultation and incremental change, creating the documentary infrastructure and processes to implement policy. The Council consulted widely with the teaching profession

in the development of the *Code of Professional Practice* and the *Code of Professional Conduct*, and while in line with international practices, these documents articulate the Council's "standards", reflecting the cultural values and traditions of the Irish teaching profession. Although *Teachers Matter* affirmed the policy of the continuum of teacher education and advised on a path of action, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) again engaged in the tactic of diplomatic inactivity; on this occasion, this period allowed for the renewal and reconfiguration of the Department, where a newfound confidence and sense of agency became evident. Following the publication of the PISA (2009) results, the DES was ready to make comprehensive reform statements; the PISA results were not just a spur for change, but were utilized as a justification for radical reform. Under the political stewardship of an ambitious Minister for Education and led by a strong Department management team (Chief Inspector, Director of Education and Secretary General), clear policy decisions were made and a tight implementation plan was published. The Minister announced the reform of the content and duration of initial teacher education, the level of reform is monitored and assessed by the Teaching Council through accreditation procedures, and the HEA is now consolidating the number of teacher education providers.

Throughout the last four decades, EU policy and in particular OECD reports, have played a significant role in creating the context for change, stimulating internal debate and providing a foundation for national policy development. Carroll and Kellow (2011, p. 34) state "the key to the effectiveness of peer reviews lies not in any coercive sanction for non-compliance, but, rather, their hortatory nature" (cited by Sellar & Lingard, 2013, p. 712). Irish policy makers have depended significantly on external reviews and international guidance to spur policy development and reform. Working within an historical context where church provision of education and teacher education seemed incontrovertible, the repeated intervention of the OECD in its reviews and latterly in its benchmarking of educational systems, has served to justify and validate policy development. While previous administrations did not have the vision or ambition for change, the momentum for change has been growing and since 2011 teacher education has been the focus of unprecedented reform. While evidence of the "perfect storm" has been discussed by others (Conway, 2013), the reliance by successive Irish governments on OECD reports and the unquestionable status attained by PISA, contributed in no small way to the wave of reform currently experienced by teacher education in Ireland.

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Biographical note

Teresa O'Doherty, dr., is Dean of Education at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. She is a member of a wide range of academic and professional committees; she is a member and former Southern Co-Chair of The Standing Conference on Teacher Education, North and South (SCoTENS), an invited member of the NCCA Early Childhood and Primary Education Committee, as well as being the invited Chair of the International Panel of Judges, Teacher Education Section of the Undergraduate Awards 2012-2014. Her personal research interests are in the History of Irish Education.

Croatian Teacher Competencies Related to the Creation and Implementation of Education Policy

Vesna Kovač*[1], Branko Rafajac[2] and Iva Buchberger[3]

∽ This research was conducted in order to gain a preliminary insight into the general orientation and range of opinions of 396 primary and secondary school teachers in Croatia toward the a) importance of their competencies related to the education policies; b) cognition and mastering of the competencies related to the education policies; c) the actual activity of primary and secondary school teachers in the creation and implementation of education policies. Research data were collected on the basis of a survey methodology, using an online questionnaire in the form of a Likert scale. In addition, the questionnaire contained two open questions. The analysis of results has clearly shown that primary and secondary school teachers in this research evaluated their competencies related to the education policies to be an important part of the competency profile of teachers. Teachers have made relatively high evaluations of their cognition and mastery of the competencies related to the education policy processes within school. In contrast, somewhat lower evaluations have been given to the mastery of competencies associated with the knowledge of education system, i.e. activity outside the school context. The evaluations of scale items related to the preconditions and personal activity in decision making and the implementation of education policy within the school vary in the range of average values or slightly above that.

Keywords: education policy, school management, teachers' competencies, teaching profession, educational reforms, teachers' decision making

1   *Corresponding Author. University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, Department of Education, Croatia; vkovac@ffri.hr
2   University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, Department of Education, Croatia
3   University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Rijeka, Department of Education, Croatia

Kompetence hrvaških učiteljev v povezavi z oblikovanjem in implementacijo izobraževalnih politik

Vesna Kovač*, Branko Rafajac in Iva Buchberger

∽   Raziskava je bila izvedena za pridobitev preliminarnih informacij o splošni orientiranosti in različnih mnenjih 396 osnovnošolskih in srednješolskih učiteljev na Hrvaškem o: a) pomembnosti njihovih kompetenc, povezanih z izobraževalnimi politikami; b) poznavanju in obvladanju kompetenc, povezanih z izobraževalnimi politikami; c) dejanskih aktivnostih osnovnošolskih in srednješolskih učiteljev pri oblikovanju in implementaciji izobraževalnih politik. Podatki so bili zbrani s pomočjo ankete; uporabljen je bil spletni vprašalnik v obliki Likertove lestvice. Poleg tega je vprašalnik obsegal še dve odprti vprašanji. Analiza rezultatov je jasno pokazala, da osnovnošolski in srednješolski učitelji, ki so sodelovali v raziskavi, ocenjujejo svoje kompetence, povezane z izobraževalnimi politikami, kot pomemben del kompetenc učiteljev. Učitelji so sorazmerno visoko ocenili svoje poznavanje in obvladanje kompetenc, povezanih s procesi izobraževalnih politik znotraj šole. Nasprotno pa so nekoliko nižje ocenili obvladanje kompetenc, povezanih s poznavanjem izobraževalnega sistema, kot na primer aktivnosti zunaj šolskega konteksta. Ocene postavk lestvic, povezanih s predpogoji in z osebnimi aktivnostmi pri odločanju in implementaciji izobraževalnih politik znotraj šole, se gibajo okrog povprečnih vrednosti ali nekoliko nad njimi.

Ključne besede: izobraževalne politike, vodenje v šoli, učiteljeve kompetence, poklic učitelja, izobraževalne reforme, odločanje učiteljev

Introduction

In most international reports that specify the factors of successful education systems and schools (such as, OECD, 2010, 2013; Sahlberg, 2012), among the most commonly specified factors are a high degree of participation of teachers (along with school principals and their associates) in making decisions on important aspects of school (and the education system) performance, and the appreciation of teaching profession in society. Apart from the declarative level, the content of major policy documents that guide the development of the education system at the international and national levels provides very little knowledge about the actual efforts of the authorized decision makers in education policies aimed at strengthening the professional capacities and the role of teachers as active participants in the creation of education policy.[4]

Describing the effect of global field in education policy, Rizvi and Lingard (2010) argue that global education policy is established, created, disseminated and implemented in a different manner in comparison to when individual nation states had central authority over it. Nowadays, the main guidelines for the creation of global education policy stem from policy documents and activities of international and transnational organizations such as the OECD, the World Bank, UNESCO and the EU. Furthermore, new actors have taken part in the creation of education policies, thus developing new (often interconnected) vertical and horizontal forms of education management (Connolly & James, 2011). In addition, value-driven orientations, which are specifically refracted in the relation between the advocacy of economic efficiency of education and the maintenance of social equality and justice through education are undergoing changes as well (Ben-Peretz, 2009). One of the consequences of these actions is the creation of a certain distance between the place and the actors through whom (global) policies are formed and the place and the actors through whom those policies will be implemented (locally). State authorities, as mediators in these processes, often show a stronger tendency to meet the global trends, while teachers, who are direct implementers of *policy* decisions in their schools and classrooms, are rarely consulted on the issues relevant to the implementation. The result of this type of relationship can be seen in the frequent dissatisfaction of teachers with policy decisions, difficulties during implementation and,

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4   At the time of the completion of this research, working paper "Strategy for Education, Science and Technology" (Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2013) has been published and sent to a public hearing. The introduction points out that "Croatia recognizes education and science, as well as their development, as priorities that can bring long-term stability, economic prosperity and security of cultural identity" (p. 7), while the autonomy of institutions and professionals in the field of education and science is recognized as the basic principle on which this strategy is based.

ultimately, in unsuccessful reforms. This paper is based on the assumption that the success of the education system and educational reforms depends largely on the professional capacities and willingness of teachers to implement new decisions in their everyday school practice (Fullan, 2007, 2010). Therefore, this paper will pay attention to the role of teachers in the adoption and implementation of key decisions at the school level.

Trends in global education policies: strengthening of teachers' competencies

Experts agree that the ultimate goal of global education policies is to enable citizens to effectively take part in and benefit from the global world economy (OECD, 2010). A more thorough review and comment on significant (global) education policy initiatives and documents, especially teacher education, is available in more recent publications (e.g. European Commission, 2010; Valenčič-Zuljan & Vogrinc, 2011). The review starts with the emphasis on the final decades of the 20th century as the beginning of changes and new challenges in (teacher) education. The professional education of teachers is listed as one of the indicators for monitoring the implementation of the Lisbon objectives in the field of education (European Council, 2009). Nowadays, this particular form of education is one of the indicators for monitoring the implementation of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, in which one of the emphasized priorities is investment in human resources and education. This type of an investment is seen as a contribution to the economic development of a country.

Recently, international research and debates about teachers' competencies have been extremely dynamic. Therefore, their lists of teachers' competencies are constantly updated in line with the changes and challenges that teachers face in the context of the effects of global education policies. The most influential comparative study of (teachers') competencies was driven and carried out under the TUNING Educational Structures project in Europe (Gonzales & Wagenaar, 2008). Recent studies dealing with competencies have also been conducted in Croatia. For example, research has been conducted on quality of teacher education and other aspects of the teaching profession from the perspective of primary school teachers (Pavin, Rijavec, & Miljević-Riđički, 2005). The first part of the questionnaire, conducted for the purpose of that research, contained the elements regarding major areas of teacher's work. Teachers had to evaluate the list of competencies with regard to the degree of acquisition during their initial education and with regard to the degree of satisfaction with the content, organization and execution of the initial education. In connection

to that, it is important to mention studies on (teacher's) competencies that, in addition to the finding on the situation in Croatia, also provide a comparative aspect of the Croatian position in relation to other countries in the region (e.g. Spasovski, 2010).

The current study has resulted in the creation of a comprehensive list of teachers' competencies grouped into several fundamental areas of professional performance. Moreover, it resulted in an interpretation of teachers' evaluations on the importance of mastering certain (groups of) competencies. There is a list of 39 teacher's competencies divided into four groups of competencies: a) competencies related to values and upbringing of the child, b) competencies related to the understanding of education system and contributions to its development, c) competencies related to knowledge of the subject area, pedagogy and curriculum and d) competencies related to self-evaluation and professional development. The research results indicate that in the (initial) teacher education programs the least represented elements are those that *develop competencies related to the social role of teachers, understanding the education system and education policy or raising awareness of the importance of their contribution to the development of education*. This information is significant, since it is in compliance with development perspectives and the role of teaching profession in the context of successfully coping with the challenges of the global education policies (such as, Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; OECD, 2010; Ben-Perez, 2009). These are the following competencies (Spasovski, 2010): willingness (of teachers) to participate in public debates on education topics; monitoring and participating in the activities of relevant bodies at various levels of education system; the ability to participate in projects in the field of education; understanding national priorities in education; willingness to cooperate with the local community in organizing program activities (e.g. organising practical training in local businesses); ability to anticipate new labour market requirements related to education; ability to conduct research for the advancement of education; understanding of legislation and authority in education; willingness to cooperate with the stakeholders of health and social institutions; and willingness to participate in school development plans.

Competencies that belong to this group can also be found in other lists used in recent studies: the ability to identify potential links between aspects of education theory and education policy and practice, understanding the structure and purpose of education systems, the ability to understand the process of development and change in the community, the ability to understand trends in education and recognition of their implications (Drudy, Gunnerson, & Gilpin, 2009). According to three studies that support the development of

school policies (Piesanen & Välijärvi, 2010), the teachers' competencies that were found to be particularly important were those dealing with cooperation, collaboration and leadership.

Moreover, the list of the so-called secondary professional roles of primary and secondary school teachers that were discussed in the TALIS research must be mentioned. Through those roles, teachers must respond to the expectations of the wider community. The list of roles consists of the ability to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders within and outside the school on issues related to education; knowledge of education policy and organization of the education system, the ability to participate in public debates on education policy from the perspective of the implementation education policy in schools and cooperation in managing schools (Scheerens, 2010). Debates on the expected professional competencies of teachers are closely connected with the organization of their initial and permanent professional development, as well as other settings of their professional identity. However, current debates and research do not provide data on the extent to which national education policies empower the desired professional capacity of teachers.

Position and Role of Teachers in the Adoption and Implementation of the Key Decision in Education Policies

Two groups of research bring significant information on different aspects of the position and role of teachers in adoption and implementation of decisions: those who deal with policy implementation at the education system level and those who observe different aspects of school management (Kovač et al., 2014).

Most research on *policy* implementation emphasizes its two main dimensions. The first is the *success* of the implementation, i.e. the extent to which the policy has been implemented into practice to suits its purpose. The second is the *efficiency* of implementation, i.e. the extent to which the implementation of policy has achieved the desired improvements in practice (McLaughlin, 1987; Fitz et al., 1994; Honig, 2006; Fuhrman et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 2008). The success and the efficiency of policy implementation depends on the mutual interaction of various factors, the most prominent of which are those related to the characteristics of individual policy decisions and those related to the environments in which specific policy decisions should be implemented (Honig, 2006).

Assuming that in the study of education policy teachers are commonly seen through their role in the implementation of important policy decisions, it is important to draw attention to the increasing advocacy of the expansion of their role and competence profile. The course and characteristics of policy

implementation will largely depend on the roles that teachers occupied in the earlier stages of the policy process. Most education policy researchers indicate that the knowledge of the nature of relationships that existed between the various participants in the stage of making policy decision is crucial for understanding the policy implementation process (e.g. McLaughlin, 1987; Honig, 2006). At the same time, it is important to overcome the distance between the "top" and the "down" (Fuhrman et al., 2007). The importance of overcoming this distance is confirmed by the results of the recent PISA study (OECD, 2010, 2013), which associates successful education systems with a higher level of autonomy of schools and teachers in making key decisions.[5] However, this finding should be viewed in the context of other factors that characterize the individual education systems: strengthening the autonomy of teachers will not have a positive effect if the process is not followed by ensuring/strengthening the professional capacity of teachers for qualitative decision making.

During the implementation of an education policy, one must always rely on the ability and possibility of teachers and other professionals to interpret and reinterpret the policy in a way that suits their knowledge, beliefs and values attributed to specific policies (McLauglin, 1987; Fitz et al., 1994). In other words, teachers, as professionals, rarely execute instructions "from above" without prior consideration of the appropriateness, significance and the possibility of adapting policy decisions to the real practice in which the implementation is expected to take place. Therefore, in the situations of "top-down" decision making, it is very likely that the implementation will not fully correspond to the intentions of a decision maker. However, these phenomena cannot be considered to be desirable or undesirable without prior analysis, since they usually reflect positive motives, i.e. focused on finding the best practices for the benefit of end-users. The incorrect implementation sometimes happens due to the lack of necessary competencies and other capacities or because of personal frustration caused by the loss of certain resources after the implementation of new policies (Palmer & Snodgrass Rangel, 2011).

Desurmont et al. (2008) considered the different roles and types of teachers' participation in educational reforms. The researchers started with the reforms that were more often initiated by the national government. In those type of reforms, the modes of teachers' involvement were created from the "top

5   The results of the PISA study (OECD, 2013) show that the connection between school autonomy and students' achievement can be seen in the allocation of autonomy. In particular, in the creation of curriculum, in assessment process and in making decisions on the allocation of resources. Regarding this issue, Croatia, among the countries who participated in the PISA study, has one of the lowest degree of autonomy (the value of the achieved index of autonomy is -0.8). It is important to mention that Croatia has a complete absence of autonomy in the issues regarding the election of school principals, i.e. in defining their authorities and responsibilities.

down" perspective. Accordingly, the researchers noticed the most frequent modes of involvement: a) low level of involvement, when only a few selected experts / representatives of teachers participate in the preparation of the reform documents; b) participation through representatives of trade unions (which may or may not be regulated by law as an obligatory way of involvement); and c) large numbers of consulting teachers. The last item can be realized through participation in pilot projects, precisely structured public discussions or through participation in larger studies in which the teacher serves as a direct source of relevant information.

The current tendency of strengthening the involvement of teachers in the reform process is explained via the intention of achieving two basic goals: gathering information from those who have the best knowledge of the actual school conditions (which may facilitate the implementation of the reform) and reducing resistance in the implementation of reforms. Even though Croatia did not participate in this research, it can be assumed that Croatia does not apply those modes of teachers' involvement that ensure their strong participation in reforms.[6]

Recent research results of various aspects of school management and education systems (e.g. Jackson & Marriott, 2012; Jarvis, 2012; Somech, 2010; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hulpia et al., 2011) indicate that school management is a process that enables the crucial connection of school classrooms, individual schools and the education system as a whole, integrating internal processes to improve schools with externally induced reforms. Through its series of comparative studies and publications dedicated to school management, the OECD specifically advocates the strengthening of the so-called distributive management forms of school and school systems (Pont et al., 2008). Those forms are considered to be the more distinct guidelines for the development of education policy at the global level. The distribution of management roles and responsibilities to teachers and other professionals within and outside the school (special attention ought to be paid to school boards) has appeared due to the increased scope of roles and responsibilities of school principals. It is assumed that schools have become overly complex organizations that operate in an increasingly complex environment. Therefore, it is very difficult for a single

6   In the pilot-research, the results of which are presented in this paper, teachers were asked to describe their perception of the most important trends in the Croatian education policy. Among others, they described basic programs and projects at the national level in which they take part, the adoption of which made significant changes in ther daily work. The most cited projects are: standardization of the national curriculum in elementary schools (Croatian National Educational Standard) and other interventions relalated to the inovation of curriculum (introducing new content such as education on health and citizenship), implementation of State Graduation Exam in secondary schools, the strenghtening of lifelong education policy and the application of self-evaluation of schools.

person or a small group of employees responsible for the school management to make appropriate decisions. Involving teachers in the decision-making process is positively associated with the increased efficiency of schools, labour productivity and professional capacity of teachers, student achievement, as well as with the formation of desirable characteristics of a school's climate and environment (Bruggencate et al., 2012; Robinson et al., 2008; Choi Ho Wa., 2010). Advocacy of the distributive type of school management is based on four assumptions: decisions in which teachers take part will be more qualitative, teachers' motivation to implement them will be stronger, realization of their professional capacity will be better, and their job satisfaction will be higher.

Somech (2010) emphasizes that the appropriate involvement of teachers in the decision-making process must satisfy four basic assumptions: the inclusion must be defined by the official policy of the school management, their participation must be direct, the influence on decision making must be powerful, and the issues to be decided upon must be perceived as important. It should be noted that true characteristics of the distributive school management include the equal access of all participants to the necessary resources and equal right to vote in the decision-making process. Jackson and Marriot (2012) observed and compared the efficiency of schools in respect to their organizational features. Moreover, they evaluated different combinations of the level of influence that school principals and teachers have on making key decisions. They concluded that the most successful schools are those in which school principals and teachers make high evaluations of their level of influence on the decision-making process. The abovementioned research determined that a mere 27.22% of schools appertain to the most desirable category. Similar tendencies can be observed in the studies that compare the degree of influence of teachers in making key decisions in relation to the influence of other stakeholders inside and outside the school. The more successful schools are those in which teachers and other stakeholders make high evaluations of their influence on the decision-making process. Moreover, those schools are characterized by the presence of (desirable) characteristics of the distributive type of management.[7]

If only the legal and formal assumptions for the functioning of distributive management in Croatian schools were to be analysed, it could be relatively quickly concluded that the practice of distributive management is strongly represented and well established in these aspects. There is a wide range of stakeholders who have an ensured participation in decision-making on various

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7   Within the PISA study, school principals answered the question regarding the frequency of taking certain activities, such as involvement of teachers in those processes. The value of index of managing school with the involvement of teachers for Croatian schools is only 0.1.

aspects of school performance.[8] Moreover, the function of the Teacher Council enables all teachers and professional associates to participate in decision-making on a range of school activities. In contrast, the structure of the School Board provides regular participation of representatives of parents and founders in the decision-making process. However, an insight into the role, structure and scope of work of these bodies provides only information on their purpose, on the composition of the members who strive to achieve this purpose, and on the inventory of their activities.

In the context of Croatian education policy, there is lack of sufficient empirical data on teachers' qualification for participation in the creation and implementation of key decision in education policy. Moreover, there is little data on the realization of the necessary assumptions for giving teachers a more active role in the school management. Therefore, empirical research has been conducted in order to obtain insight into the realization of those assumptions.

Purpose, Objective and Research Method

This research was conducted in order to gain preliminary insight into the general orientation and range of opinions of teachers employed in primary and secondary schools on the issues of teachers' competencies related to the education policy. Apart from an insight into the issue and into a general orientation and range of opinions, an additional purpose of this research is to create a theoretical and empirical basis for the operationalization of a more extensive research project in this issue. In particular, this purpose is related to the research of specific roles of various stakeholder and interferences in their interaction that can cause dysfunction in the system.

Therefore, the research questions are as follows:

1.   What are the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers in Croatia towards the importance of teachers' competencies related to the creation and implementation of education policies?

2.   How do Croatian teachers evaluate their actual cognition and mastering of competencies related to the education policy?

8   Duties and responsibilities of the educational institutions in pre-tertiary education in Croatia are divided among bodies (authorities) of dual orientation of expertise. For some of the bodies, the main purpose is to take care of the resources necessary for the operation (material, human, financial, etc.), and they are usually appointed as the governing bodies, e.g. School Board in elementary and secondary schools. Others are oriented towards the successful realization of pedagogical processes and are called professional bodies of educational institutions, e.g. primary and secondary Teacher Councils, developmental pedagogical services and the principal who connects and coordinates the work of both (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Official Gazette No. 87/2008).

3.   How do Croatian teachers evaluate their actual participation in the creation and implantation of key decisions at the school level?

Regarding the above-stated questions, the collection of the quantitative data was based on the evaluation of the provided statements according to the level of agreement. Additionally, teachers were given two open questions. In the first, they were asked to state positive features of Croatian education policy and in the second they were asked to state negative features of the same policy. Thematic categories of data were selected based on the collected and analysed responses (Milas, 2005). The selected categories provide deeper understanding and facilitate the interpretation of data on the motivations, roles and actual activities of teachers in making key decisions in education policy. The recognition of teachers as important factors of education policy constitutes an important group of desirable features of education policy. As for the negative features, several selected categories support the results of this research: comments focused on the poor status of teachers and the teaching profession, the inadequacy of decisions in relation to pedagogical profession, and distrust in the work of educational authorities.

