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Pre-Service Teachers' Attitudes towards Learning and Teaching English to Young Learners

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ABSTRACT

Considerable attention has recently been invested into researching the influence of affective variables, such as attitudes and motivation on foreign language learning and teaching. The topic is timely and relevant especially at the time when English is being introduced as an obligatory subject in the first cycle of primary school in Slovenia. Two key issues are addressed: attitudes towards learning and teaching English as a foreign language and the profile of the young learners' language teacher. The article presents the results of a small-scale research conducted with a group of primary education students on their attitudes towards learning and teaching English. The results suggest that trainee teachers have moderately positive attitudes towards learning English but diverse attitudes towards teaching a foreign language.

Key words: English as a foreign language, pre-service teachers, attitudes, motivation, young language learners

Stališča študentov razrednega pouka do učenja in poučevanja angleščine v otroštvu

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POVZETEK

Številni strokovnjaki ugotavljajo, da stališča pomembno vplivajo na učinkovitost učenja in usvajanja tujega jezika. V prvem delu na osnovi pregleda relevantne literature ugotavljamo, da so stališča tesno povezana z motivacijo in uspešnostjo pri tujejezikovnem pouku. Večina raziskav na področju stališč in motivacije do učenja tujega jezika je bila opravljena na učencih jezika, razmeroma malo pa je raziskav, ki bi se osredotočale na učitelje oziroma bodoče učitelje. Ob tem je poudarjen pomen razlikovanja med učitelji razrednega pouka in diplomiranimi učitelji angleščine, saj smo domnevali, da se stališča teh dveh skupin bistveno razlikujejo. V drugem delu prispevka so predstavljeni rezultati preiskovalne raziskave, v kateri smo raziskali stališča študentov razrednega pouka do učenja in poučevanja angleškega

jezika. Uporabljena sta tako kvantitativni kot kvalitativni pristop. Raziskava je pokazala, da so stališča večine vprašanih do učenja angleščine kot tujega jezika zmerno pozitivna, medtem ko se stališča do poučevanja tujega jezika razlikujejo v več vidikih.

Ključne besede: tujejezikovni pouk, bodoči učitelji, zgodnje učenje angleščine, stališča, motivacija

Introduction

The introduction of English as an obligatory subject in the first cycle of primary school in Slovenia has prompted several discussions related to the nature and effects of teaching foreign languages to young learners. The past two decades have witnessed an increased interest in the area of teaching foreign languages to ever younger learners both in Slovenia (Pižorn 2009; Čok, Skela, Kogoj and Razdevšek-Pučko 1999) and worldwide (Ellis, Brewster and Girard 2002, Enever 2014). Once regarded as a 'Cinderella area of scholarship' (Copland and Garton 2014, 223), teaching foreign languages to young learners is today seen as a field of study in its own right, providing both theoretical foundations as well as insights into the practical concerns of professionals who teach a foreign language to children. The present study addresses two key issues in the area of teaching young learners, i.e. attitudes towards learning and teaching English as a target language (L2) and the role of the young learners' language teacher.

A teacher's attitude towards learning and teaching is an important determinant of the learners' performance and their motivation to learn. In the area of second language teaching attitudes have been extensively studied especially in relation to motivation and foreign language achievement (Gardner 1985, Dörnyei 1998, Masgoret and Gardner 2003). However, the majority of studies have focused on learners' attitudes and motivation, and only a few have addressed experienced teachers' or pre-service teachers' attitudes. Gürsoy (2013) points out that there is a gap in the literature with respect to researching trainee teachers' attitudes towards the language they are supposed to teach when they graduate. In addition, the research into attitudes has so far been mainly focused on specialist language teachers "assumed to have the versatility to teach at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels with an equal degree of competence" (Enever 2014, 232). However, the worldwide trend of introducing L2 learning from the very start of compulsory schooling has dictated the need to redefine the role of the young learners' language teacher. In the European context, this meant the development of a model of a generalist primary teacher qualified to teach all (or almost all) subjects in the curriculum including an extra qualification for teaching a foreign language (Enever 2014; Brumen and Dagarin Fojkar 2012). According to Eurydice (2012, 85), while the generalist model is recommended in most countries, several different profiles of foreign language teachers are used across Europe, which suggests that the area of primary education applicable to foreign language teaching is still in a provisional

stage. Brumen and Dagarin Fojkar (2012, 39) point out that in the Slovene context, both specialist and generalist teachers' models are used with generalist teachers being required to get an additional qualification for teaching a foreign language up to grade 6. A special teacher training course for teaching young language learners is also required of specialist teachers teaching in the first three-year cycle of primary school.