The research is intended to be a preliminary determination of the orientation and range of opinions towards the importance of mastering the competencies in education policy and participation in the implementation of policy decisions. Consequently, simple random samples were not extracted from the population group. Instead, a modified random sample group of participants were extracted from population group in throughout Croatia. The procedure consisted of a random selection of seven counties from the list of all Croatian administrative territorial units (21 counties). The research included 396 primary and secondary school teachers from all the schools in the selected counties. The questionnaire was distributed via county or city offices for education.

Data were collected via an online questionnaire in the form of Likert scale in which informants had to evaluate the given statements according to the level of agreement to a specific statement: "1" meaning strongly disagree and "5" strongly agree. Anonymity was guaranteed to all participants and the average time to fill in the questionnaire was 15 minutes. The questionnaire was available to participants for a period of two weeks. In a cover letter, the questionnaire was explained in detail, starting from the purpose of research, basic concepts to the key role of the research participants. Data analysis was performed using the SPSS statistical program. Descriptive statistics (shown as the mean, standard deviation and percentages) was used in the analysis of the collected data. A T-test for independent samples was used in order to determine the difference

in evaluations of certain statements with regard to the separate independent variables (discussed below).

The list of the evaluated teachers' competencies related to education policy is content-wise and logically validated and in compliance with recent pieces of research presented in the theoretical part of the paper (Pavin, Rijavec, & Miljević-Riđički, 2005; Drudy, Gunerson, & Gilipin, 2009; Spasovski, 2010; Scheerens, 2010). Moreover, the list is aligned with policy recommendations that define new primary/secondary school teachers' competencies.

The importance and mastery of the derived competencies was evaluated through ten statements (scale items). Incentives and the actual participation of teachers in designing and implementing policies were evaluated through eight statements. It is important to state that this research did not include an evaluation of the role of teachers in the decision-making process with respect to different types of decisions, e.g. at the school level or at the education system level (such as in OECD, 2010; Jackson & Marriott, 2012). Instead, the research opted for finding the general evaluation of the role of teachers in decision-making processes.

Apart from opinions, the questionnaire collected the following features of participants: gender, qualifications, work experience, type of school in which they are employed, subject area and status with regard to the realized professional progression. However, the analysis of these variables generally showed no statistically significant differences in the examined opinions.

Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Teachers' evaluation on importance of competencies related to education policy

The presented results (Table 1) clearly show that teachers evaluated all the competencies related to policies as an important part of their competency profile (average evaluations are around and above 4). Even though this type of data seems expected and uninteresting, its actual significance emerges when placed into the context of the current curriculum for the Teacher Education Program at Croatian universities. In fact, content related to these competencies is rarely or not at all present in the initial education and in the lifelong learning program for Croatian teachers. However, one must not ignore the fact that all groups of competencies, within the range of completely irrelevant to very important, were evaluated as important or very important. The result may indicate that teachers expect a certain level of their involvement in dealing with activities that go beyond their primary professional role (teaching students).

Table 1. *Teachers' evaluations on the importance of competencies related to education policy*

Statements	Importance of competencies	
	M	SD
Ability to adapt the educational process to the requirements of the labour market	4.44	0.778
Knowledge of legislation related to education (law, regulations, decisions, strategies, etc.)	4.32	0.799
Understanding of the effects of the global trends on activities in teaching and school practice	4.28	0.764
Knowledge of global trends in education	4.27	0.785
Qualification for active participation in the preparation of development plans for school	4.26	0.873
Qualification for active participation in projects and research related to the development of education	4.23	0.818
Ability to take initiative in making decisions related to school performance	4.20	0.871
Capacity to actively participate in public debates on education topics	4.09	0.906
Qualification for active participation in activities of relevant governing bodies at the school level (school boards, etc.)	4.09	0.882
Knowledge of the education system structure at the national level (structure, education level, number and composition of decision-making bodies related to education and education system, etc.)	3.93	0.912

Teachers' self-evaluation on cognition and mastering of the competencies related to education policies

The results of evaluations of the cognition and mastering of each competence (Table 2) indicate that teachers provide relatively high evaluations of their cognition and mastering of all the competencies, especially those related to their activities within the educational institution. Most of those statements were evaluated with an average value greater than 4. Competencies related to the knowledge of education system, i.e. actions outside the framework of the educational institution, were evaluated slightly lower.

Table 2. *Teachers' self-evaluation on cognition and mastering of teachers' competencies related to the cognition of education policy*

Statements	Cognition and mastering of the competencies	
	M	SD
I am able to participate in the relevant governing body at the school level (school boards, etc.)	4.31	0.871
I am able to participate in the projects and research related to the development of education	4.25	0.785
I am able to adapt the educational process to the requirements of labour market (content, mode)	4.24	0.799
I am able to participate in the preparation of development plans for school	4.24	0.854
I am able to take the initiative in making decisions related to school performance	4.19	0.903
I have knowledge of global trends in education	4.02	0.756
I have knowledge of the education system structure at the national level (structure, education level, number and composition of the decision-making bodies related to education and the education system, etc.)	3.99	0.895
I am able to participate in public debates on education topics	3.97	0.863
I understand the effects of global trends on activities in teaching and school practice	3.9	0.862
I know the legislation related to education (laws, regulations, decisions, strategies, etc.)	3.88	0.85

The results of t-test for independent samples showed a significant difference between the evaluations of primary school employees and secondary school employees. The difference is seen in two statements: *Understanding the effects of global trends on activities in teaching and school practice* (t (376) = -2.267, p <0.05) and *The ability to take the initiative in making decisions about school performance* (t (371) = -1.1997, p < 0.05). In both cases, secondary school employees provide higher evaluations, which may lead to the assumption that secondary school employees participate more frequently in decision-making processes.

However, teachers' evaluations of the importance and mastery of the competencies related to the understanding and implementation of education policy should be interpreted with certain restrictions. In fact, self-evaluations related to mastery of competencies should not be viewed as indicators of the actual mastering of these competencies. Instead, they should be viewed as a potential capacity of teachers to participate in decision-making processes at the school level.

*Evaluations of assumptions and activity of teachers in creation and
implementation of decisions in domain of education policy*

It should be noted that statements provided in the questionnaire are
fully compliant with trends that are being advocated through relevant policy
documents in the field of education, as well as through the reports on (factors
of) efficiency of education systems. Therefore, the values that rarely exceed the
average of teachers' evaluations do not reflect a favourable situation that can en-
sure the success and sustainability of educational reforms (Table 3). The evalu-
ations of statements related to the awareness and personal activity in making
policy decisions and implementing them at the school level vary in the range of
average values or slightly above that.

Table 3. *Evaluations of assumptions and activity of teachers in creation and
implementation of education policies at the school level*

Statements related to the assumptions and activity in creation and implementation of education policies at the school level	M	SD
I am regularly involved in professional training programs.	4.58	0.747
I am regularly informed on important issues of school performance.	3.54	1.203
The principal encourages me to make changes at the school level.	3.39	1.277
School environment is supportive of my work.	3.38	1.202
My opinion is appreciated in making key decisions at the school level.	3.19	1.201
I actively participate in the implementation of educational reforms.	3.05	1.192
Information needed for the successful implementation of educational reforms are available to us.	2.91	1.167
The school where I work is well equipped.	2.86	1.241

The results of t-test showed a significant difference between the evalua-
tions of teachers who have made professional progression and those who have
not. The difference is seen in two statements: *Regular involvement in profes-
sional training programs* (t (326) = 3.203, p < 0.01) and *Availability of required
information for the successful implementation of educational reforms* (t (324)
= 2.991, p < 0.01). In both cases, teachers who made professional progression
make higher evaluations of the provided statements. Bearing in mind the ac-
tivities that Croatian teachers have to undertake in order to gain the right to
professional progression (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2008), it
is possible to assume that the more appropriate system of rewarding teachers
could significantly contribute to the enhancement of desirable trends of involv-
ing teachers in these processes.

The relatively low evaluations of their active participation in the implementation of educational reforms (M = 3.05) leads to the assumption that national educational authorities failed to implement modes of the high level of involvement of teachers (Desurmont et al., 2008). However, this information may indicate that the implementation of those modes did not result in desired effects. In this context, particular attention should be paid to the responses that teachers provided to open questions. Those responses confirm that their messages and opinions do not reach the education authorities, even in situations in which there is a formal opportunity to engage in a public debate on making draft decisions. The consequences of this situation can be seen in adoption of decisions that are not appropriate for the teaching environment. In fact, teachers frequently report such situations:

- "There are no public debates before the introduction of changes."
- "Every reform is implemented haphazardly, teachers are not even asked for an opinion, and when they are randomly asked, their opinion is not appreciated."
- "Creators of education policies are often not familiar with the actual conditions in schools and the possibility of realizing the set objectives."
- "People who create education policies do not work in schools, most of them never worked in schools."

In addition, the following comments illustrate low evaluations of active participation in the implementation of reforms:

- "Experts are not contacted in terms of reforms. Always jumping in decision-making, without the prior analysis. No experimental programs. Everyone comes, dragging their own people along with them, and makes changes."
- "Education policy is not created by teachers who are competent to implement it into practice."

Low evaluations of material conditions (M = 2.86) are also closely related to low evaluations of participation in the implementation of decisions, as evidenced by the following statement:

- "Frequent reforms, badly thought though, haphazard, and teachers have to adjust and find a way to realize it; a lot of schools do not have the conditions for implementation, so then, how will the students acquire the necessary competencies? First, everything should be well prepared, financially secure, and then go into the realization; then, the success (motivation / realization) would be much better."

Judging by the teachers' statements, low evaluations of their participation in the implementation of education reforms is likely associated with a poor status of teachers and teaching profession in society. Moreover, it is associated with the lack of confidence in the performance and competence of the representatives of education authorities. Commenting on the unfavourable status of teachers and teaching profession, teachers most often singled out poor treatment by the education authorities and other entities that are associated with school performance.

- "Teaching staff is not paid enough and therefore is unmotivated."
- "Downgrading teachers and their rights in the process of teaching."
- "The dignity of teachers has been degraded. Successful teachers do not receive any 'bonus' or award, other than a pat on the shoulder. You can't live on that."

A low score of evaluations of the availability of information needed for the successful implementation of reforms (M = 2.91) is another indicator of underutilized potential for strengthening the involvement of teachers in the creation and successful implementation of reforms.

- "Participants of education have lack of information."
- "Reforms and changes are chaotic, under-planned and they are imposed to teachers without explanation."

In this case, teacher training possibilities should be noted. In fact, the Agency for Education provides possibilities that are partially related to the professional preparation of teachers for the implementation of the ongoing projects and programs. However, teachers point to some limitations in this segment:

- "Lack of resources for professional training and systematic guidance of teachers in the implementation."
- "Due to a lack of finances, a small number of teachers participate in professional training and projects."

Since being informed is a necessary condition for teachers' successful and active involvement, it is imperative to find and implement mechanisms that will encourage teachers to use the available information. Moreover, those mechanisms may serve as a powerful factor in raising awareness of the importance of their role in creating and implementing educational reforms.

Finally, as expected, evaluations related to the activity of teachers in decision-making processes at the school level have higher values. This can partially be clarified by the legally acquired right to make decisions through

collective participation in school management bodies. However, low evaluations of statements related to the appreciation of teachers' opinions in decision-making process (M = 3.19) and principal's encouragement to make changes at the school level (M = 3.39) should be noted. It seems that the acquired right to make decision often relies on participation in bodies that are mainly advisory and are not involved in making a large number of decisions relevant for the school performance.

Discussion and conclusions

The analysis of results clearly showed that the participants in this research evaluated teachers' competencies related to the education policies as an important part of competency profile of primary and secondary school teachers. Teachers have made relatively high evaluations of their cognition and mastering of the competencies, especially those related to activities within school. In contrast, somewhat lower evaluations have been given to the mastering of competencies associated with the knowledge of education system, i.e. activities outside the school context. Three important messages can be derived from this part of research. First, attention should be given to the designers of teachers' education programmes, emphasizing the necessity for inclusion the development of this particular set of competences as a part of initial teacher education, with reference to Fullan's (2007) assumption about the necessity of linking all levels of management of the education system in order to ensure successful and sustainable educational reform.

The second message of this research should be referred to decision-makers at the highest (national) level of authority. The message is the following: primary/secondary school teachers in Croatian schools should be strongly involved in the process of creating education policy, with better appreciation of their professional competencies and capacities. Research results confirm that their messages and opinions do not reach the education authorities, even in situations in which there is a formal opportunity to engage in a public debate on making draft decisions.

The third message should be directed to the school principals: the process of stronger involvement should start with the creation of better conditions for strengthening their role in decision-making processes at the school level. Research indicates a serious lack of information needed for the successful implementation of educational reforms in spite of various teacher training possibilities, which are partially related to the professional preparation of teachers for the implementation of the ongoing projects and programs. Empowered and

involved teachers can ensure the adoption of more appropriate decisions, aimed at improving school and teaching achievements.

The results can also be interpreted in the context of debates about the appropriateness of certain decisions in an actual school situation. A number of the reviewed teachers' statements have reported insufficient material conditions of schools, or on adoption of decisions that are not appropriate for certain school environment. The findings of the similar research studies point to decision makers who do not take sufficient account of the variety of local conditions in which certain decisions or innovations will have to take place (Honig, 2006). Undesirable consequences of such practice usually lead to teachers' negative perceptions towards educational authorities, distrust in quality and appropriateness of decisions made by politicians, opinion that key decisions are made by individuals who are not familiar with the teaching practice. The results of this research are not significantly different from the results of similar studies in other national systems. Experts from the Centre for Education Policy in Belgrade (Pantić & Čekić -Marković, 2012) report similar results based on the analysis of data collected via interviews with focus groups of teachers in Serbia. However, differences in the relationship between "politicians" and "practitioners" are a quite common phenomenon in the context of education policy (Kovač, 2007). Therefore, the obtained results should be seriously considered. Moreover, desired approaches to solving or mitigating the identified problems should be defined.

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that research results give optimistic assumptions for a more active involvement of teachers in process of decision making: positive results of self-evaluations of teachers in terms of their professional capacity, agreement in evaluation of the importance of competencies for participation in the creation and implementation of education policies, and a mostly positive attitude towards the necessity of involvement of teachers in the process of decision making. According to the announcements of national and international authorities in the field of education policy, educational reforms will surely continue to be implemented in full intensity. Greater success and sustainability of those reforms will be ensured through the improvement of communication links between all levels of the education system management and through the improvement of competencies of all relevant stakeholders in this process. Therefore, the continued research of this issue is one of the important strategic objectives. Topics that were opened in this research indicate to the necessity of research extension and particularly to the necessity of collecting data from several other groups of stakeholders. In doing so, Fullan's assumption (2007) on the importance of the vertical and horizontal interconnection within the education system would be entirely fulfilled.

Note:

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Biographical note

Vesna Kovač, dr., is associate professor at the University of Rijeka – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education. Her research interest has been firstly focused on the education policy, management and leadership in higher education, while the recent research focus has been also focused on the education policy, management and leadership within the pre-tertiary education. She is currently appointed as the head of Doctoral Study Programme of Education and as the head of the Center of Teacher Education.

Branko Rafajac, dr., is full professor at the University of Rijeka – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education and former dean of the faculty. His main research interest has been focused on the sociology of education, education policy and management, methodology of educational research, methodology of cultural research and statistics. He is currently a principal investigator of a research project Investigating School Leadership From a Distributed Perspective in Croatian Schools supported by the University of Rijeka. He was a winner of the National Award „Ivan Filipović" for his contribution in higher education in 2006.

Iva Buchberger is junior researcher at the University of Rijeka – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education. Her recent research focus is concerned with the field of the education policy, management and leadership within the pre-tertiary education. Her interest is also concerned with the critical thinking, reading and writing, didactics and philosophy of education. She is currently doctoral student at Doctoral Programme in Education at the University of Rijeka – Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Education.

Effects of German Language Teacher Professional Development on Pupils' Learning Outcomes in Intercultural Competence

Ana Šenjug Golub[1]

∼   The development of intercultural competence is increasingly being perceived as a key goal in today's education. As a result of a strong emphasis on that competence in curricular documents, teachers are faced with demanding tasks. Confirming this, recent research in the field of intercultural competence in Croatian schools indicates the numerous difficulties teachers face in accomplishing the goal of developing their pupils' intercultural competence. Teacher professional development can be crucial for a systematic approach to the development of learners' intercultural competence. Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine whether teacher participation in a further professional development programme on the topic of intercultural competence can significantly affect the achievement of goals set in the current curricular documents on foreign language learning related to intercultural competence. The effects of the professional development programme were assessed by means of analysing learner outcomes in intercultural competence prior to and after teacher participation in the programme. A quasi-experimental pre-test-post-test design was used, and the achievements of 752 primary and lower secondary level pupils attending 4th and 8th grades were evaluated. The results confirmed that foreign language teacher professional development in the field of intercultural competence had positive effects on pupils' learning outcomes, especially in the cognitive component of intercultural competence. This leads to the conclusion that it is necessary to motivate foreign language teachers to participate in such programmes. The results also indicate the necessity of placing particular emphasis on the problem of stereotypes and prejudices when designing such programmes.

Keywords: evaluation of learning outcomes, German language teaching and learning, intercultural competence, teacher professional development

1   Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb, Croatia; ana.senjug@ufzg.hr

Učinki profesionalnega razvoja učiteljev nemščine na učne dosežke učencev s področja medkulturnih kompetenc

Ana Šenjug Golub

∽   Razvijanje medkulturnih kompetenc je vedno bolj v ospredju kot ključen cilj v današnjem izobraževanju. Glede na to, da je ta kompetenca močno prisotna v kurikularnih dokumentih, se učitelji srečujejo z zahtevnimi nalogami. To potrjujejo tudi novejše raziskave na področju medkulturnih kompetenc v hrvaških šolah, ki kažejo na številne težave, s katerimi se učitelji spopadajo pri doseganju cilja – pri učencih razviti medkulturne kompetence. Učiteljev profesionalni razvoj je lahko ključnega pomena pri sistematičnem pristopu k razvijanju medkulturnih kompetenc učencev. Zato je namen te raziskave ugotoviti, ali lahko udeležba učiteljev v programih profesionalnega razvoja na temo medkulturnih kompetenc pomembno vpliva na doseganje ciljev, postavljenih v obstoječem kurikulumu za poučevanje tujega jezika, povezanih z medkulturnimi kompetencami. Učinki programa profesionalnega razvoja so bili merjeni s pomočjo analiziranja učnih dosežkov s področja medkulturnih kompetenc, preden so se učitelji udeležili programa in po udeležbi. Uporabljena je bila metoda kvazieksperimenta (predtest/potest). Analizirani so bili dosežki 752 učencev, ki so obiskovali četrti in osmi razred osnovne šole. Rezultati so potrdili, da je imel profesionalni razvoj učiteljev tujega jezika s področja medkulturnih kompetenc pozitiven vpliv na dosežke učencev, še posebej glede kognitivne komponente medkulturnih kompetenc. To vodi do sklepa, da je učitelje tujih jezikov nujno treba motivirati, da se udeležujejo tovrstnih programov. Rezultati kažejo tudi na to, da je pri snovanju tovrstnih programov treba še posebno pozornost nameniti težavam, povezanim s stereotipi in predsodki.

Ključne besede: analiza učnih dosežkov, učenje in poučevanje nemščine, medkulturne kompetence, profesionalni razvoj učiteljev

Introduction

The global economy, the establishment of worldwide connections between people and or institutions, as well as economically and socially motivated migration, are characteristic occurrences of contemporary societies and contribute to the increasing heterogeneity of various aspects of human life. In order to sustain oneself, thrive and actively participate in such a society, individuals need a set of different competences. Intercultural competence is often singled out as an important component of that set, its purpose being to establish and improve relationships and bring about mutual understanding and respect among members of different cultural and social groups. The development of this competence is increasingly being perceived as a key goal in today's education. Official recognition of its importance in education at the European level was confirmed by its inclusion in the *Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning* (Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006).

The development of key competences is regarded as a relevant goal both in the European Union's education policy and in the national education policies of European countries. Therefore, key competences are increasingly being included in the national curricula throughout Europe. Similarly, intercultural competence is incorporated in the curricula of most European countries today, with foreign language teaching representing a significant area of its development (see Languages and Cultures in Europe, 2006).

The Republic of Croatia is not an exception in following this trend, as the document on *Key competences for lifelong learning – a European reference framework* has exerted significant influence on the design of the Croatian *National Curriculum Framework for Preschool Education, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education* (2010) (hereafter: *National Curriculum Framework*). Intercultural competence is integrated into the *National Curriculum Framework* and is thus recognized by the Croatian education policy and language teaching methodology as an essential key competence. While this competence was defined as a foreign language teaching goal in the *Primary School Curriculum* of the Republic of Croatia as early as 2006, its achievement is more elaborately defined in the subsequently adopted *National Curriculum Framework*. Therefore, the competence has been given a significant position in the Croatian curricular documents. The development of intercultural competence is precisely defined and outlined in the foreign language teaching framework, and the competence is also – implicitly or explicitly – cited as a goal in other education areas and subject-integrated fields of study.

As a result of the placement of a strong emphasis on intercultural competence in curricular documents, teachers are faced with demanding tasks. In the Croatian education system, foreign language teachers are affected by the changes the most significantly, because intercultural competence is regarded as an essential component of foreign language competences. The accomplishment of the learning outcomes, such as the ability to reflect on the phenomena of 'the culture of the interlocutor without making value judgments' (National Curriculum Framework, 2010, p. 89) or the ability to reflect on the influence of 'one's own culture on the perception of both the culture of the interlocutor and one's own, on the ways in which culture affects communication and cultural patterns, and on heterogeneity, change and development as important aspects of culture' (National Curriculum Framework, 2010, p. 89) can present teachers with challenges. Recent research in that field confirms these assumptions.

Research results in the field of intercultural competence in Croatian schools point to the numerous difficulties teachers face in accomplishing learner outcomes in this area, i.e. they indicate that the approach to the development of this competence has not been sufficiently systematic (see Breka, 2012; Filipan-Žignić, 2008; Legac, Mikulan, & Siročić, 2007; Šenjug, 2008). The results of research conducted in Croatian elementary schools, i.e. among pupils at primary and lower secondary school levels,[2] show evident shortcomings in relation to different aspects of pupils' intercultural competence. Filipan-Žignić (2008) identifies significant deficiencies in the area of specific cultural and civilizational knowledge and concludes that such topics are neglected in foreign language teaching. Šenjug's (2008) research carried out among German language learners shows that the harbouring of prejudice toward German language speakers is not necessarily significantly lessened with increased durations of target language study. Such results indicate that cultural aspects are not given sufficient attention in foreign language teaching, i.e. that the changes introduced in the curricular documents are not sufficiently considered in the teaching practice (see Legac, Mikulan, & Siročić, 2007). Although future and in-service teachers frequently express a positive attitude toward the development of intercultural competence and consider it to be an important goal in foreign language teaching (Piršl, 2011; Breka, 2012), they often do not cover intercultural topics in their own classes. This is confirmed by some findings by Breka (2012), according to whom most of the teaching time in the foreign language classroom is dedicated to the development of language competences (Breka,

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2   In the Croatian education system, compulsory education comprises eight years of schooling and is organized in elementary schools. Grades 1-4 make up the primary, and grades 5-8 of elementary schools the lower secondary level, as referred to in this paper.

2012, p. 249). In this respect, teachers frequently report on their shortcomings in the field of intercultural competence as an obstacle to its development among their pupils (Breka, 2012, p. 251). While teacher professional development in the given field could be very useful, Breka's (Breka, 2012, p. 213) findings show that more than two thirds of teachers have never attended seminars on intercultural competence development. It is important to note that those teachers who have participated in such seminars and workshops consider such forms of training very useful. In addition, the majority of teachers are of the opinion that the development of intercultural competence should be given more attention than is currently the case (Breka, 2012, pp. 217–218).

With regards to the presented research results, it is evident that teachers face difficulties in achieving the aims related to intercultural competence in the classroom. One possible reason for this is surely the fact that the relevant topics are not covered in teacher initial education. Further professional development can be the key to improving the teaching of those teachers who are already in service and are attempting to cope with education policy changes. Teachers themselves also consider continuing professional development to be crucial for the systematic development of learners' intercultural competence (Breka, 2012, p. 219).

The development of teacher competences, teaching quality improvement and the improvement of the learning outcomes are the central goals of teacher continuing professional development (Croatian Education and Teacher Training Agency, 2013). Forms of teacher education and professional development are varied and range from those directed at developing work-specific competences to individual learning and different formal education courses in higher education institutions. Teacher professional development comprises "talks and discussions with colleagues, study of specialist literature, participation at symposia, working visits, participation in distance-learning courses, in scholarship programmes and in research" (Petljak Zekić, Ruklječ, & Urek, 2013, p. 18). Forms of teacher professional development have changed over time. As opposed to the traditional model, in which teachers usually attended symposia and listened to plenary talks in large groups, modular training courses are more frequently offered today. Such courses enable participants to work in small teams and engage in an in-depth study of specific topics in the course of a few meetings or modules (Petljak Zekić, Ruklječ, & Urek, 2013, p. 18). In this way, single in-service training courses are abandoned in favour of extended, more comprehensive, study-oriented programmes (Vujičić, 2007).

Given that the effects of teacher professional development are reflected in the learning outcomes of pupils, such outcomes are indicative of the quality of

teacher professional development programmes. For this reason, learner achievements are frequently the subject of research aimed at assessing the quality of teacher education and continuing professional development (see e.g. Angrist & Lavy, 2001; Domović & Godler, 2005; Jacob & Lefgren, 2004; Shah & Alam, 2002). A great number of such studies indicate the weak spots of in-service teacher training (Kennedy, 1998) and identify low intensity or small amounts of input and a lack of continuity of professional development programmes as the main problems (Corcoran, 1995; Little, 1993). In contrast, some studies show that high quality in-service teacher training positively affects students' learning outcomes (Angrist & Lavy, 2001; Little, 1993).

In view of the difficulties faced by foreign language teachers in relation to achieving intercultural competence as a learning outcome and given the relevance of teacher's continuing professional development, the aim of this study was to determine whether teacher participation in professional development courses on the topic of intercultural competence can significantly affect the achievement of goals set in the current curricular documents on foreign language learning. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the influence of German language teacher professional development in the field of intercultural competence on the outcomes defined as goals in the foreign language curricular documents. The effects of teacher professional development were assessed by examining learner outcomes in intercultural competence, prior to and after teacher participation in a specially designed teacher professional development programme. In order to define the subject area of teacher further professional development and set the guidelines for learner outcome evaluation, a definition of intercultural competence in the framework of foreign language teaching shall be given first.

Intercultural competence in foreign language teaching

The complexity of the construct of intercultural competence currently lacks a uniform definition. Attempts to convey the complex aspects of the concept are exemplified in a range of various terms currently in use. While no overlapping of terms was noted in the German language sources, studies written in English promote a variety of synonymously used expressions, such as *cross-cultural awareness*, *global competitive intelligence*, *cultural competence*, *cultural sensitivity*, *ethno-relativity*, *international competence*, *intercultural interaction*, *biculturalism*, *multiculturalism*, etc. (Fantini, 2006, p. 81; Mertesacker, 2010, p. 26; Yussefi, 2011, p. 16). Emphasis is laid on global knowledge in one term, sensitivity is in the focus of another, specific skills are singled out in yet another,

and so on. In spite of the focal differences of the said concepts, a consensus across disciplines exists on the three essential components of intercultural competence: the cognitive (knowledge), the affective (attitudes and beliefs) and the pragmatic (skills) component (Gehrmann, Petravić, & Šenjug Golub, 2013).

These components form part of Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communication competence. His model is very well accepted in foreign language learning and teaching, and has significantly influenced the way in which intercultural competence is defined in both the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001) and in the Croatian *National Framework Curriculum* (see Petravić, 2011). This competence is regarded as an important aspect of Byram's model of intercultural communication competence, which consists of intercultural, linguistic, sociolinguistic and discursive competence. Intercultural competence itself comprises five components:

- knowledge (fr. *savoirs*),
- attitudes (fr. *savoir être*),
- skills of discovery and interaction (fr. *savoir apprendre/faire*),
- skills of interpreting and relating (fr. *savoir comprendre*), and
- critical cultural awareness/political education (fr. *savoir s'engager*).

The *knowledge* one brings into interaction with individuals from another country, i.e. with interlocutors perceived as different from oneself, comprises two categories. One is the category of the knowledge of social groups and culture in one's own as well as one's interlocutor's country; the other is the knowledge of the processes of interaction, referring to the ways in which social identity is acquired and to the awareness of that identity's acting as a prism through which one is perceived by others. The prism also determines the way in which members of other groups are perceived by us (Byram, 1997, pp. 35–37).

Skills of interpreting and relating originate in the knowledge of one's own environment and the environment of another, and are not limited to interaction with others, but are also applied when faced with any kind of document from another culture. *Skills of discovery and interaction* are activated when one's knowledge in interaction with another is limited or entirely lacking. This dimension relates to the ability of acquiring specific knowledge and the understanding of beliefs and behaviour behind a given phenomenon, be it a document or a person in interaction (Byram, 1997, pp. 37–38).

Critical cultural awareness partially covers the remaining dimensions of Byram's model. It refers to the ability to critically reflect on the perspective, the customs and the products of one's own and one's interlocutor's culture. The aim of such reflection is not exclusively limited to achieving more efficient

communication, but also involves bringing to light the ideological side of one's own perspective (Byram, 1997, pp. 63–64).

Attitudes are a prerequisite of successful intercultural competence, with desirable attitudes being those marked with curiosity and openness toward others, readiness to suspend disbelief and respect for others' beliefs and behaviour. Furthermore, it is important that one's attitude expresses a readiness to observe one's own culture from the viewpoint of the interlocutor and critically reflect on one's own values (Byram, 1997, pp. 34–35).

Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence is often applied in the design of instruments for the evaluation of foreign language teaching (see Äijälä, 2009; Eberhardt, 2009; Feng & Fleming, 2009; Sercu, 2000). While all but one component of intercultural competence can, according to Byram, be assessed directly, critical cultural awareness (fr. *savoir s'engager*) is assessed indirectly via other components. Byram does not regard holistic evaluation as possible, because each component requires a particular mode of assessment. He cites four such assessment modes: portfolio, test, simulation and continuous assessment. Some of these procedures can also be applied when evaluating more than one dimension of intercultural competence. For instance, knowledge (fr. *savoirs*) of the target culture in terms of the knowledge of the products, events and phenomena, can be assessed via tests and continuous assessment (Byram, 1997, p. 98). The most appropriate means of assessment for attitudes marked with openness, curiosity and readiness to suspend disbelief related to one's own and one's interlocutor's culture (*savoir être*) is the portfolio (Byram, 1997, p. 95), while skills of discovery and interaction (fr. *savoir apprendre/faire*), which enable students to act as intermediaries between cultures and independently look for and evaluate information on a foreign culture, can be assessed via tests, simulations and portfolios. Skills of interpreting and relating (fr. *savoir comprendre*), at work in interaction and in contact with any kind of foreign content, can be assessed through tests and continuous assessment (Byram, 1997, p. 102). While Byram names the procedures applicable for evaluation, he does not tackle the questions of actual tests, the kinds of tasks needed and the particular target groups of respondents, except in the case of portfolio. Furthermore, there are other aspects that make the carrying out of certain assessment modes difficult and need to be considered in the evaluation. They may include the specifics of the school environment, such as the cognitive-affective level of child development, individual pupil assessment in groups and the time and staff constraints. Nevertheless, Byram's framework outline enables the design of actual evaluation instruments adapted to the specifics of school context and evaluation purpose and aimed at assessing particular groups of respondents (see Äijälä, 2009).

Considering the usefulness of Byram's model of intercultural competence in foreign language teaching, its widespread acceptance and the possibilities of its implementation in the field of intercultural competence assessment, it serves as the basis of the research presented here. The following part of the paper deals with the individual steps and the results of the study.

Method

The research was conducted in three phases:[3]
1.   An initial evaluation was conducted at the beginning of the school year in all treatment and control groups.
2.   Teachers teaching treatment groups participated in three day-long teacher professional development modules with the topic of intercultural competence during one school year.
3.   Final evaluation was conducted at the end of the school year in all respondent groups.

Teacher professional development was carried out in the form of modules over the course of one school year. Five teachers of German as a foreign language took part in the programme during the 2009/2010 school year, and six during 2010/2011. The programme was conducted in three modules: at the start of the school year, at the end of the first semester and during the second semester. The first module focused on two aspects the theoretical background and practical exercises in the form of workshops. The aims of the first module were to gain awareness of the importance of intercultural competence, to deepen the knowledge of the concept and the models of intercultural competence, to become acquainted with the outcomes of teaching aimed at the development of intercultural competence, and to learn and carry out the activities for the development of the competence among pupils. The activities[4] were specially designed in the framework of the aforementioned project or modified according to the relevant literature and adapted to the pupils' ages and the Croatian school context. In addition to deepening acquired knowledge, the next two modules focused on the teachers' reflection on the effects of their work based on the classroom examples and the exchange of participants' experiences. In this way,

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3   Research was conducted in the framework of the research project *Development of intercultural competence in primary foreign language teaching* (MZOŠ RH, 227-2271168-0726) under the supervision of prof. dr. sc. Ana Petravić).

4   The activities were published as a collection of materials on IC as a learning outcome of young and teenage learners, under the title *Auf dem Weg zum interkulturellen Sprecher* (*On the way to the intercultural speaker*) (Petravić & Šenjug Golub, 2012).

the teachers kept a record of the intercultural activities they conducted during the school year, of their observations on the individual steps in the implementation of activities, of their pupils' reactions and the difficulties encountered, as well as of the possible solutions. Some difficulties were noted regarding the level of pupils' language competence, the discussions of sensitive issues, the complexity of some issues as exemplified in the concepts of value, cliché, stereotype and the like, the problem of perspective change, etc. Reports of pupils' positive reactions were frequently made and refer to the pupils' awareness of particular problems, their perception and acceptance of mutual differences, their abilities to connect certain topics with their own experiences, their openness and curiosity in learning about a foreign culture and positive changes in the relationships between pupils in class.

Assessment of the effect of the teacher professional development programme on the learning outcomes of pupils was conducted in fourth and eighth grades, i.e. at the end of primary and lower secondary education, respectively. Evaluation of learner outcomes (a paper-and-pencil procedure) in the duration of one school period was deemed to be an appropriate mode of assessment. The main shortcomings of paper-and-pencil evaluation procedures are their failure to take into account the pupils' state of mind at the time of testing and the lack of the possibility to ask additional questions. This makes it quite difficult to gain better insight into pupils' reasoning. Despite these shortcomings, written evaluation methods are often deemed the most appropriate type of evaluation in the school context. They have the highest objectivity level due to minimal interaction between evaluators and respondents. In addition, they are the most practical, as the assessment time is minimal, and group testing can be conducted with a large number of pupils. Furthermore, as the financial costs are minimal, they can be conducted by classroom teachers (see Bärenfänger & Stevener, 2009.).

A pre-test-post-test intergroup quasi-experimental design was applied, and distinct emphasis was placed on the similarity between the control and treatment group in the dependent variable. This means that in order to successfully ascertain the effects of teacher professional development at the end of the experiment, it was vital that the pupils in both the treatment and the control groups accomplished similar pre-test results in their level of intercultural competence.

The aim and hypothesis

The aim of this survey was to determine the effects of German language teacher professional development in the field of intercultural competence development on the pupil intercultural competence learning outcomes through

the assessment before and after the teachers' participation in a particular professional development programme. The following problem is derived from the stated aim:

> To evaluate the differences in the level of fourth (primary) and eighth grade (lower secondary) pupils' intercultural competence in relation to their teachers' participation in the professional development programme on intercultural competence development.

The following hypothesis was proposed:

H: *Teacher professional development will have positive effects on pupils' learning outcomes in intercultural competence.*

Pupils in the treatment group were exposed to a particular process of intercultural competence development in such a way that their teachers carried out certain actions and activities and covered the topics studied in the professional development modules. The topics covered were dealing with everyday life from the intercultural viewpoint. Also included were specific topics, such as intercultural misunderstandings, preconceptions and stereotypes, culturally influenced communication, etc. The choice of activities comprised specific tasks related to intercultural learning, such as tasks developing perception, the abilities of estimating culturally conditioned patterns and the ability of intercultural comparison.

This by no means implies that the pupils from the control groups did not receive any treatment at all, i.e. that their teachers did not cover the topics and activities aimed at the development of intercultural competence as defined in the teaching curriculum. However, it is assumed that such topics are usually not given a significant amount of time or focused on significantly in class and that they are frequently narrowed down to factual knowledge of culture and civilization of the countries of the German-speaking area (see Petravić, 2010). It was, therefore, expected that the pupils in the treatment groups would, due to their more intensive and structured exposure to the said topics, achieve higher post-test scores as a direct result of their teachers' professional development. The hypothesis comprises the following sub-hypotheses:

H1: Pupils in the treatment groups will achieve higher scores in the area of knowledge about the culture and civilization of the German-speaking area.

H2: Pupils in the treatment groups will achieve higher scores in the area of specific intercultural skills.

H3: Pupils in the treatment groups will express more desirable attitudes toward individuals from the German-speaking area.

Respondents

Respondents in this survey were fourth and eighth grade pupils of primary and lower secondary school. The sample comprised a total of 37 classes of pupils learning German as the first foreign language. A total of 13 schools from 6 counties took part in the survey (see Figure 1); 28% of the total number of respondents come from rural areas, 6% from small urban areas (up to 10,000 inhabitants), 6% from mid-sized towns (10,000 to 100,000 inhabitants) and 60% from large urban areas (more than 100,000 inhabitants).
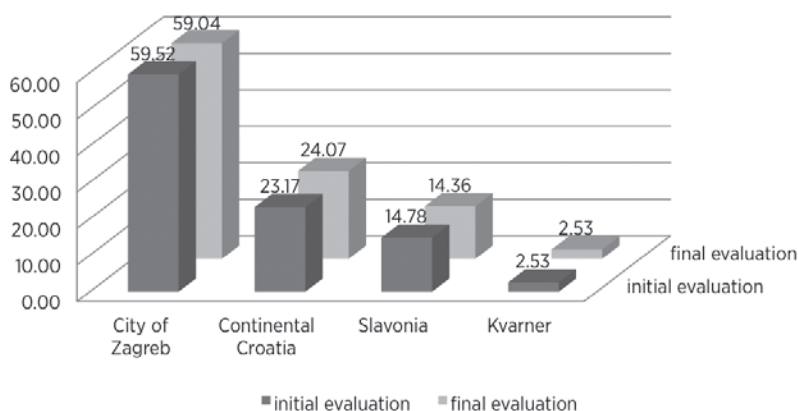
Figure 1. Number of respondents in the initial and the final evaluation according to county, shown in percentages

The initial evaluation was conducted at the beginning of the 2009/2010 school year in the fourth grade and at the beginning of 2010/2011 in the eighth grade. A total of 751 respondents, of which 397 (52.86%) were girls and 349 (46.47%) boys, participated in the pre-test. Five (0.66%) respondents left their gender unmarked on the pre-test. There were 323 (43%) respondents in the treatment group and 428 (56.99%) in the control group; 355 respondents attended the fourth and 396 the eighth grade. The final evaluation in the fourth grade was conducted at the end of the 2009/2010 school year, and in the eighth grade at the end of 2010/2011. A total of 752 respondents (386 (51.33%) girls and 366 (48.67%) boys) took part in the post-test. The treatment group was represented by 321 (42.69%) and the control group by 431 (57.31%) respondents; 360 respondents were fourth grade and 392 eighth grade pupils.

Instruments

An intercultural competence evaluation instrument was designed for the pupils in the fourth grade and the eighth grade. The design was based on Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence, which was adapted for the specifics of the Croatian school environment, the current curricular documents and the level of pupils' cognitive-affective development. The components of intercultural competence relevant for the target group were integrated into a threefold structure of the questionnaire. It represents a battery of instruments assessing the cognitive, affective and pragmatic aspects of intercultural competence.

The first part of the instrument assesses the knowledge of the culture and civilization of the German-speaking area, i.e. culturally specific knowledge (Byram, 1997). The content of the test questions was adapted to the German language curriculum. Respondents were given a set of open questions in which they were asked to name the facts and the phenomena of the target culture such as information in relation to geography, history, science, humanities, arts, behaviour, customs and ways of communicating and behaving.

The second part of the instrument evaluates skills, primarily the skill of relativizing the foreign culture as well as one's own, the skill of gathering information and the skill of interpreting and interacting. Therefore, this part of the instrument covers individual competence areas of the skill of discovery and interaction (fr. *savoir apprendre/faire*) and the skill of interpreting and relating (fr. *savoir comprende*) (Byram, 1997). These specific skills were investigated by means of the completion of associative sequence tasks and the tasks of describing reactions to problem situations similar to some probable real situations. This part of the instrument was designed on the basis of previous research and the instruments used therein, primarily those related to the school context (see Äijälä, 2009; Brym, 2004; Hesse & Göbel, 2006; Pachevska, 2003), as well as the instruments of the INCA project (www.incaproject.org).

The third part of the instrument examines pupils' attitudes by means of a five-point scale measuring three sub-dimensions of attitudes toward members of the culture of the German-speaking area: curiosity/disinterest, openness/lack of openness and inclination/disclination to stereotypes and preconceptions (see Byram, 1997, p. 35, 50, 91). The items were based on the instrument of the previously conducted survey of learner attitudes toward Germans (see Šenjug, 2008). Although the affective dimension of intercultural competence comprises the positive attitudes toward all people perceived as different from ourselves, this study focused on the specific context of German language teaching and was

based on the curriculum of German as a foreign language (see Primary School Curriculum, 2006). For this reason, only the attitudes related to the members of the target culture were investigated.

Data processing

Metric characteristics of the instrument were assessed upon conducting the research. To test the validity, an item discrimination index was used. Mutual relatedness between the three parts of the instrument (*knowledge* (1), *skills* (2) and *attitudes* (3)) and the correlation of success on each part of the instrument with external variables of school success was measured using the Pearson correlation coefficient. In the attitudes part of the instrument, an exploratory factor analysis using the principal component method was conducted to test the assumption of the three sub-dimensions of attitudes toward members of the foreign culture. The reliability of the instrument was examined by determining the internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. In order to examine the sensitivity, the acquired range and the item's difficulty index were analysed.

It can be stated that the metric characteristics of all three parts of the instrument (knowledge, skills and attitudes) are satisfactory as a whole. The acquired range in all parts of the instrument greatly correlates with the possible theoretical range. All the questions in the parts of the instrument covering *knowledge* and *skills* have good item discrimination ($r_{iu} > 0.35$). Factor analysis of the third part of the instrument confirmed the assumption of the three sub-dimensions of attitudes. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is in the range between 0.668 and 0.879 in individual parts of the instrument. All three parts of the instrument are mutually well correlated and in line with pupils' grades in the subject of German language, which points to the instrument's validity.

A T-test and Mann-Whitney U test were applied to test the differences in the level of pupils' intercultural competence development in relation to their participation in the experimental programme, i.e. in order to test the hypotheses. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS for Windows.

Results

The results are shown in two segments. The first part deals with the pre-test results, where the focus lies on the assessment of similarities between the control and the treatment group in the dependent variable. The second part shows the post-test results and the differences between the control and the treatment group in relation to the level of intercultural competence.

Initial evaluation

As already stated, the similarity between the treatment and the control group in the dependent variable is essential in order to be able to reach viable conclusions after the experiment completion. For the purpose of identifying possible differences between the fourth grade control and treatment group in relation to the results accomplished in the area of knowledge and skills, an independent samples t-test was conducted. As the data in the area of attitudes do not follow the normal distribution, a nonparametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results obtained indicated the absence of statistically significant differences between the control and the treatment group regarding the results obtained in the area of knowledge (t=0.702, p=0.483) and skills (t=-1.669, p=0.096). This confirms that the two groups were equal with regard to their knowledge of culture and civilization of the countries of the German-speaking area and that the members of both groups were equal in their achievement of intercultural skills. Therefore, upon completion of the experimental programme, conclusions can be drawn on the programme's influence on the treatment group.

The absence of a statistically significant difference between the treatment and the control group in view of the respondents' lack of openness toward individuals from the German-speaking area and in view of their inclination to stereotypes was confirmed in the area of attitudes[5] (see Table 1). However, the groups differed in the level of curiosity, with the treatment group having a higher mean rank in this respect than the control group (marked bold in Table 1).

Table 1. *Mann-Whitney U test for independent samples – pre-test results of 4th grade pupils' attitudes*

	Group	N	Mean Rank	U	z	p
Curiosity	Treatment	116	**153.94**	7257.500	-2.951	**.003**
	Control	158	**125.43**			
Lack of openness	Treatment	100	112.11	6161.000	-1.596	.110
	Control	140	126.49			
Inclination to stereotypes	Treatment	117	140.50	8951.000	-.449	.653
	Control	158	136.15			

N – number of participants, U – Mann-Whitney U value, z – z value, p – statistical significance

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5   Three aspects characterising attitudes toward members of the target culture (curiosity, lack of openness and inclination to stereotypes) were identified by submitting the part of the instrument relating to *attitudes* to factor analysis. These findings are in line with the theoretical framework (see also Byram, 1997).

For this reason, it would not be possible to compare the groups in view of the said component of attitudes after post-test. Nevertheless, it can generally be said that in relation to the result of the pre-test, the treatment and the control group are quite similar, with a slight difference in one segment of attitudes.