The question of attitudes towards teaching and learning a foreign language takes on a substantially different form when associated with the profile of the foreign language teacher. Unlike specialist language teachers who are usually highly motivated to study languages, primary education teachers may have more or less positive attitudes towards learning and hence teaching a foreign language. In addition, we may assume that their attitudes will be affected by issues related to their L2 language proficiency. In this context, one of the recommendations ensuing from the investigation into the global practices of teaching English to young learners reported by Garton, Copland and Burns (2011) concerns the need for developing teachers' English language proficiency and skills. The authors argue that primary school teachers who are trained to teach English often lack confidence in their English ability. This, however, is not necessarily related to their actual or insufficient proficiency level but rather to the general belief that a native-like competence is required for teaching English to young learners (*ibid.*).

These aspects are worth investigating especially considering the role teachers play in the early formative years of a learner's schooling. In this context, the ELLiE study (English Language Learning in Europe, a longitudinal study of the introduction of second/foreign language learning in primary school classrooms in seven European countries) revealed that the students' learning of a foreign language is strongly influenced by the attitude of the teacher. The results of ELLiE case studies from seven different European countries suggest that while successful foreign language learning can be found in different learning conditions and can be associated with the use of very different teaching approaches, successful teachers are almost always those who have a positive attitude towards teaching English (Enever 2011). The present study therefore aims to fill the gap in the literature by investigating pre-service primary education teachers' attitudes towards second-language teaching and learning and their correlation with the respondents self-reported level of English language proficiency. The first part looks at the relevant previous research on attitudes to foreign language teaching and learning. The second part presents the results of a small-scale research conducted with a group of pre-service generalist teachers on their attitudes towards learning and teaching English. The article concludes with some suggestions for future research.

Attitudes and motivation in foreign-language learning and teaching

Attitudes towards foreign language teaching are today generally regarded as a key variable in successful language learning. Triggered by Gardner and Lambert's (1972) seminal work on the role of attitude and motivation in foreign language learning, several studies have pointed to the positive correlation between language performance on the one hand and positive attitudes and motivation on the other (cf. Žefran and Cencič 2013). However, the relationships between these three aspects of foreign language learning are far from apparent. For example, Dörnyei, Durow, and Zahran (2004, 89) argue that the motivation to learn a second language is a "multifaceted construct" which comprises several aspects, such as the learner's attitudes towards the target language and their culture, personality and identity issues and other factors. Thus, it stands to reason that any investigation into attitudes will necessarily have to consider the relationship between these three aspects.

In his socio-educational theory Gardner (Gardner 1985; Masgoret and Gardner 2003) identified five attitude/motivation variables which are particularly relevant for our research: integrativeness, attitudes towards the learning situation, motivation, integrative orientation, and instrumental orientation. Integrativeness refers to the extent to which a language learner is able to identify with the target language community. The concept implies that individuals who are more willing to identify with the target language community will have a higher motivation to learn the target language. The second variable, attitudes towards the learning situation, focuses on the response of the individual to the context in which the target language is taught and includes two aspects: the evaluation of the course and evaluation of the teacher. The third variable is motivation, which comprises motivational intensity, desire to learn the language and attitudes toward learning the target language. Gardner (1985, 10) defines motivation as "the combination of efforts plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes towards learning a language".

These three variables constitute integrative motivation which implies that a learner who is integratively motivated to learn the target language is open to identification with the target language community and has positive attitudes towards the learning situation. The last two variables look at the reasons for learning the target language. Integrative orientation refers to the reasons for learning the language which are related to the extent to which learners are willing to identify with the community, while the concept of instrumental orientation, broadly speaking, refers to the desire to learn a language for practical reasons, such as getting a job or plans to live abroad. Masgoret and Gardner (2003) point out that an orientation is not necessarily the same as motivation. For example, one may be highly motivated to learn a target language for job-related purposes, thus professing an overt instrumental orientation, but at the same be very integratively motivated to learn the language.