In spite of the lack of normal distribution of data in the intercultural competence in the eighth grade pre-test, the analysis of kurtosis, skewness and modality of distribution shows that it was possible to use the parametric procedure for the comparison of the treatment and the control group in all parts of the instrument. An independent sample t-test was applied, and the results obtained showed the absence of a statistically significant difference between the control and the treatment group in the results achieved in the area of knowledge (t=0.243, p=0.808), skills (t=1.542, p=0.124) and attitudes - curiosity (t=1.077, p=0.282), lack of openness (t=-0.977, p=0.329) and inclination to stereotypes (t=-0.195, p=0.845). This shows that the two groups are equal in all the evaluated segments of intercultural competence. Therefore, both the conducting of the experiment and the conclusion drawing upon post-test are valid procedures.

Final evaluation

The aim of the final evaluation was to ascertain the differences between the treatment and the control group in view of respondents' level of individual components of intercultural competence and thus determine the effects of teacher further professional development in the field of intercultural competence. It was expected that the treatment group respondents would, due to their more structured and more intense exposure to intercultural topics than that of the control group respondents, achieve better results in all dimensions of intercultural competence as a direct result of their teachers' professional development in that field.

In comparing the *fourth grade* posttest results, significant differences were identified between the treatment and the control group in the mean results obtained in individual parts of the instrument (Table 2). It can be seen that the treatment group pupils achieved a mean score of 22.1 points in the knowledge of culture and civilization, while the control group respondents only achieved a score of 13.7 points in that field. The treatment group also scored on average three points higher than the control group in the area of skills. As already stated, the pretest results for attitudes showed differences between respondents in the factor of curiosity, with the treatment group having higher scores. While the control group scored 22.18, the treatment group earned a score of 24.31 points. The control group acquired virtually the same result on

the post-test, while the treatment group achieved a higher post-test score. Furthermore, the treatment group pupils with a lower mean result were found to be more open toward foreign cultures. It is interesting to note that the treatment group respondents scored higher in their inclination to stereotypes than those in the control group. However, in order to determine the statistical significance of the stated differences between the groups, it is necessary to conduct appropriate statistical procedures.

Table 2. *Descriptive parameters of overall 4th grade post-test results*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	treatment	148	**22.11**	4.818	0.396
	control	202	**13.71**	5.457	0.384
Skills	treatment	148	**25.11**	6.942	0.571
	control	202	**22.12**	7.491	0.527
Curiosity	treatment	137	**25.55**	5.485	0.469
	control	190	**22.74**	6.522	0.473
Lack of openness	treatment	139	**9.41**	5.127	0.435
	control	186	**12.69**	6.204	0.455
Inclination to stereotypes	treatment	133	**24.57**	4.031	0.350
	control	183	**23.16**	4.090	0.302

With the aim of determining a statistically significant difference between respondents' results in the area of knowledge and skills, an independent sample t-test was conducted. Table 3 shows that the above described differences between the groups are statistically significant, i.e. that the treatment group scored better in the area of specific knowledge and skills.

Table 3. *Independent-samples t-test for 4th grade respondents – the comparison of the treatment and the control group in the post-test results for knowledge and skills*

	t	df	p
Knowledge	14.939	348	.000
Skills	3.781	348	.000

df – degrees of freedom, p –statistical significance

Because data in the segment of attitudes did not follow normal distribution, a nonparametric rank-sum Mann-Whitney U test was applied to determine the significance of the differences between the treatment and the control

group. The test was not conducted for the factor of curiosity due to the already mentioned difference between the control and the treatment group in the pre-test. The results confirm that the above mentioned differences are statistically significant (see Table 4), which means that the treatment group pupils are more open toward the members of the German-speaking area, but they are also more inclined to stereotypes in relation to the members of other cultures. There are a few possible explanations for this interesting finding, one of which is that stereotypes may have been unconsciously transferred from the treatment group teachers in their lessons with a stronger emphasis on the target language culture and civilization. Teachers may have inadvertently transferred stereotyped images to pupils, who are open to accepting the attitudes from their environment, this especially being true for primary school pupils (Aboud, 1988, p. 128; Leopold-Mudrack, 1998, p. 67). Another possible explanation of this finding lies in the specifics of pupils' cognitive and affective maturation. Stereotyped notions are developed in pupils even before the beginning of schooling and are processed until the end of lower secondary education. The focus shift from external to internal characteristics in the assessment of people occurs with age, so that it is only after ten years of age that pupils more readily accept the similarities between themselves and the persons from other cultures (Aboud, 1988; Selman, 1980, in Berk, 2008). It is, therefore, possible that the pupils in the treatment group, who were more intensively exposed to cultural contents of the target language, did not filter their acquired knowledge, but used it to develop stereotypes, i.e. to make generalizations. It is, thus, for example, possible for the pupils who learn that Germany is known for its beer production, to transfer the acquired knowledge to the area of their own beliefs and come to believe that all Germans drink beer.

Table 4. *Mann-Whitney U test for 4th grade respondents – the comparison of the treatment and the control group in the post-test results for attitudes*

	U	z	p
Lack of openness	8496.500	-5.399	.000
Inclination to stereotypes	9335.000	-3.546	.000

The results of the post-test for *eighth grade* respondents significantly differ from those obtained in the fourth grades. If the mean results for groups in the post-test are compared (see Table 5), it can be seen that the control and the treatment group only differ in the section of knowledge. This difference is statistically significant (see Table 6).

Table 5. *Descriptive parameters of overall post-test results for 8th grade respondents*

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	treatment	160	**9.06**	5.507	0.435
	control	210	**7.91**	5.241	0.362
Skills	treatment	160	22.45	7.781	0.615
	control	210	21.50	9.119	0.629
Curiosity	treatment	141	23.21	6.169	0.520
	control	182	22.47	6.285	0.466
Lack of openness	treatment	140	9.69	4.850	0.410
	control	178	10.13	4.865	0.365
Inclination to stereotypes	treatment	140	22.36	4.251	0.359
	control	177	22.76	4.723	0.355

Although it was expected that all treatment group respondents would achieve better post-test results in all the tested segments of intercultural competence, this was not the case with the respondents from eighth grades. Slight differences between the control and the treatment group can be noted in the aspect of skills and attitudes (Table 5). However, these are not statistically significant (see Table 6). In other words, the treatment group pupils did not score better than the control group pupils in the area of skills and attitudes.

Table 6. *Independent-samples t-test and Mann-Whitney U test for 8th grade respondents – the comparison of the treatment and the control group for the post-test results in the dependent variable*

t-test	t	df	p
knowledge	2.042	368	.042
skills	1.080	368	.281
Mann-Whitney	**U**	**Z**	**P**
curiosity	11875.500	-1.152	.249
lack of openness	11708.500	-.934	.351
inclination to stereotypes	11280.000	-1.373	.170

The results show that the effect of teacher further professional development on the development of intercultural competence among eighth grade pupils was only evident in the cognitive aspect, i.e. in the field of specific knowledge of culture and civilization. It can be concluded that in the case of teenage

pupils, specific intercultural skills and attitudes are developed in a more complex way and over a longer period than among younger pupils. This conclusion can be based on the assumption that the attitudes of children up to a certain age are marked with more openness toward the world. Therefore, pupils under ten years of age do not possess a firmly developed system of values and attitudes, which is acquired in the process of socialization in one's own culture (Leopold-Mudrack, 1998, p. 65). This means that the attitudes of children under ten years of age toward other cultures and their members will be positive or neutral at the least. Further development is marked with stronger acceptance of norms and ways of behaving typical of one's own social circle, i.e. one's country, so that the openness toward the other and that which is different from one's own culture is diminished. This makes it somewhat more difficult to develop specific intercultural competences among lower-secondary pupils.

Nevertheless, if we take a look at the results for fourth grade respondents, certain similarities with the results described for eighth grade respondents are evident. Although the fourth grade pupils in the experiment group achieved better results in almost all the tested components of intercultural competence, the results show that the effect of intensive and more structured dealing with cultural topics is the greatest in the field of knowledge. An overall conclusion can be given that in the teaching of intercultural competence it is more difficult to influence complex skills and attitudes. Furthermore, this process becomes more complex and develops more slowly with age. It is, therefore, possible that the post-primary stage is not the best time to start dealing intensely with the contents aimed at developing intercultural competence.

Conclusion

In view of the results obtained it can be concluded that the first sub-hypothesis (H1) was confirmed for both fourth and eighth grade pupils and that the teacher professional development programme had a significantly positive effect on the learning outcomes in the cognitive aspect of intercultural competence. Furthermore, it can be said that the second sub-hypothesis (H2) was confirmed for fourth grade pupils, i.e. teacher professional development had a positive influence on the pupil achievement in the area of skills. The second sub-hypothesis was not confirmed for respondents in eighth grade. Sub-hypothesis H3 was partially confirmed for fourth grade pupils. Teacher professional development influenced one segment of attitudes, i.e. pupils in the treatment group showed more desirable attitudes in view of openness toward individuals from the German-speaking area. This sub-hypothesis was not confirmed for the eighth grades.

In view of all the given results, it can be concluded that foreign language teacher professional development in the field of intercultural competence has positive effects on the pupil's learning outcomes, especially with younger learners, as with this group of respondents the participation in the experimental programme yeilded better results in all the aspects of intercultural competence with the exception of one aspect of attitudes. Positive outcomes of the experimental programme were less evident among eighth grade pupils. While this can be a consequence of certain limitations of short-term teacher development programmes, it should also be noted that the development of intercultural competence is a lengthy and slow process, especially with regards to complex skills and attitudes. This is also one of the possible reasons the effects of the experimental programme were limited.

In view of the complexity of the development of intercultural competence at the primary and lower secondary school levels, it should be noted that the further professional education course provided for the needs of this study was limited in its duration and comprised three day-long modules. The experimental programme was conducted in the course of only one year. Despite this, teacher participation in the programme and their subsequent application of the knowledge and skills acquired, i.e. their teaching in experimental classes, had positive effects on the pupil intercultural competence development. This is an argument in favour of such form of further professional education programmes. Nevertheless, it should be said that such programmes with a longer duration might give better results.

All the results presented thus far lead to the conclusion that the effects of short-term teacher professional development in the field of intercultural competence are very useful in spite of their limitations and that it is important to motivate teachers to participate in them. However, bearing in mind that the development of this competence is a complex and lengthy process, it is especially important to motivate teachers for continued activities related to intercultural competence in their foreign language teaching and preferably start with the pupils of the youngest school age. Regarding the design of teacher professional development programmes in the field of intercultural competence, particular emphasis should be placed on the problem of stereotypes and prejudices. While the outcomes of this study refer to the school system of the country in which it was conducted, they also point to the importance of teacher education in the development of learners' intercultural competence outside of the Croatian education system.

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Biographical note

Ana Šenjug Golub, dr., is Research Assistant at the Department of German Teacher Education at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb. Her research interests are related with foreign language teacher education, intercultural learning, early language teaching and evaluation of learning outcomes. She has participated in scientific research projects related with assessment of student learning outcomes and development of intercultural competence in compulsory education. She has presented her work in international conferences and has published in several scientific journals.

Europe's Got Talent: Setting the Stage for New Teachers by Educative Mentoring

Karin da Rocha[1]

∽   Growing challenges, demographic change and the need to deal with various demands in one's professional and private life call for a high flexibility and willingness to learn, especially among teachers, who serve as role models in this respect. Consequently, professional development has to focus on reflective and introspective processes. At the beginning of a teaching career, educative mentoring can provide valuable support. In the course of planning a new teacher-training program in Austria, the University College of Teacher Education Styria, in Graz, is conducting a mentoring project in primary schools from 2012 to 2014. It takes place in two Styrian districts and is accompanied by evaluation research. Local mentors support new teachers. Moreover, in-service training for new teachers, mentors and principals is provided. The topics of the courses correspond to the participant groups' roles and interests, foster social and digital networking, and encourage peer discussion and cross-group communication. The qualitative research entailed in the project investigates supporting factors of educative mentoring and communication processes by applying questionnaires, expert interviews and group discussions. This article focuses on the role, challenges and duties of a mentor, taking into account the value of educative mentoring for professional learning communities and individual learning processes.

Keywords: teachers' competence, educative mentoring, induction, mentor, new teachers

1   Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark (University College of Teacher Education Styria), Graz, Styria, Austria; karin.darocha@phst.at

Evropa ima talent: vpeljevanje novih učiteljev s pomočjo mentorstva

Karin da Rocha

∼   Vedno večji izzivi, demografske spremembe in potreba po spopadanju z različnimi zahtevami v posameznikovem profesionalnem in osebnem življenju zahtevajo večjo prilagodljivost in pripravljenost za učenje. To še posebej velja za učitelje, ki so v teh pogledih vzorniki drugim. Zato mora profesionalni razvoj temeljiti na reflektivnih in samoopazovalnih procesih. Na začetku učiteljeve kariere lahko izobraževalno mentorstvo nudi pomembno podporo. V okviru načrtovanja novega programa za izobraževanje učiteljev v Avstriji je pedagoška visoka šola v Gradcu med letoma 2012 in 2014 izvajala projekt mentorstva v osnovnih šolah. Ta je potekal v dveh štajerskih okrožjih, spremljala pa ga je evalvacijska raziska-va. Krajevni mentorji nudijo podporo novim učiteljem. Poleg tega je or-ganizirano tudi strokovno izpopolnjevanje za nove učitelje, mentorje in za ravnatelje. Teme izobraževanj odražajo vloge in interese posameznih skupin, nudi se socialno in digitalno mreženje, spodbujata se medse-bojno diskutiranje in interakcija med skupinami. S pomočjo kvalitativne raziskave prek vprašalnikov, intervjujev in fokusnih skupin so bili v pro-jektu analizirani faktorji podpore pri izobraževalnem mentorstvu in ko-munikacijskih procesih. V prispevku se osredinjamo na vlogo, izzive in na naloge mentorja z vidika pomena, ki ga ima izobraževalno mentor-stvo za strokovno učečo se skupnost in individualne učne procese.

Ključne besede: kompetence učiteljev, izobraževalno mentorstvo, pripravništvo, mentor, novi učitelji

Introduction

The induction of new teachers to their profession is currently used and evaluated in various countries worldwide. It is also a focus of interest in Austrian pedagogic research for two reasons. Because several hundred primary and secondary teachers are going to retire in the next few years, many new teachers are going to start their careers. They are often deprived of their elder colleagues' experiential knowledge if there are no transfer phases for intergenerational communication. Thus far, new teachers in Austrian primary and compulsory secondary schools are not accompanied by mentors at their local schools, although the amount of teaching practice is high during pre-service training. The new curriculum allots a four-year bachelor studies program, an obligatory induction period supported by mentors at school and a subsequent two-year master studies program.

This article focuses on mentors' challenging duties, taking a short look at existing European practices within this field. Moreover, this position's demanding profile is related to national and regional requirements aimed at induction as a part of the new Austrian teacher-training program. These findings are based on the project *Supporting New Teachers at the Beginning of their Professional Careers*, which is being carried out by the University College of Teacher Education Styria from 2012 to 2014. Finally, the relations between European, national and regional aspects in mentoring are discussed.

Setting the stage for new teachers: educative mentoring in induction

In their pre-service trainings, the amount of teaching practice for European pedagogical students varies considerably. Moreover, there are school and teaching-related situations that cannot be simulated, such as organizational issues or parent-teacher meetings. As Feiman-Nemser states, "[…] beginning teachers have legitimate learning needs that cannot be grasped in advance or outside the context of teaching" (Feimann-Nemser, 2003, p. 26). Terhart (2001) and Hericks (2006) both assert that new teachers need to develop professional attitudes and coping strategies for dealing with unfamiliar situations. Here, Helsper (1996, 2012) refers to typical antinomies such as the uniformity and deviation as well as the distance and proximity new teachers have to deal with at the beginning of their careers. Accordingly, models about new teachers' school entrance talk about terms, such as surviving, exploring and mastering (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Hubermann, 1991). In order to do so, it is of great value if new

teachers are provided with necessary resources, including time with a mentor for guided reflection or professional conversation.

With a focus on co-operative relationship-based professional communication, educative mentoring offers a rather formal setting, employing an expert from the field of work (Ittel & Raufelder, 2009). It is characterized by "cultivating a disposition of inquiry, focusing attention on student thinking and understanding, and fostering disciplined talk about problems of practice" (Feimann-Nemser, 2001, p. 28). The model aims to induce lifelong personal and professional learning processes by co-operative, reciprocal learning. In this respect, the mentor's willingness to agree to mutual learning is of the utmost importance. Otherwise, the concept does not go beyond a typical "apprenticeship model" (Halai, 2006).

Therefore, it must be kept in mind that the mentors to also need to be prepared for the new role they are going to take on. Self-reflection, an active interest in their own professional development, interest in and tolerance for colleagues' opinions and co-operation are preconditions for successful mentoring (Langdon, 2007). In addition to knowledge about the educative mentoring model, mentors need to be familiar with communicative tools for critical feedback and supportive reflection processes.

From a more general perspective, referring mainly to building a professional attitude, it is necessary to embed mentoring in more far-ranging principles to foster personal learning. Gardner (2009) provides five guidelines that can serve for such a purpose:

- the Disciplined Mind, which refers to dealing in-depth with an area of expertise,
- the Synthesizing Mind, which describes the selection and connection of ideas from different fields of experience,
- the Creating Mind, which comprises combining a person's excellence in a field with posing new challenging questions and discussing solutions from various perspectives,
- the Respectful Mind, which means tolerance towards heterogeneity in people and accepting them, and
- the Ethical Mind, which focuses on taking on societal responsibility.

This short overview highlights the value of Gardner's concept for a broader view on learning, which can serve as a guideline not only for mentoring but for learning in general. How the learning-through-mentoring concepts varies in different countries is described below.

International experience and national needs

Both induction programs and educative mentoring as an effective means have been tested and endorsed worldwide (Wang & Odell, 2007; Blömeke & Paine, 2009). Experiences include, for example, expert knowledge from Anglo-American countries (Great Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand) as well as from Europe. Among others, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Greece and Switzerland provide induction programs, but they vary in terms of assessment and resources, for instance, concerning the time given for professional conversation and the remuneration of mentors (Huber, 2010). Countries with little teaching practice during pre-service training, such as Great Britain, France and Italy, add compulsory induction to in-service training. Conversely, Switzerland aims for a high amount of pre-service and in-service training (Blömeke & Paine, 2009). Models also differ in matters of definition and training concerning the mentors. Paine and Schwille observe that various words and their respective connotations are used to name the mentor in different countries:

> "The words used in Shanghai – 'guiding teacher', 'old teacher', or 'master' – are associated with traditional culture and show that in some sense the new teacher is a 'disciple' of the master. In France, mentors are called 'pedagogic advisors', a title that communicates the focus of their work, while in New Zealand, they are 'advice and guidance advisors', department heads, or 'buddy' teachers, which suggest mentoring roles of a different sort" (Paine & Schwille, 2010, p. 38).

This emphasizes the manifold cultural interpretations of the term and the decisions, which have to be made in order to establish mentoring in schools. Moreover, costs and assessment come into play. Exemplarily, concepts from Great Britain and Switzerland are described in short below.

In Great Britain, newly qualified teachers (NQT) are obligated to participate in an induction program, which is organized by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, a part of the Department for Education (DfE). New teachers can only apply for induction after having obtained qualified teacher status (QTS) in their initial teacher training (ITT). According to the Department of Education, the one-year induction focuses on personal, professional development as well as assessment concerning the Teachers' Standards (DfE, 2013).

Induction tutors support new teachers. They conduct progress reviews and formal conversations, too. Guidelines clearly define the different roles in the process and the corresponding tasks:

"The induction tutor (or the headteacher if carrying out this role) should:
- provide, or co-ordinate, guidance and effective support including co-aching and mentoring for the NQT's professional development (with the appropriate body when necessary);
- carry out regular progress reviews throughout the induction period;
- undertake three formal assessment meetings during the total induction period co-ordinating input from other colleagues as appropriate (normally three termly, or pro rata for part-time staff);
- inform the NQT during the assessment meeting the judgements to be recorded in the formal assessment record and invite NQTs to add their comments;
- ensure that the NQT's teaching is observed and feedback provided;
- ensure NQTs are aware of how, both within and outside the institution, they can raise any concerns about their induction programme or their personal progress; and
- take prompt, appropriate action if an NQT appears to be having difficulties" (DfE, 2013, p. 31).

These requirements merely refer to organization, co-operation, monitoring and assessing, but they do not address other aspects of expertise a mentor needs. For that reason, different boroughs and counties have developed more specific profiles (The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, 2013) referring to qualities, such as interest in the role and in another person, communicative skills, an encouraging and fostering attitude, confidence in teaching, experience and problem-solving strategies.

The induction models in Switzerland deal with other preconditions than the concept above; pre-service training already contains teaching practice. As Huber (2013) points out, local mentors support new teachers in the St. Gallen and Rorschach area. These mentors have been trained at regional university colleges of teacher education. They help new teachers in pedagogical and subject matters, in becoming acquainted with school administration and regulations as well as being into contact with authorities. Regional mentors work with study groups consisting of six to eight new teachers. The model clearly describes mentors' tasks and lists the necessary competencies regarding curricular and pedagogical knowledge as well as organizational and social skills (Benz et al., 2005). Here, mentors do not assess the new teachers. This is a very interesting point to discuss, with regards to comparing European models: some countries do not grade their new teachers at all in mentoring, allowing personal and professional development without grading, whereas other literally standardize the concept, which intends to foster reflection and introspection. Such

decisions are accompanied by cultural interpretations of models like mentoring as such, as well as by matters of educational policy and, consequently, institutional demands.

With regard to the upcoming new teacher-training program in Austria, several projects concerning induction and mentoring have been launched. At present, the University College of Teacher Education Styria is conducting a three-year master's program in mentoring in co-operation with the Catholic University College for Education Graz, the University College of Teacher Education Burgenland and the Karl-Franzens-University Graz. The attendees will act as facilitators for mentors as soon as the new teacher training curriculum comes into effect. Additionally, a research project with a focus on mentoring new primary school teachers is being undertaken. The following remarks refer to the latter project, which, on the one hand, clearly shows references to developments in other European countries, but on the other, clearly emphasizes the need for local variety and refrains from overly restrictive standards.

Developing a regional project

From 2012 to 2014, the project *Supporting New Teachers at the Beginning of their Careers* in primary schools is organized by the University College of Teacher Education Styria and strongly supported by the local supervisory school board. The undertaking is situated in the Styrian districts of Leoben and Bruck-Mürzzuschlag.

This region has very distinctive geographical features, with only a few densely populated industrial towns and remote, scarcely inhabited alpine areas. Consequently, employment and schooling are among the significant challenges the population faces. Due to a reduced number of pupils, many isolated schools are in constant danger of being closed down or merged, which also means that only a few teachers are employed. Moreover, it is difficult to hire teachers for these rural schools, because many young people prefer to live in more urban areas. In the centres, however, big classes with considerable heterogeneity are always challenges for teachers. The impending retirement of many teachers is another fact that contributes to the current situation.

In each of the two project years, about 40 new teachers started their careers. In order to meet the needs of the prevailing situation, a program to support new teachers was developed. However, it has to be mentioned that the pilot scheme at that time neither included any reduction of teaching time for participants nor remuneration of mentors. Mentors at the local schools were appointed by the principals; in-service training for new teachers with regards

to curricular, pedagogical and organizational knowledge, social and personal skills was provided by the University College of Teacher Education Styria. Mentors and principals were offered in-service training about mentors' roles and duties, inducing learning conversations and giving critical acclaim. Additionally, there was a particular focus on reviewing previous actions and changes in the teaching profession. Table 1 contains an overview of the project's training facilities.

Table 1. *In-service training facilities*

New Teachers	Mentors	Principals
professional role and identity	mentors' roles and responsibilities	reflecting and defining a mentor's role
classroom management and parent-teacher meetings	the basic concept of educative mentoring	inducing professional conversation
individualization in teaching and assessment	changes and innovation in professional development	observing and providing feedback

Monitoring research accompanies the project during the two-year period. The primary objective is to explore factors of successful mentoring on various levels concerning personal, structural and systemic development. Moreover, the concept of mentoring is analysed in terms of implications on school development and human resources. Consequently, the following research questions, which are based on studies analyzing new teachers' needs at the beginning of their professional careers (Hericks, 2006; Cameron, 2007; He, 2009, and Keller-Schneider, 2010) are the focus of interest:

- Which factors help to establish successful mentoring?
- How can mentoring help build professionalism in new teachers?
- How does specific in-service training facilitate new teachers' starts in professional life?
- Which roles do social and digital networks play with regard to the challenges of new teachers' professionalism?

In order to answer these questions, a mixed-methods approach is applied. The research contains written surveys with new teachers and mentors at the beginning and the end of the school year (October and June). Each participant uses the same anonymous code for both questionnaires. The questions in the first survey are kept open-ended and focus on the participants' expectations about mentoring, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. *Questions from the written survey in October*

Written Survey at the Beginning of the School Year (October 2012; sample questions)	
New Teachers (21 questions)	**Mentors** (19 questions)
Which hopes, wishes and concerns are there regarding your first year at school?	What are your reasons for participating as a mentor in this project?
In which fields of the profession do you wish to draw upon your mentor's experience?	In which fields of the profession do you see exceptional challenges for new teachers?
What makes a good mentor? / What makes an ideal mentoring relationship?	
What will be your own contribution to successful mentoring? / How do you plan to organize mentoring?	

The second questionnaire contains open-ended question formats referring to the target group's experiences during the project, as well as quantifiable multiple-choice formats. The latter aim at evaluating the in-service training facilities, which are additionally offered in the course of the mentoring project. Table 3 displays a few samples from this written survey.

In order to investigate the research questions concerning factors for successful mentoring as well as how it can contribute to building professionalism in new teachers, group discussions are conducted. Based on Bohnsack, Marotzki and Meuser's approach (2003), these discussions with new teachers, mentors and principals in March allow for oral feedback pertaining to topics such as pre-service and in-service training as well as experiences resulting from the evolving mentoring relationships.

Additionally, recurring expert interviews are conducted, one at a time, in three different schools each year, with the new teacher, the mentor and the principal. On the one hand, these talks aim at finding out how regional differences influence factors of successful mentoring; on the other, they allow a close-up of several mentoring situations, which illustrates the process of professional development in new teachers. Accordingly, questions in these interviews ask about the local school's specific situation, the perception and assessment of the mentoring concept among school staff and project participants as well as in-depth descriptions of the respective mentor and new teacher's co-operation. Inquiries also investigate experiences with in-service training offered in the course of the project and the establishment of peer networks.

To summarise, the questionnaires aim at showing the participant groups' general attitudes, expectations and evaluations, whereas the group discussions serve as feedback options about the running project. The semi-structured

interviews provide insights into the manifold and complex processes that occur during mentoring.

Table 3. *Items from the written survey in June*

Written Survey at the End of the School Year (June 2013; sample questions)					
New Teachers (20 questions/items)			**Mentors** (19 questions/items)		
In which fields of your profession did you succeed in your first year?			Being a mentor, in which fields did you gather new experience?		
Which areas were not covered in pre-service training?			Would you like to continue to work as a mentor in the future? Why (not)?		
Which challenging situations occurred during the year? / Which topics were discussed in mentoring?					
Please describe your mentoring relationship!					
Which surrounding conditions were encouraging? Which ones were discouraging?					
How was mentoring dealt with at your school? Among colleagues? By the principal?					

11 statements concerning mentoring for respective group (Likert-scale; example):

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	commentary
A mentor eases the start in a new profession.					
I consider the relationship with my mentor/mentee successful.					

How much mentoring time was invested per week?
❏ 15 minutes ❏ 30 minutes ❏ 1hour ❏ 2 hours ❏ other:

Evaluation of in-service training facilities for respective group
(9 seminars for new teachers to choose from, 4 for mentors; example):

	highly satisfied	satisfied	not satisfied	not at all satisfied	did not participate
Mentoring Basics (October)					

Did you use the moodle online network? Why (not)?
Did you network with other new teachers/mentors? Why (not)?

The qualitative analysis entailed in the project is rooted in the reconstructive tradition; the recorded data was transcribed and categorized by adapting Mayring's content analysis (2010) as well as Gläser and Laudel's guidelines (2010) for expert interviews. Categories were introduced by an inductive approach using an open coding system.

In the project area, all the primary schools with new teachers participated: 42 teachers, 35 mentors and 32 principals. The heads of schools were responsible for nominating the mentors. The age of the mentors varied between 24 and 60 years of age with 3 to 30 years of work experience. All mentors and new teachers were given the two questionnaires (paper format) and asked to complete them. However, the response rates in the written surveys in the first year of the project varied considerably, as can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. *Response rates in the written surveys*

	New Teachers	Mentors
October 2012	31 out of 42	26 out of 35
June 2013	25 out of 38	15 out of 31

Differences in the total number of participants in the surveys in June result from changes concerning employment status, number of staff ill or on maternity leave.

The following chapter will focus on the mentors, depicting interesting results from the research mainly drawn from the data analysis of the two written surveys.

On stage: experiences from the project year 2012/2013

This chapter deals with findings from the research referring to the mentor's role. At the beginning of the project year, none of the participants had been officially placed in such a position before and therefore could neither rely on experience nor specific training with theoretical knowledge about the concept. Due to the previous lack of a nationwide program including all types of schools, mentors in this project learned about competence concerning the mentoring project and how to put it into practice simultaneously. In this respect, the focus of interest here is on how the new mentors in this project evaluate the concept based on their experiences of the ongoing school year.

Participants' expectations in October 2012 already showed how much was expected from the mentors in this particular situation – by themselves and by the new teachers. Experiences after a year of mentoring are reported and analysed below. Finally, conclusions for the second project year and recommendations for induction in the new Austrian teacher training are drawn.

The wish list

Early in the project, in the first written survey in October 2012, new teachers and mentors were asked about their beliefs and expectations concerning the project, and, especially the mentor's role. Answering to the question what makes a good mentor, new teachers and mentors conceptualize a similar picture, which is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. What makes a good mentor?

New Teachers	Mentors
...confident, competent, well-organized	
...being patient and taking time	
...being respectful towards the new teacher	
...offering support without obtruding	
...being a mentor voluntarily	...open to questions
...listening and keeping conversations confidential	...open-minded, interested, motivated
...helping with words and deeds at all times	...ready to help, if asked
...attending in-service training	...cooperative and friendly, on a level playing field
...likes being a teacher	...giving appreciative feedback

Interestingly, in the first four features mentioned in Table 5, new teachers and mentors are in total agreement. These characteristics refer to curricular and pedagogical knowledge, which are accompanied by a strong focus on establishing a working relationship based on mutual respect. This first survey emphasized that, in addition to relationship based on trust, having enough time for professional conversation is one of the most important factors. Moreover, another emphasis, with a thoroughly demanding implication, becomes clear: mentors shall always be available in case they are needed.

When it comes to describing the ideal relationship between mentor and new teacher, the mentors point out that their new colleagues have to feel comfortable with them, which can only be achieved in an atmosphere based on mutual trust and with an open respectful way of communication, as had been stressed earlier by Bobek (2002). Moreover, there has to be a clear understanding that positive reinforcement, fostering individual development, and mutual learning are among the goals that resemble research findings by Cooper and Stewart (2009). Additionally, it has to be emphasized that support is offered without obtrusion. The new teachers want to talk freely to their mentors,

without any fears. They appreciate honest and critical feedback on a level play-ing field, sharing experiences, swapping material and regular meetings. From the new teachers' point of view, a combination of quick, situation-related que-ries and longer professional reflective talks is most effective. Again, the factor of time comes into play, especially regarding the mentors' availability.

Interestingly, 21 out of 26 mentors did not hesitate to accept their princi-pals' request to take up this new role. For many, it went without saying that new colleagues have to be supported; some mentors referred to their own almost traumatic career starts as a reason that they agreed to working in this posi-tion. Many experienced colleagues were surprised by the high number of new teachers and saw the need and value of the mentoring concept. Moreover, they regarded the model as a means for enhanced school quality and development, for example through teamwork.

The mentoring experience

After a year of mentoring, a second written survey was conducted in June 2013. Results from the annual group discussions and the expert interviews with new teachers, mentors and principals in three schools were supported by this inquiry. Further depictions in this paper focus on the mentors to empha-size the importance and challenges of their duties.

Generally, the mentors described their experiences as positive, manifold and interesting. They referred to their own role in a responsible position with a role model function and highlighted the strong feeling of commitment, which accompanied the official appointment to the position. It added to their previous profile as a teacher and allowed new insight into collegial co-operation. In this respect, the mentors reported increased skills in communication and observa-tion, perception and reflection. It proved to be essential to acknowledge the new teachers as equals by trusting them. The mentors observed that, depending on the new teachers' personalities, their task was to be there, willing to help and interested in the new colleagues' progress in the first place. Listening sensitively and actively and providing experience and guidance to individual solutions were mentioned as means of professional communication. Reflecting on their own beliefs turned out to be a key to new learning processes in mentors; many had forgotten about actions performed in their daily routines that had become unconscious routines. In addition, the mentors drew attention to the difficult balance between supporting new teachers and not forcing their advice on them. Moreover, it was evident that the mentors felt obligated to confront new teach-ers with positive as well as constructive critical feedback, which definitely ex-ceeded the usually existing supportive attitude among colleagues, which many

teachers had mentioned in the project year's first survey.

During that year, mentors dealt with various areas that were demanding for new teachers. As studies (Lipowski, 2003; Martinuzzi, 2007; Keller-Schneider, 2010) have already confirmed, the new teachers consulted their mentors concerning:

- curricular knowledge about assessment, annual planning, education standards, individualization and differentiation;
- pedagogical knowledge about pupils displaying behavioural problems, implementing codes of conduct, mixed-level classes and classroom management;
- organizational knowledge about local school administration and school laws;
- social skills for parent-teacher meetings, relationships with colleagues, principals and superintendents, and
- personal skills for time management, work-life balance and coping with individual expectations.

More than half of the mentors in the survey described various challenging situations during the process. They referred mainly to problems concerning time in various ways. Due to set timetables, attendance at school was often impossible: Austrian primary school teachers are usually entirely responsible for their class including hall monitoring. As a result of the reduction of total teaching time, many schools had not set specific timeframes for professional conversation, so mentors and new teachers had to organize their meetings individually.

Moreover, the specific regional situation came into play. First many new teachers and mentors in the area were commuters, so time management required considerable flexibility on both sides. Next, up to five new teachers started their first year at the same school. As pointed out earlier, because of the size of many local schools, there were not enough mentors in such cases. Then, some very small schools ended up with the principals as the only experienced teacher plus one or two new teachers. Under these circumstances, the heads of schools served as mentors, which caused other difficulties, for example with hierarchy in case there were any conflicts of opinion. This underlines the importance of bearing in mind reflective questions about how mentoring is defined and carried out in various countries and their particular regions.

In the course of the project, it was seen that various forms of time management were established. The written survey in June 2013, as well as the expert interviews, proved that once a particular structure for meetings had been set,

it was kept throughout the year; for the vast majority, that meant a total of one to two hours a week. Many included their conversations in joint lessons for planning, especially when mentor and new teacher worked on the same class level. This appeared to be the most appreciated combination, because (as a matter of course) the mentoring-team was able to co-operate content-wise as well as in areas such as individualization, grading or classroom organization. In the reflection, some mentors who had offered a lot of time for spontaneous conversation and, in some cases, had more than one new teacher to attend to, contemplated another solution for the following year. They would try to arrange mentoring at set times to avoid overwork.

Here, the important role of school advisory boards and principals as facilitators of induction programs with mentoring becomes evident. Not only do the new teachers have to be cared for, but so do the mentors. Even though 25 out of 31 mentors report their principals' support on a personal level, about 15 of them observed that the concept was not selected as a central theme in conferences at all. Some even experienced alarming reactions from their colleagues. Many did not respond to the project at all, pitied the mentors because of the extra workload, or in single cases, even accused the mentors of acting like "the queen bee" by taking on this position. Therefore, it is clear that professional development must not only focus on support for new teachers in order to avoid attrition at the beginning of their careers, but has to be a recurring topic and constant basing point for lifelong learning in teachers.

Mentoring in mind

Learning cannot be finished at any time. Correspondingly, Gardner's concept of five minds for the future (2009), which has already been referred to, opens developmental fields for the individual. Regarding the concept knowledge of new mentors, this means examining their own beliefs and attitudes as well as facilitating the new teachers' growth, both on personal and professional levels. Accordingly, the following set of features for mentors always requires permanent reflection and must not be regarded as a list of tasks that has to be fulfilled.

With this intention and based upon the conclusions from the research results above, a mentor's duties can be split into areas of individual experience and professional development as well as content-based tasks. This, in combination with Gardner's five minds, can be used to illustrate the concept, which is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. *Mentors' fields of development and tasks*

Areas of Experience and Professional Development	Content-Based Tasks
Disciplinary Mind	
various years of teaching experience; enthusiastic about pupils and teaching	supporting new teachers in curricular, pedagogical, organizational, social and personal matters
Synthesizing Mind	
interest in school development	introducing and integrating new teachers quickly
Creating Mind	
willingness to try out new ideas and to participate in in-service training	establishing professional learning teams with new teachers
Respectful Mind	
communicative skills for mentoring and coaching processes	conducting respectful, empowering professional conversations
Ethical Mind	
reflection and introspection concerning the mentor's own work (as a teacher and as a role model for new teachers)	acting as a mediator (new teacher – principal, new teacher – teacher colleagues)

Providing such a profile not only serves as a means for finding enthusiastic mentors, but also offers a guideline for teachers interested in such a role. Moreover, such a model illustrates its requirements, which essentially means being ready for continuous professional learning with responsibility for and partaking in a colleague's initial career phase. It also shows that mentoring must not undermine the new teacher's personal responsibility; on the contrary, the objective is to empower the new teachers to find their individual solutions – an approach that strongly relies on Deci and Ryan's "Self-Determination Theory of Motivation" (1993) and Reeve and Jang's research (2006) concerning the support of autonomy in learners.

With this intention, one focus in the second year of the project is on further in-depth observation of the mentor's role, taking into account topics such as mentors' positions among their colleagues, (self-)evaluation for both, mentor and new teacher, and fostering learner autonomy in general.

Conclusion and implications

Mentoring for new teachers may serve as a supportive and constructive concept in various countries. However, several decisions concerning the level of

formality, the contents of such programs and the costs have to be kept in mind. Regarding the role of the mentor, further decisions have to be made; for example: Can a mentor who supports a novice also assess that person? Shall the mentor be chosen by the beginner teacher or assigned? Can mentoring and mentor training happen simultaneously? Schwille, Dembélé and Schubert (2007) raise these questions among others in order to emphasize the complexity of the concept and its various applications. In a detailed study, Britton et al. (2003) pointed out that among the five countries they compared there was hardly any consensus on such questions but individual national solutions which reflected the countries' manifold cultural approaches.

Just as mentoring not only emphasizes curricular and pedagogical knowledge but also contributes to the formation of professional beliefs and attitudes, human resources and school development constantly have to focus on continuous individual learning processes. Viewed in this wider context, this adds to a joint dimension and understanding of professional learning in teachers, which is, of course, not only part of mentoring processes but becomes clearly visible in these relationships: co-operation, openness, interest, tolerance, respect and communication are virtues that are goals in teaching pupils or students, but must be especially valid for teachers, too. Educative mentoring evinces a gap in which new relationships can contribute to the growth and creation of new forms of professional learning by forming new communities or, as Niklas Luhmann puts it, "it is only non-knowing systems that can know; or, one can only see because one cannot see" (Luhmann, 2002, p. 132).

However, individual, professional and systemic development are only some of the reasons mentoring proves to be a valuable support at a teacher's career start in various countries; the concept also contributes to augmented communication among teachers. What this discussion about experiences with mentoring also shows is a way to bridge the generation gap and enable the transfer of knowledge within schools. Establishing mentoring officially also means accepting an obligation for the employees' development. Here, guidance ideally refers to open-mindedness based on self-motivation, bearing in mind principles, such as Gardner's (2009) and Deci and Ryan's (1993), to increase new teachers' and mentors' awareness towards meeting future challenges.

In contrast to the wider perspective presented above, concepts like mentoring must also be considered on a regional, or even local level depending on the very circumstances. Therefore, it is necessary to keep an eye on cultural contexts and fit when transferring one model to another European nation. Values and traditions of assessment or the definition of good teaching vary considerably, and the acceptance of such models differs accordingly. This

complex bridge between European and national concepts requires the respect of individual countries' needs.

Regarding the project described above, one goal is to investigate which factors help to establish successful mentoring; in this case, focusing on the mentor. One of these is certainly the suitability of the mentor for the individual. New teachers' personal needs to enable individual and professional development must be met as well as regional needs, when, for example, schools are very small and not enough mentors are available. Establishing professional learning communities by employing regional mentors is one adequate way to deal with structural differences. Moreover, it adds to the mentoring concept of one mentor and one to two new teachers at the local school by providing regular communication apart from the consolidation of (new) hierarchical structures.

It was indicated in the current research results that the following factors can be viewed as necessary components to make mentoring work: the principals' willingness to establish the program and to support the mentors' activities, the mentors' official appointment and voluntary participation, sufficient time slots, and a relationship based on mutual trust between mentor and mentee. The latter issue reflects the new teachers' need for emotional support (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000; Zachary, 2000), although there is a strong focus on reciprocal learning as referred to by Cooper and Stewart (2009). At the same time, new teachers have high expectations concerning the availability of mentors and the time they are willing to spend with their mentees. This finding is important for the mentors to prevent them from overstraining.

Taking mentors' qualities into account, it can be reiterated that they not only have to have excellent curricular, pedagogical and organizational knowledge, but also social and communicative skills to lead effective conversations and foster new teachers' professional development, as research evidence has already suggested (McDonald & Flint, 2011). Challenging in this respect is the fact that there is no compulsory training for mentors in Austria thus far, and projects take place only in test settings in which the mentors are not offered any remuneration or lesson reduction for this professional work. However, the mentors' great willingness to learn about the concept and their positive reactions to the pilot project show the value they allot to this means of professional development for new teachers and themselves.

In order to arrive at a general conclusion, it can be stated that – given the chance – new teachers and mentors mostly appreciate working in professional teams to experience the joy and benefit of co-operation and reflective talk, because it not only leads to investigating their own but also their pupils' potentials in order to set the stage for further mindful learning. Therefore, it is high time

for school authorities to acknowledge that professional mentoring needs set times for reflection and to establish high quality in-service training facilities for current and future mentors.

Acknowledgements

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Biographical note

Karin da Rocha, dr., is a lecturer and researcher at the University College of Teacher Education Styria in Graz, Austria, with a Master's in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and German from the University of Vienna and a doctorate in education/lifelong learning from the University of Klagenfurt. She has previously taught English and German in Brazilian and Austrian secondary schools. Her current research interests include induction and mentoring, learner autonomy, critical thinking, visual literacy and teaching literature in EFL.

Refusal Strategies of Iranian University English as a Foreign Language and Non-English Learners in Native Language: A Comparative Study

Seyyed Hatam Tamimi Sa'd*[1] and Zohre Qadermazi[2]

∽   This study is an attempt to examine the possible effect that exposure to English has had on the use of refusal strategies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners compared with those of non-English learners when refusing in their native language, Persian. The sample included 12 EFL learners and 12 learners of other academic majors including electronics, psychology, management, etc., who responded to a Persian Discourse Completion Task (DCT), adopted from Allami and Naeimi (2011), who has engaged in the speech act of refusal. The responses were coded according to the classification of refusal strategies as outlined by Beebe, Tahakashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). The results indicated that non-English learners used the refusal strategies considerably more frequently than the EFL learners did, while the EFL learners utilized more adjuncts to refusals than the non-English learners did. However, the differences were not statistically significant. Furthermore, the first four most frequently used refusal strategies by both EFL and non-English groups were found to be "Non-performative statement" (in the case of direct strategies and in the form of "I can't"), "Statement of regret", "Excuse, reason or explanation" and "Attempt to dissuade interlocutor" (in the case of indirect strategies), and the most frequently used adjuncts to refusal strategies by both EFL and non-English groups were "Statement of positive opinions, feelings or agreement" and "Gratitude/Appreciation". Furthermore, gender differences were not statistically significant either. The results can be evidence that the effect of the second language (L2) on the native language (L1) might not be at work in the pragmatic aspects of language learning.