According to the model, the variables of integrativeness and attitudes toward the learning situation are correlated and influence second language performance but in an indirect way, i.e. as a support to motivation which is the variable responsible for achievement in foreign-language learning (ibid.).

Several studies on attitudes and motivation as variables related to learners' performance in a classroom situation have assessed these variables using Gardner's (1985, 2004) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) which was designed to measure different variables of individual differences in the paradigm of the socio-educational model. The AMTB consists of several subtests aimed at measuring motivation, integrativeness and attitudes towards the learning situation, and two measures of reasons for learning a foreign language, the instrumental and integrative orientation. Besides these tests, additional variables are often included in the test taking into account the context and aims of different studies, such as language anxiety which refers to apprehension experienced by a learner in the foreign language classroom or parental encouragement with respect to L2 learning.

The research conducted by Gardner and his associates implied that students who are integratively motivated for learning a foreign language will be better language learners than those who are instrumentally motivated, in other words, learners who are keen to integrate into the target culture will be more successful in learning the target language than those whose motivation lies primarily in job or academic advancement. However, Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) point out that integration with the target culture and community is not always possible or plausible which makes this dimension less important than was assumed by Gardner and his colleagues. Dörnyei (1998) also argues that despite the high importance given to integrativeness, the concept remains enigmatic and difficult to define. In addition, Gardner's model was developed in the Canadian context where the anglophone and francophone communities coexist in a distinctive fashion, a context which bears little resemblance to several other foreign language learning environments. Noels (2001: 44) brings into question the need to view integrative orientation as a determinant of other motivational and L2 achievement variables and suggests that there may be other relevant orientations not covered by the integrative/instrumental model, such as travel, friendship, achievement and several others. In a similar vein, Djigunović (2012) argues that attitudes and motivation are today seen as interacting with other learner variables, such as language aptitude, language anxiety, language learning styles and others.

Other models of motivation have been proposed, such as the model developed by Ryan and Deci (2000) which distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for learning a foreign language. Intrinsic motivation comes from the learner as an individual and refers to doing an activity because he or she finds it inherently interesting or enjoyable, while extrinsic motivation comes from outside and refers to doing something because it leads to a clear result, such as a reward or praise. In a foreign language learning context, an intrinsically motivated learner

will, for example, look up an unknown foreign word simply out of curiosity and not for necessity's sake, while an extrinsically motivated student will learn a foreign language because it is a requirement of a university programme (Noels 2001). While some studies report on a positive correlation between intrinsic motivation and foreign language achievement, a particular learner's motivation is more likely to be a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford 2003).

Although attitudes and motivation are considered to be closely related and are frequently analysed together, they are two distinct variables of individual learners' differences. Attitudes play an important role in building motivation. While positive attitudes tend to increase the motivation to learn, negative attitudes have a decreasing effect on learners' motivation. Chambers (1999) defines attitudes as "a set of values which a pupil brings to the foreign language learning experience" and which are affected by the expected advantages the foreign language learning experience will bring. The learners' values are determined by different variables, such as the experience with the language and the target community, parental and peer influence and others. According to McKenzie (2010), the importance of attitudes lies in the cognitive schema which they provide, i.e. a simple structure which enables the individual to categorise and cope with an otherwise complex and ambiguous environment.

Research on attitudes towards foreign language learning and teaching

Several studies have been focused specifically on attitudes and how they relate to foreign language learning and acquisition. However, the majority of these studies have dealt with learners' attitudes. For example, McKenzie (2010) focused on students' explicit and implicit attitudes towards English language diversity. He investigated Japanese university students' perceptions of UK, US, Japanese, Chinese, Thai and Indian English speech and concluded that students demonstrated more favourable evaluations of Japanese, UK and US English speech compared to the other Asian forms of English. In the Slovene context, Žefran and Cencič (2013) studied the role of anxiety in learning a foreign language. In their survey of non-language university students' attitudes towards learning English they concluded that the majority (60.3%) of students show a high or very high anxiety level with regard to learning English.

Considerably fewer studies have dealt with teachers' or trainee teachers' attitudes to teaching or learning a foreign language. Karavas Doukas (1996), for example, examined EFL teacher's attitudes towards the communicative approach in Greek public secondary schools and developed an attitude scale to investigate teachers' attitudes. Kassabgy, Boraie, and Schmidt (2001) examined language teacher's values and goals regarding teaching along with teacher's perceptions of job and career satisfaction and rewards. The results showed that as a group, teachers emphasise the importance of intrinsic over extrinsic rewards.