Keywords: Refusal, Refusal Strategies, Speech Acts, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners, Non-English Learners; Politeness

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1   *Corresponding Author. Urmia University, Iran; shtamimi90@gmail.com
2   Urmia University, Iran

Odklonilne strategije iranskih univerzitetnih študentov anglistike in študentov neanglistov v domačem jeziku: primerjalna študija

Seyyed Hatam Tamimi Sa'd* in Zohre Qadermazi

∾   V študiji skušamo preveriti mogoče učinke izpostavljenosti angleščini na uporabo odklonilnih strategij študentov anglistov v primerjavi s tistimi, ki jih imajo študentje neanglisti, ko jih odklanjajo v svojem domačem jeziku, perzijščini. V vzorec je bilo zajetih 12 študentov anglistike in 12 študentov drugih predmetnih smeri, kot so: elektronika, psihologija, uprava itn., ki so izpolnili diskurzno nalogo dopolnjevanja (ang. Discourse completion task), prirejeno po Allami in Naeimi (2011), ki sta se ukvarjala z govornim dejanjem odklanjanja. Za kodiranje odzivov vključenih študentov so uporabili klasifikacijo odklonilnih strategij Beebeja, Tahakashija in Uliss - Weltzove (1990). Rezultati kažejo, da so študentje neanglisti precej pogosteje uporabljali odklonilne strategije kot študentje anglistike, medtem ko so se ti posluževali večjega števila pristavkov odklanjanja kot študentje neanglisti. A razlike niso bile statistično pomembne. Štiri najpogosteje uporabljene odklonilne strategije anglistov in neanglistov so vključevale: »neperformativne izjave« (pri direktnih strategijah oziroma pri odgovorih »I can't.«), »izjave obžalovanja«, »opravičila, navajanja razlogov ali razlaganja« in »poskuse prepričevanja sogovornika« (pri indirektnih strategijah). Pristavki odklanjanja, ki so jih študentje anglistike in tudi študentje neanglisti uporabljali v največji meri, so se nanašali na »izjave pozitivnega mnenja, občutij in strinjanja« ter »zahvale/upoštevanja«. Tudi razlike med spoloma niso bile statistično pomembne. Rezultate lahko razumemo kot ugotovitev, da pri pragmatičnih vidikih jezikovnega procesiranja, tuj jezik ne učinkuje na domači jezik.

Ključne besede: odklanjanje, odklonilne strategije, govorno dejanje, študentje anglistike, študentje neanglisti, vljudnosti

Introduction

The issue of second language (L2) learners' pragmatic competence has long been the subject of heated discussion in language teaching. Moreover, refusing can be a very challenging task to perform even in one's native language (L1) (Al-Kahtani, 2005). Refusing in an appropriate way is taken to be evidence of pragmatic competence since the speech act of refusal is an extremely face-threatening act (FTA) which is most likely to damage the addressee's face very easily (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For decades, the prevalent idea has been that the pragmatic norms of the L1, which are learned during childhood, affect the learning process and product of the L2. However, it has also been assumed that this transfer from the L1 to the L2 can also be from the L2 to the L1, a phenomenon that has been mostly documented in the learning of vocabulary (Ellis, 2012). This study assumes that there is the possibility that the norms of the L2 might turn to be at work when using one's L1 in producing different speech acts. Table 1 offers the refusal strategies, consisting of Direct Refusals, Indirect Refusals and Adjuncts to Refusals, as classified by Beebe et al. (1990, as cited in Farnia & Wu, 2012, p. 174).

Table 1. *Classification of Refusal Strategies*

Type	Strategies	Semantic Formulas
I) Direct	A) Performative	I refuse
	B) Non-performative statement	
	1. "No"	
	2. Negative willingness/ability	I can't; I won't; I don't think so.
II) Indirect	A) Statement of regret	I'm sorry; I feel terrible.
	B) Wish	I wish I could help you.
	C) Excuse, reason, explanation	I have a headache.
	D) Statement of alternative	
	1. I can do X instead of Y	I'd rather do...; I'd prefer
	2. Why don't you do X instead of Y	Why don't you ask someone else
	E) Set condition for future or past acceptance	If you had asked me earlier, I would have...
	F) Promise of future acceptance	I'll do it next time; I promise I'll...; -Using "will" of promise or "promise"
	G) Statement of principle	I never do business with friends.
	H) Statement of philosophy	One can't be too careful.

I) Attempt to dissuade interlocutor

1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the requester	"I won't be any fun tonight" to refuse an invitation
2. Guilt trip	Waitress to customers who want to sit a while: "I can't make a living off people who just order coffee."
3. Criticize the request/requester, etc. (statement of negative feeling or opinion); insult/attack	Who do you think you are?; That's a terrible idea!
4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request.	
5. Let interlocutor off the hook	Don't worry about it; That's okay; You don't have to.
6. Self-defence	I'm trying my best; I'm doing all I can.

J) Acceptance that functions as a refusal

1. Unspecific or indefinite reply

2. Lack of enthusiasm

K) Avoidance

1. Nonverbal

  a. Silence

  b. Hesitation

  c. Do nothing

  d. Physical departure

2. Verbal

  a. Topic switch

  b. Joke

c. Repetition of part of request, etc.	Monday?
d. Postponement	I'll think about it.
e. Hedging	Gee, I don't know; I'm not sure.

Adjuncts to refusals	1. Statement of positive opinions/ feeling or agreement	That's a good idea…; I'd love to…
	2. Statement of empathy	I realize you are in a difficult situation.
	3. Pause filler	uhh; well; uhm.
	4. Gratitude/appreciation	

By comparing the refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusal strategies of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and non-English learners in their first language, Persian, this study aims to throw light on the bidirectional influence,

if any, that exposure to English has had on EFL learners' pragmatic competence. The study is, therefore, comparative, attempting to gauge the possible effect that exposure to an L2 (here, English) has on one's L1 (here, Persian). More specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the types and frequencies of the refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals that Iranian EFL and non-English learners use when refusing in their L1, Persian?
2. Is there any significant difference between EFL and non-English learners in their use of refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals in Persian?
3. Is there any significant difference between EFL and non-English males and females in their use of refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals in Persian?
4. Does the exposure to English have any effect on EFL learners' the use of refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals in Persian?

Theoretical framework

Research into L2 production of speech acts in general and refusals in particular has been increasingly rigorous (Al-Kahtani, 2005; Allami & Naeimi, 2011; Beebe et al., 1990; Farnia & Wu, 2012; Ghazanfari, Bonyadi, & Malekzadeh, 2013; Hassani, Mardani, & Dastjerdi, 2011; Lingli & Wannaruk, 2010; Martínez-Flor & Usó-Juan, 2011; Silva, 2003; Umale, 2011; Yang, 2008). This research has been mainly motivated by the fact that refusing a suggestion, invitation or offer by nature leads to disruption in harmony in relationships and, as a consequence, performing this speech act has to be carried out very carefully. The line of research has focused on various issues surrounding this speech act, such as a comparison of native and non-native speakers' refusal strategies (Umale, 2011), the effect of instruction on the language learners' refusals (Lingli & Wannaruk, 2010), and so forth. Umale (2011) carried out a study to investigate the similarities and differences between ten British speakers and ten Omanis who responded to situations in a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) that consisted of various interlocutor statuses (low, high and equal). Umale's findings suggested that both the Omanis and the British speakers tended to use indirect refusal strategies, mainly statement of regret, care for the interlocutor's feeling, giving reasons and promise for future acceptance, to refuse requests from their superiors. Umale concluded that while Omanis tried to sound polite when refusing, their overly long answers often led to pragmalinguistic failure.

The role of implicit and explicit instruction in English refusals of 62 Chinese learners of English was examined by Lingli and Wannaruk (2010). They

found that while no significant difference was observed with regard to refus-als to offers and suggestions, the explicit instruction was better than implicit instruction in refusals to invitations and requests. In general, they concluded that the explicit teaching in English of refusals was found to be better than implicit instruction. The effect of explicit instruction on the development of polite refusal strategies was also the subject of investigation in another study (Silva, 2003). The study incorporated task-based principles into the teaching of the sociopragmatic as well as the pragmalinguistic aspects of refusals. The find-ings revealed that the subjects in the experimental group, a sample of 14 low-intermediate learners of English, made considerable pragmatic development compared to those in the control group. For instance, some refusal strategies that were absent in the pre-test appeared in the post-test phase which resulted in more polite refusals. Yang (2008) conducted a study of refusal strategies that was aimed at discerning the motivating acts that prompted the refusals to be made. The data gathered from clips taken from five Chinese TV series shown throughout China indicated that refusals were most often prompted by requests, offers, invitations and suggestions; specifically, the individuals refused those acts that were requests, invitations, offers or suggestions but rarely ever refused other acts.

Researchers have also focused on the instrumentation phase of interlan-guage research. Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2011) examined the appropriate data collection tools for gathering data on refusals to requests, comparing oral role plays, written discourse completion tasks and awareness tests and their effect on the production and comprehension of refusals among university stu-dents. They concluded their study with the comment that these tasks can be uti-lized not only to collect data on pragmatics-related aspects of language learn-ing, but also to teach these aspects to L2 or FL learners. In a very recent study, Ghazanfari et al. (2013, p. 60) examined the realizations of the refusal strategies by Persian and English native speakers in 100 films. They found that there were differences in these realizations that may lead to breakdowns in communica-tion, particularly concerning the fact that "English speakers are more direct, more open in their interactions, and more straightforward, using performa-tive verbs and non-performative statements more than Persian speakers". Al-Kahtani (2005) took into account the way refusal strategies are realized in three different cultures (American, Arab and Japanese) but in the same language, English. Al-Kahtani's study of these three cultural groups showed that although refusals were realized differently in different cultures, there were similarities in the way that requests were refused by the groups. He determined that regret, excuse, reason, and explanation were the most frequent refusal strategies used.

He recommended that teachers teach the appropriate use of refusal strategies so that EFL learners avoid breakdowns in cross-cultural communication. In a study of Chinese and Malaysian university students' refusal behavior, Farnia and Wu (2012) investigated the refusals to invitation by use of a written discourse completion test and an immediate structured interview aimed to examine their perception concerning their cognition and language of thought in the process of refusing. The findings showed that both groups used similar types of refusal strategies, but they differed in the frequency of the refusals. In addition, the most frequent refusal strategies were found to be statements of regret, excuses, reasons and explanation and expression of negative ability and willingness.

About the adjuncts to refusals, the results also revealed that the participants used positive opinions, feelings, or agreement, expressions of gratitude and appreciation and alerters the most frequently. Hassani et al. (2011) focused on the role of gender and social status in their cross-linguistic study of the refusal strategies of a group of 60 EFL learners who responded to a DCT with a time interval in between. The results showed no significant difference as regards the role of gender, and the higher social status was found to result in the learners' use of indirect refusal strategies in Persian while more direct strategies were used in English. Allami and Naeimi (2011) focused on the pragmatic development of Iranian EFL learners in their cross-linguistic study in which they examined the frequency, shift and content of semantic formulae of the refusals of three groups of Persian speakers, Persian learners of English and native speakers of English, taking into account the learners' language proficiency, status of interlocutors and types of eliciting acts. The findings indicated that differences in the shift, frequency and semantic formulae of the native and non-native speakers and that the most frequently used refusal strategies were direct refusals, statements of regret and excuse, reason and explanation. Allami and Naeimi noted that Iranian EFL learners demonstrated evidence of pragmatic transfer of the sociocultural norms from their L1 (Persian) to L2 (English).

It can be seen that most studies have examined refusal strategies across two languages or cultures and rarely have researchers attempted to investigate refusal behaviour across disciplines. Therefore, what seems to be missing from the line of research on refusals is a comparative study of refusal strategies as used by EFL and non-English learners in their L1 as an examination of the possible effect of exposure to an L2 on L1. This study set out to examine this issue, aiming at presenting a fuller picture of bidirectional transfer of L2 pragmatic norms to L1 situations.

Methodology

Participants

The participants consisted of 12 MA non-English learners, (6 males and 6 females), majoring in electronics, veterinary medicine, food industries, economics, management, etc. and 12 MA EFL learners (6 males and 6 females). The age range of the EFL group was within 23 to 28 years and the non-English within 18 to 28 years. Regarding the participants' linguistic background, they spoke Persian as their mother tongue. It is noteworthy that by the term "Non-English Learners" are meant those learners who studied majors other than English (as previously mentioned) and that EFL learners are those majoring in different majors of English, such as translation, English literature and English language teaching.

Instruments

Research data were collected by use of a written Discourse Completion Task (DCT) that was adopted from Allami and Naeimi's (2011) study of refusal strategies. This DCT consists of 12 situations, two of which deal with academic settings and the others with everyday life, i.e. a variety of situations. Allami and Naeimi used two DCTs in their study, one Persian and the other English. For the purposes of the current study, however, only the Persian version was utilized. In addition, the purpose of the study was to see how the EFL group and the non-English group differed in their use of refusal strategies in Persian, the learners' native language, to examine if the exposure to English in EFL learners has affected their use of refusal strategies in Persian; specifically, the objective of the study was to investigate the effect of the exposure to L2 one one's L1 use. The DCT appears in Appendix A.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The data were collected through a Persian DCT that was completed by the participants studying English or other majors in Urmia University, Iran. The reliability and validity of the DCT had been already established in Allami and Naeimi's (2011) study. However, the DCT was checked by two experts in the field for content and face validity. The data were analyzed and coded based on the taxonomy of refusals as developed by Beebe et al. (1990). Following the lead of Allami and Naeimi's (2011) study, the semantic formulas were utilized as units of analysis. This taxonomy identifies two direct and eleven indirect refusal strategies together with four adjuncts to refusals including expression of positive feeling, agreement, pause fillers, among others as mentioned in Table 1. Since the coding of the data according to the aforementioned taxonomy

included an inevitable degree of subjectivity on the part of the coder, another coder, who was an expert in the field, coded the refusal utterances of the subjects of the study, according to the afore-mentioned taxonomy. The inter-coder reliability was found to be 82%, which was considered sufficient to allow the data analysis process to proceed. Descriptive statistics, such as percentages and frequency counts, were also offered to shed further light on the use of refusal strategies by both groups. Furthermore, using the SPSS software, the Chi-square test was conducted to see if there is any significant difference between the two participant groups and between males and females in each group. The data were also examined qualitatively, and examples of the participants' refusal utterances were presented for a better picture of the use of refusal strategies among the EFL and non-English groups.

Results

This study aimed at investigating the possible differences between EFL and non-English learners in the use of refusal strategies in to examine if exposure to English has had impacted on the use of such strategies in EFL learners. Table 2 below summarizes the overall use of refusal strategies by both groups of EFL and non-English learners.
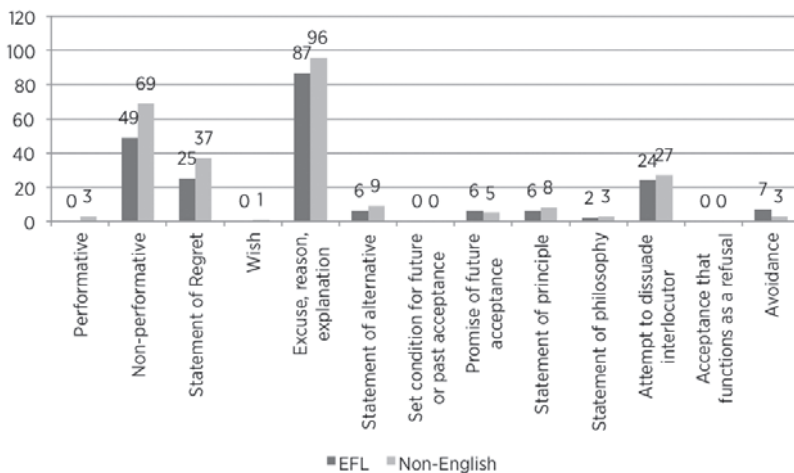

Figure 1. Refusal Strategy Use across Participant Groups

Figure 1 shows that the EFL group used the refusal strategies 212 times and the non-English group 262 times. Figure 1 also indicates that the most

frequent direct refusal strategy as used by both groups is the "Non-perform-ative statement". The "Performative" refusal strategy, which is realized mainly through "I refuse", however, was not used by the EFL group but by the non-English group. In addition, it is seen that the non-English group has used the "Non-performative statement" more frequently than the EFL group (69 versus 49). In the case of indirect refusal strategies, the first three most frequent re-fusal strategies for both groups are: 1) Excuse, reason, explanation, 2) Statement of regret and 3) Attempt to dissuade interlocutor. This figure also shows that both groups have employed other refusal strategies with similar frequencies. The three least frequently used refusal strategies are: 1) Wish, 2 Statement of philosophy and 3) Avoidance. Two refusal strategies were not used by either group at all: "Set condition" and "Acceptance".

The study investigated the role of gender in the use of refusal strategies as well. The results of refusal strategy use across the gender of the participants of both EFL and non-English groups are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Refusal Strategy Use across Participant Groups and Gender*

Refusal strategy	Group				Total	
	EFL		Non-English			
	M	F	M	F	Freq	%
I. Direct						
Performative	0	0	1	2	3	0.6
Non-performative	26	23	24	45	118	24.9
II. Indirect						
Statement of Regret	17	8	12	25	62	13.1
Wish	0	0	1	0	1	0.2
Excuse, reason, explanation	39	48	45	51	183	38.6
Statement of alternative	1	5	0	9	15	3.2
Set condition for future or past acceptance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Promise of future acceptance	3	3	4	1	11	2.3
Statement of principle	3	3	4	4	14	3
Statement of philosophy	2	0	2	1	5	1.1
Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	14	10	11	16	51	10.8
Acceptance that functions as a refusal	0	0	0	1	1	0.2
Avoidance	6	1	2	1	10	2.1
Total	111	101	106	156	474	100

Note. M=Male; F=Female; Freq=Frequency.

According to Table 2, the males in both the EFL and non-English groups do not differ considerably in the number of the strategies they have used in refusing (111 versus 106). However, females of the non-English group used a relatively higher number of refusal strategies than the females in the EFL group (156 versus 101). For both genders of both groups, the most frequently used refusal strategies are 1) Non-performative, 2) Statement of Regret and 3) Excuse, reason, explanation. It is also seen that the EFL females used the strategy of "Statement of Regret" far less frequently than the non-English females (8 versus 25). No considerable differences are observed between the two genders of both groups in almost all other refusal strategies, except in the strategy of "Non-performative" which the non-English females have used much more frequently than the EFL females (45 versus 23).

The differences between the genders of the two groups were also investigated statistically in Table 3 by means of a Chi-square test.

Table 3. *Chi-square Analysis of Refusal Strategy Use by EFL and Non-English Groups*

	Value	Df	Sig.
Chi-square	8.933	11	.628

p < .05   Critical Value: 19.675

Table 3 shows that the two groups of EFL and non-English learners did not differ significantly in their use of refusal strategies, X^2 (11, 474) = 8.933, *p* = .628.

One important aspect of the speech act of refusing is the level of directness with which a refusal strategy can be encoded. This level of directness, that is, the use of direct versus indirect refusal strategies, was also examined across the two participant groups in Figure 2.
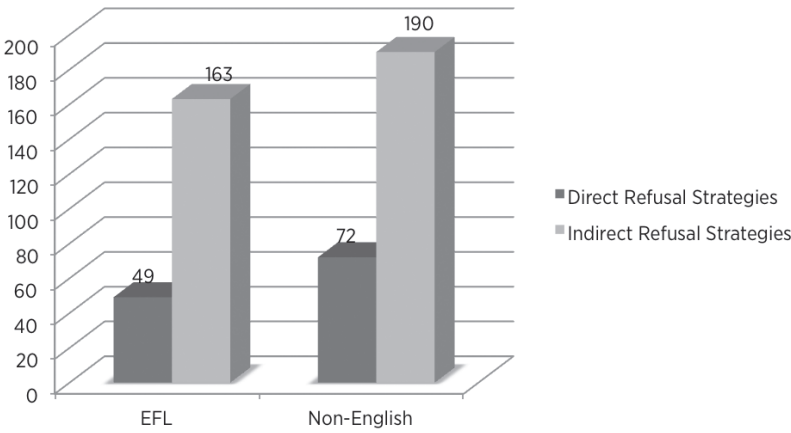
Figure 2. Level of Directness of Refusal Strategies of Participant Groups

Figure 2 shows that Direct and Indirect refusal strategies constitute 23.1% (49) and 76.8% (163) of the refusal strategies used by the EFL group, respectively. The non-English group relied on these in 27.4% (72) and 72.5% (190) of the time. The differences between the groups are not, therefore, considerable. However, a Chi-square test was run to investigate this difference more deeply. Table 4 summarises the results in this regard.

Table 4. *Chi-square Analysis of the Directness of EFL and Non-English Groups' Refusal Strategies*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi-square	1.176	1	.278

p < .05   Critical Value: 3.841

As can be seen from Table 4, the results of this analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups in their use of direct and indirect refusal strategies, X^2 (1, 474) = 1.176, p= .278.

Apart from the level of directness, another significant aspect of the refusal behaviour is the use of adjuncts t refusals, defined earlier. This aspect was examined across both participant groups, and the results are presented in Figure 3.
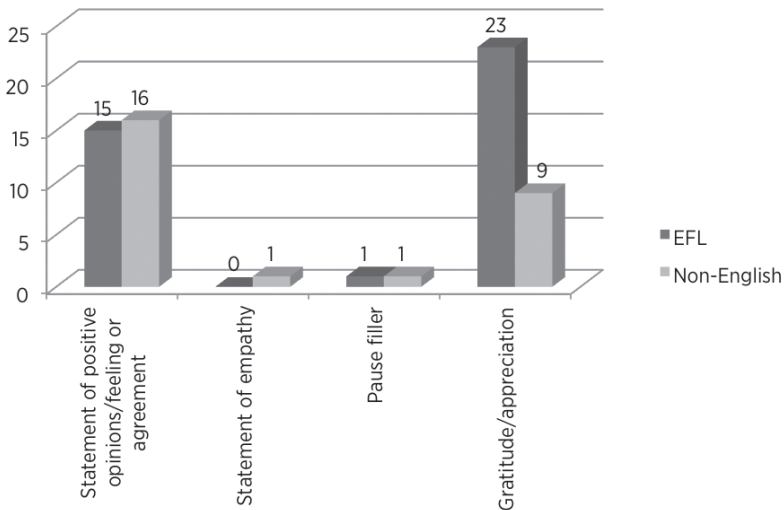
Figure 3. Adjunct to Refusal Strategy Use across Participant Groups

Figure 3 shows that overall the EFL group has used the adjuncts more frequently than the non-English group (39 versus 27). As can be seen, all the adjuncts have been used with nearly the same frequency except for the adjunct of "Gratitude/Appreciation" which has been used much more frequently by the EFL group than the non-English group (23 versus 9). This aspect of refusal behaviour was also examined with gender in focus in Table 5 below.

Table 5. *Adjunct to Refusal Strategy Use across Participant Groups and Gender*

Adjunct	Group				Total	
	EFL		Non-English			
	M	F	M	F	Frequency	%
Statement of positive opinions/feeling or agreement	8	7	9	7	31	46.9
Statement of empathy	0	0	0	1	1	1.5
Pause filler	1	0	0	1	2	3
Gratitude/appreciation	11	12	5	4	32	48.4
Total	20	19	14	13	66	100

Note. M = Male; F = Female.

Table 5 indicates that both the EFL males and females used these adjuncts more frequently than the non-English males and females. The most considerable difference is seen in the case of "Gratitude/Appreciation" where

the EFL males and females used this adjunct much more than the non-English group (23 versus 9). The role of gender in the use of adjuncts to refusals was also investigated statistically. Table 6 presents the results of a Chi-square test run to determine if there is any statistically significant difference between the two groups in their use of adjuncts to refusals.

Table 6. *Chi-square Analysis of Adjunct to Refusal Strategy Use by EFL and Non-English Groups*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi-square	5.146	3	.161

p < .05   Critical Value: 7.815

According to Table 6, the results of this analysis indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups in their use of adjuncts to refusal strategies, X^2 (3, 66) = 5.146, p= .161.

Discussion

A comparison of the results of the refusal strategy and adjunct to refusal strategy use among the EFL and non-English learners of the present study with the results obtained in other studies demonstrates a considerable level of consistency between the present and previous studies. For instance, similar results were reported in Nelson, Al Batal and El Bakary (2002), Wannaruk (2008), Allami and Naeimi (2011), Abdul Sattar et al. (2011), Umale (2011) and Farnia and Wu (2012), among others. It seems that a similar pattern of refusing is followed by L2 learners in various cultures and languages as various studies have demonstrated. These studies were conducted with speakers from various languages including Arabic, English and Persian but the results of the majority of them indicate that similar patterns of refusing are followed by the interlocutors. This study, for example, showed whether EFL learners or non-English learners made extensive use of explanation, stated regret and expressed inability or unwillingness to refuse an invitation, a request or an offer. These three strategies are exemplified in bold in the following refusal utterances (the examples are in Persian, below which their English translation is presented):

- *Man sharmandam. Khodam hanooz nakhundamesh.*
- I'm sorry. I myself haven't studied them yet. (Regret & Excuse; Sit #2; female EFL learner)

- *Vaghean sharmande. Vali khune tamas gereftan ye kari pish oomade. Bebakhshid.*
- I'm so sorry. But they called me and there's something I should do at home. Excuse me. (Regret+Excuse+Apology; Sit #6; male non-English learner)
- *Bikhial, mohem nist.*
- Forget about it, that's no important. (Attempt to dissuade; Sit #7; male non-English learner)

The extensive use of "Excuse, reason and explanation" as a refusal strategy by both EFL and non-English groups is remarkably in line with Allami and Naeimi's (2011) findings in that the Iranian participants of this study who responded to the DCT in Persian used this strategy most frequently of all other strategies. The common use of this strategy seems to be justifiable on the grounds that giving explanations and excuses might be the most immediate strategy that comes in handy in almost every situation.

Regarding the adjuncts to refusals, the results also revealed that the participants used positive opinions, feelings, or agreement, expressions of gratitude and appreciation and alerters most frequently of all. These findings are in line with Farnia and Wu (2012). Morkus (2009, p. 82) posited that adjuncts are "preliminary remarks that cannot stand alone and function as refusals". Taking into account Morkus' (2009) statement about adjuncts, one can assume that the use of them has been intended to serve the purposes of politeness. The following bold phrases are examples of adjuncts used by the participants:

- *Mamnoon vali ba yeki az bacheha gharar daram.*
  - Thanks but I have to see a friend of mine. (Gratitude; Sit #10; male EFL learner)
- *Baese eftekhare bandast ke dar in jashn basham vali motaesefane bayad be ye mosaferate kuchik beram. Enshalla ye vaghte dige.*
  - It's an honour for me to be in your party but I'm afraid I have a little trip. Next time, God willing. (Positive feeling; Sit #4; female EFL learner)
- *Khob rastesh raiis man bayad beram ye jayi. Vaghean sharmandam. Enshalla dafeye ba'di.*
  - Well, boss, I have to go somewhere. I'm so sorry. God willing next time. (Pause filler; Sit #4; male non-English learner)

Conclusion

This study compared the use of refusal strategies by students of English and those of other majors in their L1 (i.e., Persian). The results revealed that both groups made use of specific refusal strategies such as "Non-performative statement", "Statement of regret", "Excuse, reason or explanation" and "Attempt to dissuade interlocutor". The EFL group used these refusal strategies less frequently than the non-English group did, although the former group used more adjuncts than did the latter group.

In general, the study findings suggest that there are differences between EFL and non-English learners in the use of refusal strategies and adjuncts to refusals. The differences are, however, more manifest in the number of the strategies, or the frequency with which these strategies have been employed, rather than in the types of the strategies. Furthermore, the results suggest that certain patterns of refusing are followed by both EFL and non-English learners, which might be indicative of the formulaic nature of the speech act of refusal. This conclusion might be tenable on the grounds that other speech acts, such as complimenting, have been found to be highly formulaic in nature (Johnson, 1992), a finding that can turn to be generalizable to refusal behavior as well.

Implications of Study

The findings of the current study imply that bidirectional influence of English on EFL learners' L1 use may not be at work at least in an EFL context such as Iran where English is a foreign language, if not in an English as a Second Language (ESL) one. In other words, regardless of the students' majors of study, in an L1, they would use the same, if not identical, strategies to refuse. Sociolinguistically speaking, then, it might be comforting for some to see that the cultural aspects of the English norms, which are viewed negatively by the majority of the authorities who regard these aspects as attempting to "westernize" Iranian society, as not influencing their L1 norms of language use because, in the end language is a social practice and indicative of one's identity (e.g., Fairclough, 1996; Norton & McKinney, 2011).

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study was limited in some aspects. Further and future research can focus on these limitations in order to remedy and overcome them as doors for more research. One of the limitations relates to the use of a DCT to gather the data. Future research can benefit well from role plays as a more reliable data collection tool. On the plus side, studies with larger sample sizes are recommended.

Finally, comparative studies examining the results of speech act strategy use by learners in their L1 and L2 would provide insights into the nature of the effect of exposure to an L2 on the L1.

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Biographical note

SEYYED HATAM TAMIMI SA'D, (b. 1989), MA in Applied Linguistics from Urmia University, Iran, is currently an English teacher in Iran Language Institute, Iran. A prolific researcher with many publications, he serves as a reviewer for nine international journals within applied linguistics. He has published with many journals and presented papers at different national and international conferences. His interest lies in acquisitional pragmatics, culture and ELT, learner attitudes, critical pedagogy and Computer-Assisted Language Learning.

ZOHRE QADERMAZI, MA in Applied Linguistics from Urmia University, Iran, is a prolific reseracher in the areas of English language teaching. She has published in many journals, has presented in a number of conferences and is at present a teacher of English in different language institutes. Her areas of interest include intercultural competence, culture in ELT and critical pedagogy.

Appendix 1

Refusal Discourse Completion Test (English Translation)

Instruction:
Please read the following 12 situations. After each situation you will be asked to write a response in the blank after ‚you'. *Imagine that you do NOT want to comply (=agree) with their request, invitation, etc.* Please respond as naturally as possible and try to write your response as you feel you would say it in the situation. The data will be used for research purposes only.

Thanks wholeheartedly in advance!

Age: ……
Major of Study: ……

Situation 1
You are the owner of a book store. One of your best workers asks to speak to you in private.
Worker: As you know, I've been here just a little over a year, and I know you've been pleased with my work. I really enjoy working here, but to be honest I really need an increase in pay.
You: …………………………………………………………………………
Worker: Well…then I guess I'll have to look for another job.

Situation 2
You are a junior in college. You attend classes regularly and take good notes. Your classmate often misses class and asks you for the lecture notes.
Classmate: Oh God. We have an exam tomorrow but I don't have notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you this, but could you please lend me your notes once again?
You: ……………………………………………………………………….
Classmate: Well…then I guess I'll have to ask someone else.

Situation 3
You are the president of a big printing company. A salesman from a printing machine company invites you to one of the most expensive restaurants, Milad.
Salesman: We have met several times now, and I'm hoping you will buy

my company's printing machine. Would you like to have dinner with me at Milad to sign the contract?

You: …………………………………………………………………………

Salesman: Well…maybe we can meet another time.

Situation 4

You are an executive at a very large software company. One day the boss calls you into his office.

Boss: Next Friday my wife and I are having a little party at my house. I know it's sudden…but I'm hoping all my executives will be there with their wives/husbands. Will you come to the party?

You: …………………………………………………………………………

Boss: Well…that's too bad. I was hoping everyone would be there.

Situation 5

You are at a friend's house watching TV. Your friend offers you a snack.

You: Thanks, but no, thanks. I've been eating like a pig and I feel just terrible. My clothes don't even fit me.

Friend: Hey, why don't you try this new diet I've been telling you about?

You: …………………………………………………………………………

Friend: Well…you should try it anyway.

Situation 6

Your boss just asked you to bring a report to him. You can't find the report on your desk because your desk is much disorganized. Your boss walks over.

Boss: You know, maybe you should try to organize yourself better. I always write things down on a piece of paper so I don't forget them. Why don't you try it?

You: …………………………………………………………………………

Boss: Well…it was only an idea anyway.

Situation 7

You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you.

Cleaning lady: Oh God, I'm so sorry! I had a terrible accident. While I was cleaning, I bumped into the table and your china vase fell and broke. I feel very bad about it. I'll pay for it.

You (Knowing that the cleaning lady is supporting three children):

…………………………………………………………………………

Cleaning lady: No, I'd feel better if I paid for it.

Situation 8

You teach English at a university. It is just about the middle of the semester now. One of your students asks to speak to you.

Student: Ah, excuse me; some of the students were talking after class yesterday. We kind of feel that the class would be better if you could give us more practice in conversation and less on grammar.

You: …………………………………………………………………

Student: Well…it was only a suggestion.

Situation 9

You are at a friend's house for lunch.

Friend: How about another piece of cake?

You: …………………………………………………………………

Friend: Come on, just a little piece?

Situation 10

A friend invites you to dinner, but you really don't like this friend's husband/wife.

Friend: How about coming to my house Friday night? We're having a small dinner party.

You: …………………………………………………………………

Friend: Well…maybe next time.

Situation 11

You have been working in an advertising company now for some time. The boss offers you an increase in salary and a better position, but you have to move to another city. You don't to go. Today, the boss calls you into his office.

Boss: I'd like to offer you an executive position in our new office in Shiraz. It's a great city, only 3 hours from here by airplane. And, your salary will increase with the new position.

You: …………………………………………………………………

Boss: Well…maybe you should think about it some more before declining.

Situation 12

You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave the office.

Boss: If it's okay with you, I'd like you to spend an extra hour or two so that we can finish up with this work. Can you stay little longer at the office?

You: ……………………………………………………………………

Boss: Well, that's too bad…I was hoping you could stay.

Encouraging Family and Parent Education: Program Development and Evaluation in the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Sandra Landhäusser[1], Stefan Faas[2] and Rainer Treptow[*3]

∿   Against the background of a European-wide strategy of governance aimed at improving support for parents and families, the following report details the conceptualization and evaluation of a federal state program[4] in Baden-Württemberg (Germany) which was launched in 2008 to encourage family and parent education. Two program components, a voucher system for parents with a new-born child and an element that emphasizes educational offers for families with special needs in particular living situations, were started to increase requests for educational courses. The aim was to establish and deepen cooperation between different public and private professional services that are in contact with parents and their children. The results show that main goals of the program were reached.

Keywords: family and parent education, cooperation, voucher system, support for families with special needs in particular living situations, program evaluation

1   University of Tuebingen, Institute of Education, Department of Social Work, Tuebingen, Germany
2   University of Tuebingen, Institute of Education, Department of Social Work, Tuebingen, Germany
3   *Corresponding Author. University of Tuebingen, Institute of Education, Department of Social Work, Tuebingen, Germany; rainer.treptow@uni-tuebingen.de
4   The label STÄRKE represents *Stärkung der Erziehungskompetenz* (strengthening of educational competence).

Spodbujanje izobraževanja staršev in družin: razvoj in evalvacija programa v zvezni državi Baden – Württemberg v Nemčiji

Sandra Landhäusser, Stefan Faas and Rainer Treptow*

∽   Glede na to, da je široko po Evropi prisotna skrb za izboljšanje podpore staršem in družinam, v prispevku predstavljamo zasnovo in evalvacijo programa[5], ki se je začel izvajati leta 2008 v zvezni državi Baden – Württemberg (Nemčija), in sicer z namenom spodbujanja povezovanja izobraževanja staršev in družin. Začeli smo z dvema programskima ukrepoma za povečanje povpraševanja po izobraževalnih tečajih. Prvi ukrep je bil uvedba sistema vavčerjev za starše z novorojenčki, ki je omogočil vključitev v različne oblike izobraževanja. Drugi ukrep je bil usmerjen v izobraževalno ponudbo za družne z otroki s posebnimi potrebami in družine s specifičnimi bivanjskimi razmerami. Namen programa je bil tudi poglobiti sodelovanje med različnimi javnimi in zasebnimi strokovnimi službami/ponudniki raznovrstne pomoči ter podpore za starše in družine. Evalvacija programa kaže na to, da so bili osrednji cilji izvedenega programa doseženi.

Ključne besede: družinsko in starševsko izobraževanje, sodelovanje, sistem vavčerjev, podpora družinam s posebnimi potrebami v specifičnih bivanjskih razmerah, evalvacija programa

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5   Oznaka STÄRKE pomeni opolnomočenje izobraževalnih kompetenc.

Introduction

In many European countries, and throughout the world, family policies have experienced an expansion in recent times, although various countries still display enormous diversity and dissimilar preferences (Blum & Rille-Pfeiffer, 2010; Daly, 2013). Against this background, the topic of improving parent and family education has gained importance at all levels of politics (Euteneuer et al., 2011; Stauber, 2010; Uhlendorff, Rupp, & Euteneuer, 2011). In Germany, in the course of addressing public responsibility for the support of parents and families, new and different concepts of learning opportunities for families have been developed. These concepts include formal courses and training as well as informal get-togethers, each containing varying topics and located at a variety of institutions. As several pilot projects have shown, the strengthening of parents' competence in educating and caring for their children is not only affected by the educational resources the parents may have gained independently but is also enhanced by additional learning possibilities that are affordable, accessible and attractive. Furthermore, families need increased support from a range of available social services (Evers, Heinze, & Olk, 2011). Therefore, efficient and successful cooperation between social services and educational institutions has to be developed. This has to be done in the local community where children grow up and where parents are coping with the circumstances of life in order to fulfil their duties. Additionally, it is important to investigate how parents can be not only informed of but also convinced to participate in such offers while not fearing possible negative effects of stigmatization.

There are various strategies in educational and social politics to reach these goals. In Germany, two main methods can be identified. First, there are quite a number of federal states that focus on bringing an integrated framework of family support services, including family and parent education, to institutions that offer day-care facilities for children.[6] These services are closely connected to international developments, where the positive effects of the involvement of parents in the institutional education of their children have been enhanced (Melhuish, Belsky, & Barnes, 2010; Pascal et al., 2010). Other European countries, such as the Netherlands, also follow these developments (Busch et al., 2013). Second, there are federal activities to bring family education courses to young parents, either for free or with financial support. Examples include *Elternstart* (Parent Start) in North Rhine Westfalia and *Viva Familia* in Rhineland-Palatinate.

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6   For example, see Ministry for Generations, Family, Women and Integration of the federal state North Rhine-Westphalia, 2009; Sturzenhecker, 2009.

Improving Family and Parent Education in Baden – Württemberg: The STÄRKE Program

In 2008 in Baden – Württemberg, a federal state of Germany, which is located in the southwest of the country,[7] the STÄRKE program, a voucher system together with aid for parents with special needs in particular living situations, was introduced.[8] The main goals of the program are:

*   to facilitate access to educational opportunities and services for parents of infants and for families with special needs in particular living situations,
*   to emphasize the significance of parent and family education and promote the enhancement of an area-wide network of educational opportunities for parents and families,
*   to provide access to continuing advice for families with special needs in particular living situations, alongside and after participation in a specific course, and
*   to expand cooperation between institutions providing education to parents and families and other social services and professionals that engage in family healthcare, educate children or protect them from abuse or violence.

These goals shall be reached using the following components of the program:

*   awarding of vouchers for all parents of new-born infants, and
*   the advancement of specific supplies for families with special needs in particular living situations.

Since 1st September 2008, all parents of new-born infants have received a voucher amounting to 40 euros when they give birth or start a permanent fosterage or adoption. The vouchers are sent by mail or are personally delivered by municipal staff. Redemption must be made within one year of the child's birth. Parents and guardians can either choose a course, which costs 40 euros, or a more expensive course to which the voucher is credited. Examples of course topics include child-development, developmental psychology and nutrition, communication within the family, and being a father/mother. Vouchers in this program are characterized by several attributes. They are, in a sense, equivalent

7   Baden-Württemberg has approximately 11 million inhabitants and about 1.6 million families. The annual birth rate is about 89,000.
8   See Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Family, Women and Elderly People Baden-Württemberg (2008, 2010).

to money, but are nevertheless strongly embedded within an educational opportunity with a defined time frame. Vouchers generally produce a high degree of awareness of the program in the population and are attractive because of positive experiences in the private and public sector of giving, receiving and redeeming them (Daniels & Trebilcock, 2005; Dohmen, 2005). Nevertheless, there is no obligation to accept or redeem them, which means that the sovereignty of the parents to decide is completely respected. Moreover, parents need not fear being stigmatized as being poor because the vouchers are given to all parents after birth of a child independent of other requirements. The voucher has and should continue to facilitating access to and participation in parental education and to reducing financial and symbolic barriers.

The second component of the program focuses on particular living conditions, i.e. on challenges that strain families excessively and that can lead to specific risks in child development. Regardless of the child's age and also prior to birth, families with special needs in particular living situations can attend specific educational events for free. Up to 500 euros are available for every family. These offers are secondary preventive measures through which parents are given strategies to cope with stressful situations in order to avoid the possible negative effects of being overloaded. It is important to work with a conception that is structured for the specific target group, that enables approaching the families actively and that includes methods and exercises that are close to their everyday life. The courses aim to strengthen the knowledge base of families concerning interaction with the child and to offer coping strategies regarding the circumstances of life in general (Goldstein & Brooks, 2006). In case these parents need further advice, they can apply for additional home visits.

The combination of the voucher with specific support for families in particular living situations (e.g. families with a migration background, single parents, and families with chronically ill or handicapped members[9]) modifies the idea of general support and adds focus on specific target groups. Thereby, unrealistic expectations concerning the coverage of primary preventive arrangements can be reduced (Barnett, 1995; Yoshikawa, 1995). This second component, together with the vouchers, shows sensitivity to problems parents may face and discourages one-sided perspectives of such problems. To evaluate these claims, a set of questions has been produced. The questions are: How many parents used the voucher? How many offers were for families with special needs in particular living situations? What social background did the families

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9   Ten particular living situations are named as a specification by the program. Additionally there is an 11th category called "others", under which the educational providers are free to provide courses for families with special needs in others, not yet named, living situations.

come from? What learning opportunities were offered, and which were chosen? Were new parents who were not familiar with the opportunities reached? The following report provides the answers to these and other questions.

The Evaluation: Research Questions and Methods

The evaluation of the STÄRKE program, which was done by the Institute of Education at the University of Tuebingen between 2009 and 2012, mainly focused on the following issues (Treptow, Landhäußer, & Faas, 2013):

- claiming of the voucher and its importance in the choice of specific offers,
- the support of families with special needs in particular living situations,
- the organization and design of correspondent arrangements, and
- the structural and organizational enhancement of parent and family learning within the program, especially in regard to changes in the general structure of supply of services and deepening of cooperation between youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other professional services.

For these purposes, we used annual accounting sheets from all youth welfare offices (2009: N=48; 2010: N=48; 2011: N=47). Their analysis focused on the number of redeemed vouchers, the topics of the visited courses, the offers for families with special needs in particular living situations, the target groups reached and the involvement of educational institutions. To show the developments of these facets within the program, the accounting sheets were analysed annually. Other aspects were investigated via the online surveying of staff from youth welfare offices (2009: N=47; 2010: N=47; 2011: N=46) and from educational institutions (2010: N=245; 2011: N=235) to explore the perspectives of the involved professionals. The opinions and characteristics of parents were examined through a written questionnaire for parents[10] (N=471) and course participants who either redeemed a voucher (N=131) or took part in an arrangement for families with special needs in particular living situations (N=458). Additionally, three interviews (2009, 2010 and 2012) with a staff member of the federal youth welfare office who coordinates the program were analysed. As a final step, the different perspectives of the individuals involved were related and discussed with respect to selected aspects.

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10   In selected districts, for four months we sent a questionnaire to all parents with a newborn child.

Main Results

The following main results refer to questions about the vouchers and their importance for parents' participation in family-based learning possibilities 1), about the use of offers for special target groups by families with special needs in particular living situations 2) as well as about the general structural and organizational enhancement of parent and family learning 3) within the STÄRKE program.

Educational Vouchers

In judging the educational vouchers, the following questions were used:

- How many vouchers were redeemed and how did this number change in the process of the program? Which educational opportunities did parents choose?
- What correlations can be found between the rate of redemption and specific structural as well as organizational circumstances in the different administrative districts?
- What relevance did the vouchers have for the attendance of parents in family-based learning opportunities?
- To what extent did they change the structure of the participants in such offers?

Redemption of the vouchers

Statistical analyses of the annual accounting sheets of the youth welfare offices showed that the number of redeemed vouchers as well as the redemption rate expanded extensively during the development of the program. In 2009, at the beginning of the program, 14,624 vouchers were used (redemption rate: 16.3%; SD=4.83); in 2010, 23,520 were redeemed (25.9%; SD=6.05); and in 2011, 26,492 vouchers were used (29.8%; SD=6.74). This means that, in 2011, nearly one third of all families with new-born infants in Baden-Württemberg made use of a voucher. With regards to content, most parents visited a PEKIP[11] (Prague Parent-Child Program) course, which had been established before STÄRKE. Courses that were developed specifically for the program and that teach basic information on children's development within the first year were also in demand. In the course of the program, requests for alternative types of courses increased. For example, requests for courses such as "baby massage" rose. Based on the different

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11   PEKIP is the acronym for *Prager-Eltern-Kind-Programm* (Prague Parent-Child Program). It is a concept for group work with parents and their children in the first year of living.

administrative districts, there were large differences between redemption rates. For the year 2009, they differed between 4.9% and 29.4%, for 2010, between 11.2% and 39.3% and for 2011, between 11.8% and 45.5%. The percentage increase from 2009 to 2011 was between 3.9% and 24.6%. These great variations relating to redemption rates and changes in the development of STÄRKE suggest that the structural and organizational circumstances of the implementation of the program were different in the various districts. Furthermore, there seem to have been correlations between specific conditions and voucher redemption.

Correlations between voucher redemption and structural and organizational conditions in the administrative districts

Analyses related to the different administrative districts showed significant correlations[12] between the structural and organizational conditions, which were investigated by surveying the youth welfare office staff, and the redemption of vouchers. The following aspects seemed to be of special importance:

Area-wide opportunities. Higher redemption rates correlated significantly with increases in area-wide opportunities for family and parent courses. To act on area-wide possibilities as needed is a central goal of the program, which is directly linked to its successful implementation. Against this background, another result was remarkable. An area-wide expansion of the opportunities for parent education courses correlated with an increase in cooperation between youth welfare offices and medical centres, nursery schools and schools. This seems to be plausible as, because of their local proximity, such institutions have the potential to develop opportunities in the neighbourhood and based on local needs (Axford et al., 2012).

Cooperation between youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other partners. There was a significant correlation between an increase in voucher redemption and an increase in extensive cooperation between youth welfare offices and educational institutions that provide education courses for parents and families. Furthermore, a correlation was seen between an increase in redemption rates and an increase in cooperation between youth welfare offices and other partners. Cooperation with medical doctors and with actors from nursery schools with respect to common advertisements for the program was emphasized. Such cooperation is another central goal of the program and is linked to its successful implementation.

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12   We consciously and restrictively refer to correlations and not to causally determined impacts. The latter cannot be assured on the basis of the available data, which may be also liable to different selection processes (Legewie, 2012). Concerning their plausibility, the reported correlations are therefore to be interpreted in the context of other research outcomes and theoretical considerations.

Personal delivery of the voucher. In several communities, the STÄRKE vouchers were not sent by mail but were handed out in personal face-to-face contact. The expectation that direct contact with the parents positively influences their redemption is one of the reasons to do so. This expectation may apply in single cases, but on the basis of the collected data, no correlation between a personal hand over and the redemption rate could be found. It has to be mentioned that the personal hand over was only done in a few communities so that these cases built only a small part of the total sample. This means that the result has to be interpreted carefully because, on the basis of the collected data, influences of other variables cannot be excluded. A final judgment on this aspect would have to be made after analysing a larger sample.

The voucher's importance for participation in parent and family educational events and changes in the participants' structure.

The analysis of answers by parents who redeemed their voucher shows that it drew their attention to possibilities of parent and family education. Furthermore, it gave an incentive to participate in the courses: 23% of the surveyed parents said that without the voucher they would have been less attentive to the offers for parents including to the offer for the course they attended; 33% indicated that without the financial support of the voucher they would not have joined. With respect to the point in time for participation in the course, over 15% of the parents said that without the voucher they probably would have not participated in a course within the first year of their child's birth. Additionally, the results show an impact of the vouchers on course content. More than 34% of parents specified that the voucher influenced their choice of the course topic.

The results allow the conclusion that the majority of parents who redeemed the voucher would have participated in the courses without the financial support. Therefore, it should not be overlooked that with the help of the voucher a number of parents were also encouraged to participate who otherwise would not have done so. Related to the present analysis, this is true for one third of the respondents. This reading of the outcomes is supported by the results of the educational institution's survey. More than 30% of the respondent staff members indicate that in the context of the STÄRKE program the participants' demographic structure in the educational meetings changed noticeably. Specifically, they especially refer to the increasing publicity of the program and the financial incentive of the voucher. Several organizers report an enlarged participation of young mothers, parents with a migration background, single parents as well as parents with a low socioeconomic status.

Offers for Families with special Needs in Particular Living Situations

With regard to a detailed assessment of the courses for families with special needs in particular living situations the following questions were used:

- How many parents participated in the meetings for families with special needs in particular living situations?
- How did this change in the progress of the program?
- Which group-specific events were chosen by parents and with what frequency in the entire federal state?
- To what extent is individual counselling in a home visit related to course attendance?
- What relations exist between a large dissemination of realized courses and specific structural and organizational conditions in the urban and rural districts?
- Who attends the courses for families with special needs in particular living situations?
- How do the participants evaluate the chosen courses?

The use of offers for families with special needs in particular living situations

Statistical analyses of the annual accounting sheets administered by youth welfare offices showed that the number of families with special needs in particular living situations that participated in a correspondent event in the context of STÄRKE increased continuously. In relation to the first year, 2009 (3,529), the number of participants doubled in the second year (8,672) and more than tripled in 2011 (12,047). With respect to this result, a clear increase in the number of families was attained. Furthermore, the number of claimed home visits showed a growth of more than doubled between 2009 (292) and 2011 (673). See Figure 1.
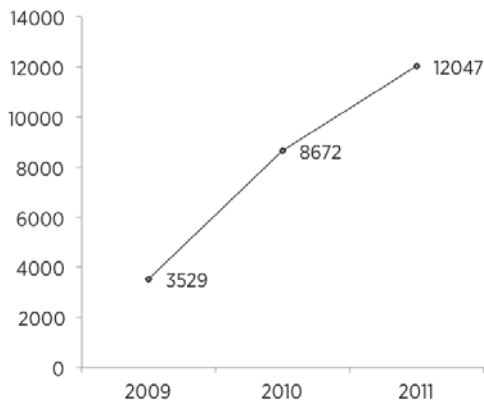
Figure 1. Participation of families in particular living situations in group-specific educational events (total numbers).[13]

The rate of home visits, related to all attended courses, was between 5% and 8%. The educational institutions survey indicated that half of the institutions that offered events for families with special needs in particular living situations provided courses with additional home visits.

Comparing the particular living situations of parents who attended a course between 2010 and 2011, there was an increase in participation at events for parents in "other" living situations. In other words, there was an increase in courses that were provided for particular target groups that were not mentioned in the program. This can be interpreted as indicating that the educational institutions use the runtime of the program to develop and establish courses for new living situations not previously taken into account. In general, most families with a migration background were addressed and reached (approx. 4,000). This also applied to single parents (approx. 3,500). In both groups, there was an essential growth in numbers between 2010 and 2011. The third largest group was families with members affected by illness or disability (approx. 1,600). All other groups combined amounted to less than 700 participants (related to the year 2011).

With respect to distribution in the particular districts, it can be seen that, with the exception of one district, there was an increase in the numbers of course offers between 2009 and 2011. For a few districts, which started with low numbers in 2009, the increase was more than tenfold. This increase in numbers coincided with significant area-wide growth of course offers, as stated by staff

13   Source: KVJS (Kommunalverband Jugend und Soziales/federal youth welfare office), own calculation

of the youth welfare offices. Relating the sum of families reached to the average number of births within a year (considering the size of a district),[14] it can be seen that in 2011 an average of 14% of families were reached. In many districts, between 4% and 24% were reached up to a maximum of more than 40%. Comparing the districts, as in the federal state-wide numbers, most courses were for families with migration backgrounds, single parents and families with members affected by illness or disability.

Correlations between the use of offers for families in particular living situations and structural and organizational conditions in the urban and rural districts

On the basis of correlation analyses, the following relations between the rate of families reached and different structure and framework requirements in the districts were found.[15]

Area-wide expansion of supply, growth in numbers and integration in early support. Just as with the redemption of the vouchers, a significant correlation between the number of reached families and area-wide expansion of course offers can be shown. This aligns with the fact that area-wide enlargement of educational offers is a central goal of STÄRKE and of great importance for successful implementation of the program. In addition, there are smaller but still significant correlations between the number of offers and their integration in early support. The correlation is even increased if there is an overall concept of how to integrate early support in STÄRKE.

Cooperation between youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other partners. There was a rather significant correlation between the number of families reached in particular living situations and more intensive collaboration between youth welfare offices and different educational institutions in the context of STÄRKE. Mainly, the common planning of the course content was relevant, meaning that use was higher when there was cooperation between youth welfare offices and educational institutions. Furthermore, the participation of youth welfare offices in a program design relating to requirements for course construction seemed to be essential, whereas proposals and examinations with respect to the supply of courses were of less importance. Considering the different institutions that took part in STÄRKE during the survey, the

14   Although the courses of component two relate not only to parents with children aged one year and below, we relate attendance at courses as a whole to birth rates, not to calculate a concrete number of reached families but to imply the size of a district by estimating a relative number on the basis of the birth numbers. Based on this, correlations between this number and specific framework requirements can be investigated.

15   As in the analysis of the data on the vouchers above, we speak here about correlations and not about causal impacts.

use of courses was higher if schools were involved in the implementation of the program. In addition, there were positive correlations if the health sector (hospitals, medical practitioners and midwives) as well as nursery schools were included in the advertisement. Similarly, correlations existed between reaching families with special needs in particular living situations and the use of schools and hospitals as places to hold courses. This also held true for the involvement of schools and nursery schools in the delivery of courses. Finally, the cooperation between youth welfare services and different institutions, as in the area-wide expansion of offers, was seen to be a central goal and a main aspect of fruitful implementation.

> ### *Groups of participants and their evaluations of the educational offers.*
> On the basis of the participants' survey, it can be documented that parents with special needs in particular living situations, which attended a course, were on average 38 years old. As for their educational achievement, almost one quarter of the respondents had a *Hauptschule* (minimum 9 years of formal education) certificate, 35% a *Realschule* (minimum 10 years of formal education) certificate, and 35% a diploma for 13 years or more (general qualification for university entrance, university diploma etc.).[16] Almost 90% speak German at home and 10% another language; 20% joined a course together with their partners. The most common type of family was a family with two children, followed by families with either one or three infants and finally by families with four or more children. The average age of the infants was nine years. Almost 4% of them were in their first year and one third of them of preschool-age (0–5 years). Around 80% of the respondents were female. Thus, with respect to the participants, several characteristics were revealed relating, for example, to their sex/gender, number of children and language they speak at home. At the same time, they showed a broad range in terms of the parents' and children's ages as well as the educational levels of the parents. With regard to the evaluation of the courses joined, nearly all participants agreed that the event was helpful in retrospect. They were also in agreement about attending such a course again should they have a chance to do so. It is apparent that the parents felt positively about the atmosphere of the events and that they felt that their individual living situation was considered in the particular course. The satisfaction with the support of the home visits was also predominantly and positive.

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16   almost 5% had another school certificate or none

General Structural and Organizational Developments

Relating to structural and organizational advancements within the field of parent and family education in the years 2009 to 2011, the following questions were considered:

- Which developments appear with respect to the structure of supply within the field of parent and family education in general?
- Which developments arise relating to the support for families in particular living situations?
- How does the cooperation between youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other professional services change and deepen?

Developments in the structure of supply

Statistical analyses of the annual accounting sheets and the surveys of the staff of the youth welfare offices show that the general course supply as well as attendance rates rose significantly within the time of the survey. This assessment was shared by all youth welfare offices. At the same time, they registered a significant growth with respect to a regional area-wide expansion of educational offers. There was also a significant improvement in area coverage reached even though some youth welfare offices admitted that full area coverage was not achieved.

There were similar developments relating to specific courses for families with special needs in particular living conditions. Here also, the course supply as well as requests for courses rose significantly. Furthermore, there was a significant area-wide increase in approved special programs. Nevertheless, there were districts in which this area-wide growth did not apply. In total, nearly all youth welfare office districts showed an area-wide increase in their supply, whether relating to voucher courses, to specific events for families in particular living situations or to both. The courses for families with special needs in particular living situations were predominantly integrated into a concept of early support.

Cooperation of youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other professional services

The results of the survey on youth welfare office staff also showed changes with respect to the cooperation of the involved actors. With regards to to the collaboration between youth welfare offices and educational institutions as well as between the educational institutions themselves, there was a significant intensification of relationships. Considering the stakeholders that were involved

in the implementation of STÄRKE during the study, the inclusion of midwives increased the most, followed by nursery schools. Medical practitioners, hospitals and schools each showed the third largest increase, followed by day care institutions.

When interpreting this cooperation in the context of the whole program, the most significant developments were shown with respect to hospitals and midwives. Here, cooperation was increased or even built for the first time. As for the medical practitioners, some contacts were built in the context of STÄRKE while others existed before. Finally, with respect to the cooperation with nursery schools, primary and secondary schools as well as day care facilities, the outcome was high intensification within STÄRKE. Against this background, it can be demonstrated that in the domain of cooperation between youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other professional services, major developments were initiated in the context of STÄRKE.

Conclusion

Within expert discourse in Germany and in other European countries, parent and family education as a field of action is affected by structural challenges. These challenges arise as the field is located structurally in child and youth welfare as well as in adult education. In this context, unreconciled and partly reconciled support structures exist, which complicates the implementation of programs. The following points have been criticized: lack of a course's appropriate fit, the complexity of providers and supply structures, a lack of transparency and perceptibility, an absence of cooperation structures, and limitations in reaching parents, especially those in difficult living situations. Against this background, a need for better linking-up, matching and recognition of courses, the creation of interfaces and central supervision has been advanced (Daly, 2013; Rupp & Smolka, 2007).

The STÄRKE program incorporates fundamental elements from expert discourses on the creation of modern family and parent education. It focuses on an improvement in the public perception of family and parent education and puts an emphasis on its significance. Furthermore, it seeks to develop a countrywide network of educational offerings for families and parents according to their needs. It stresses specific consideration for families in special and difficult living situations, the cooperation of youth welfare offices and educational institutions in parent and family education and the inclusion of other professional services and members of independent professions. In linking vouchers and offers to families with special needs in particular living situations,

the program attempts a balance between providing general educational offerings for all parents and sensitive perceptions of various needs for support. This avoids negative labelling without negating families' problems. Such a conceptualization should be judged as ambitious.

The results show that in the course of the study the main goals of the program were reached. By the end of the survey, the number of course offerings as well as their area-wide presence was increased and it can be supposed that gaps in demand diminished. Furthermore, cooperation between youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other partners, including schools, day care facilities, doctors and midwives, increased significantly. The existing data show that the program has contributed to a new level of cooperation within the health sector. Additionally, the collaboration with other educational institutions has been deepened. These changes in the context of STÄRKE are simultaneously preconditions for better reaching parents, especially parents in difficult living situations. Towards these developments, both program components, the vouchers as well as the support for families with special needs in particular living situations, may have contributed.

The vouchers showed a close connection between an area-wide increase in educational offers and an increase in cooperation. In addition, they contributed to a better public recognition of parent and family education in Baden-Württemberg. Furthermore, there is evidence that the voucher was a medium to reach parents with special needs in particular living situations and was effective for specific target group offers. Moreover, they influenced the choice of course topics. Similar results can be found for the offers for families in particular living situations. They also have to be seen in the context of an increased area-wide dissemination of educational offers and an enlargement of cooperation between youth welfare offices, educational institutions and other partners in the public and private sector. The significant escalation of these offers over time underscores better inclusion of parents with particular needs for support.

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Biographical note

Sandra Landhäusser, dr. phil., is an academic staff member at the department of Social Pedagogy at the Eberhard Karls University of Tuebingen since 2008. Before that time she was a research associate at the "Center for Education and Capability Research" at the University of Bielefeld. Her research is focused on family and parent education as well as community oriented Social Work. Relations between neighborhood and social space, questions of social inequality and empirical answers on professional interactions in the community belong to her main interests in research and theory.

Stefan Faas, dr. phil., is an academic staff member at the department of Social Pedagogy at the Eberhard Karls University of Tuebingen since 2009. Before that he was a teacher at a vocational training school. His research is focused on early childhood education, knowledge of kindergarten teachers as well as family and parent education. Monitoring the quality of institutions for children, especially the kindergarten, and professional development of educational staff belong to his main interests in research and theory.

Treptow Rainer, dr. rer.soc., full professor, is holding a chair on educational science with special focus on Social Pedagogy at the Eberhard Karls University of Tuebingen since 2003. His main topics of research are theory and history of Social Work, internationalization of social support and forms of Arts Education. Before that time he was working as a professor for Social Pedagogy at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena.

Bacevic, Jana (2014). From Class to Identity / The Politics of Education Reforms in Former Yugoslavia. Budapest – New York: CEU press, 235 pp. ISBN 978-615-5225-72-7.

Reviewed by Darko Štrajn[1]

Many questions about the reasons for the incredibly violent collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia remain unanswered, and probably the 'deepest' of them will never be sufficiently answered. However, thanks not only to the passage of time but also due to slowly accumulating research in different venues of the social sciences and humanities, growing numbers of increasingly convincing interpretations of the historic events and more reliable theories of the social, ethnic, cultural and, above all, political backgrounds are making progress in providing answers. It would be pretentious to say that Yugoslavia serves as an ultimate historical lesson for the future, and it would be overly optimistic to expect that anyone learned their 'lesson', but it is clear now that the Yugoslav example has informed theoretical thinking, and influenced a formation of conceptual constructions concerning topics such as social conflicts, political actors, ideologies and so on. Jana Bacevic's book inscribes itself into this conceptual space with one of the most consistent and clarifying interdisciplinary insights into the structures, processes and twisted logics of the Yugoslav episode in recent European history. The fact that the book is focused on and by education contributes much to the precision of hypotheses and assumptions in the book. At the same time, such a perspective proves to be especially rewarding as it enables the author to dispense with the abundance of clichés, simplifications and other more or less ideologically fashioned 'explanations' of the deplorable end of what once seemed as a promising large-scale political project. Jana Bacevic also clearly demonstrates that taking a view on a society through its central institutional instrument of reproduction is precisely that point of departure, which triggers an eruption of a number of crucial questions on how we understand and interpret a society and especially its conflicts. One such crucial problem is formulated at the beginning of the book: 'The fact that a country with high levels of education managed to disintegrate in a violent conflict strongly challenges the assumption about the preventive nature of

1   Educational Research Institute (Pedagoški inštitut), Ljubljana, Slovenia; darko.strajn@guest.arnes.si

education in terms of managing social cleavages' (p. 6). The author later dispels a whole signifying chain of established explanations and accounts of the Yugoslav tragedy, from references to the 'ancient ethnic hatreds' to a number of emphases on 'cultural differences' as presumable reasons for the conflict. However, the book is not merely about dispelling wrong assumptions, but is a nuanced study of the policies and trends in Yugoslav education before and after the war.

The Introduction is the first chapter of this admirable study. It is followed by four chapters, which are organised around conceptual core notions as well as around some important historical and institutional issues in the processes. Of course, the Introduction appropriately explains the structure of the book, giving an overview of the research methods and main topics of the book, but it also puts forward many ingenious hypotheses and assumptions. Hence, an interested reader receives a strong incentive to read the entire book through to the end. As I suggested in the first paragraph of my review, Bacevic's postulations in the first chapter build on the Yugoslav experience in order to reformulate a good part of the entire field of education studies. She shows very convincingly that some widely accepted assumptions of a role of education simply do not work, whole simultaneously demonstrating that there is more complex interaction between education, policies and politics, which through political subjectivities and group identities enter social processes. On the bases of such insights, Bacevic makes no secret of her conclusive assertion that the Yugoslav case transcends its particular significance, and it instigates somewhat renewed theories on the role of education policies in different contexts.

Chapter 2 contains an interpretative and explanatory account of the Yugoslav education reform, which Bacevic choses to name 'vocationalizing education.' The reform, which started in the 1970s, was based on the rhetoric of class, but failed due to multifarious opposition against its different features. Bacevic does not say so, but one could see similarities between the language of the last Yugoslav education reform and the rhetoric of competencies, skills and abilities, which permeates the discourse of education reform in the market-oriented Europe. The latter only replaces class-related notions, which signify the social context, with a chain of other notions as for instance employability, competitivity, human resources and so on. However, the author makes clear that the Yugoslav education reform was interlaced with politics, which led to the final social conflicts. To further explain this historic structure, she gives a well-informed view on the social movements and events that affected the cohesion in the former Yugoslavia. It is a very telling fact that serious mass dissent erupted in university centres in most constitutive republics of Yugoslavia, but in each of them for quite different reasons. In her analysis, Bacevic arrives

at the conclusion that the education reform's 'primary driver was ideological rather than economic' (p. 74). She clearly points out that the education processes should be read against the background of political developments as, for instance, a noteworthy constitutional reform in 1974, which was an attempt to contain looming 'national' (meaning also 'ethnic') conflicts of 1980s and 1990s.

For well-founded reasons, the next chapter concentrates on a clash between religious education and what the author amusingly names 'civic EUcation.' The chapter is focused on (Milošević's) Serbia, the largest former Yugoslav Republic and political developments there, compared to what had been going on in other former Republics, now independent states. Bacevic's reading of different genres of politically motivated narratives exposes the identitarian trend, which produced a centrality of the 'problem' of civic and/or religious education. Of course, the religious education has to do with historical and cultural traditions in the ideological core of the politics that constructs invented traditions.

Chapter 4 deals with higher education and with post-conflict development, primarily in the Serb province of Sandžak and in semi-recognized states of Kosovo and Macedonia. The author asserts that 'the countries of former Yugoslavia eagerly joined the [Bologna] process' (p. 126). Hence, she determines that Bologna reform is as a policy considered to be a part of 'Europeanization' in most of these countries. She shows an interesting phenomenon of 'two in one,' meaning that in many multi-ethnic cities two universities, instead of one, were established to reflect the ethnic divides. She then goes on to the case of Kosovo, which 'represents the clearest case of intersection between education policies and identity politics' (p. 136). The struggle in the framework of education policies in Kosovo, as one can surmise from the author's writing, serves as an explanatory instance for the whole process of disintegration of Yugoslavia. This part of the book brings forward many interesting clarifications and a great deal of information on events that led to the contemporary as-ever ambiguous and unstable social situation, although in substantially changed political framework. Especially for those readers who are not acquainted with the complicated construction of former Yugoslavia, a part of this chapter on the Muslim-inhabited region of Sandžak, is very interesting and it explains much. The struggle between different 'identities' is evolving through higher education institutions. Another case is Macedonia, where the 'two in one' phenomena is also rampant, only in this case main actors are ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians. Bacevic points also to some praiseworthy attempts to overcome ethnic cleavages, for instance, in the case of South East European University (established in 2001), where they attempted to introduce trilingualism (Macedonian, Albanian and English). With substantial international support, the experiment overcame opposition from both sides.

The concluding chapter is built around Theodor Adorno's view on the necessity of ensuring that Auschwitz never happens again. On the bases of her study of the role of education in the countries of former Yugoslavia, Jana Bacevic claims that neither emancipatory nor reproductive education exist. She supports her finding with Adorno and other critical theorists, who 'considered that the totalizing, violent potential of education did not emanate from the practice itself, but rather from the tendency of education to reflect and reproduce the prevailing ethos of society' (p. 211). Bacevic here clearly points out that the problematic relationships between education, policies and politics concerns not only the former Yugoslavia. She admits that there are, due to its relative autonomy, 'potentials in education' for at least generating critical voices and that subsequently 'education can actually serve as a consistently progressive social force' (p. 211).

Finally, the book should be applauded for its perceptive theoretical discourse and well-founded conclusions, but it is also interesting for all those readers who would like more details on what has been happening in the region of the Balkans. Jana Bacevic gives a very good overview of historical events, explains the logics of the development towards politics of identity that followed decades of the communist stress on class politics and, above all, makes a reader understand how education can work for different goals in conjunction with social forces.

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