One of the studies carried out with trainee teachers is reported by Gursoy's (2012) who investigated prospective EFL teachers' attitudes toward the English language in Turkey and concluded that the participants show mildly positive attitudes towards the English language and a stronger instrumental than integrative motivation. Focusing on beliefs rather than attitudes, Peacock (2001) investigated EFL trainee teachers' beliefs about learning a second language and studied the changes in their beliefs following a foreign language teaching methodology course. These studies focused on prospective specialist teachers of English. In the Slovene context, Brumen and Robnik (2008) investigated trainee language teachers and prospective pre-school teachers' attitudes towards different aspects of teaching young language learners. To the best of my knowledge, there have been no studies investigating the attitudes of primary school teachers who can choose to teach English as one of the subjects in their primary school programme towards both learning and teaching a foreign language.

Study and results

The current research aims to investigate pre-service teachers' attitudes towards learning and teaching English. It is based on the assumption that teachers' attitudes have an important effect on learners' attitudes and motivation to learn a foreign language. The participants in the research are not prospective EFL teachers but trainee primary school teachers who can choose to take an additional module for teaching English to young learners. This is an important aspect of the research for several reasons. First, given that the foreign language is not their first study choice, we may assume that pre-service generalist teachers' attitudes towards learning English are not self-evidently positive. In addition, foreign language proficiency is usually taken for granted with students studying a foreign language as a major subject at university but can be an issue for generalist teachers affecting their attitudes towards teaching a foreign language. I would like to argue that this is a particularly sensitive aspect which plays a crucial part in pre-service teachers' professional development decisions. The significance of language competence is well illustrated by the results of the study conducted by Emery (2012) in which teachers were asked to give an estimate of different qualities related to the question of what makes a good primary school English teacher. The majority of the participants listed "good language skills" as the most important quality. A third aspect is related to the participants' intentions and motivations for teaching a foreign language. The two main questions addressed in the article are therefore: What are pre-service generalist teachers' attitudes towards learning and teaching English? Are there any statistically significant correlations between the students' self-evaluated language proficiency and their attitude towards learning and teaching English?

Sample and data collection

The sample consisted of 53 first-year undergraduate students enrolled in the Primary school teaching programme of the Faculty of Education at the University of Primorska, Slovenia. The majority of the participants were aged between 18 and 20 and 87% of them were female and 13% male. They were all full-time students in the first year of their studies. In the second-year of their studies, they can opt for an additional module besides their primary school study programme which will enable them to gain an additional qualification for teaching English to young learners. The module consists of 8 courses and 60 credit units and is carried out throughout their studies as part of their optional programme. The sample studied is not meant to be representative of the population, the technique used is purposive sampling aimed at investigating specific characteristics of a homogenous group of participants (the total population of primary education students in the first year of their studies before they decide whether or not to enrol in the English for young learners' module).

Data were collected using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The students were administered a questionnaire in Slovene at the beginning (the second week) of their first year university course. The questionnaire consisted of four parts, the first part comprised an open-ended question format (What do you think is the most difficult thing in teaching a foreign language?) and a closed-ended with an open-ended contingency question (Are you planning to enrol in the English for young learners course? Why yes, Why not?). These questions were meant to elicit attributions without pre-conceived categories, thus allowing the categories to emerge from data. The second part was intended to show the level of students' proficiency in English based on their self-reported proficiency in English using the Common Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) self-evaluation grid (Council of Europe, 2000).

The third part consisted of 15 statements on a four-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree), eight statements were aimed at identifying the participants' attitudes towards learning English and seven towards teaching English. Attitudes towards learning English were assessed on the basis of the following variables: attitudes towards learning the target language, desire to learn the foreign language, language anxiety, peer influence, attitude towards the teacher, parental encouragement. Four of the items were positively worded, and four were negatively worded. The items were recoded before calculating the total score so that high scores indicated a high level of motivation. With respect to their attitudes towards teaching English, respondents were asked to compare teaching English to teaching other subjects, to rate the difficulty of teaching English, to rate the best suited teacher of English (native speaker, primary school teacher) and to what extent they can imagine themselves teaching English in the future.

Results

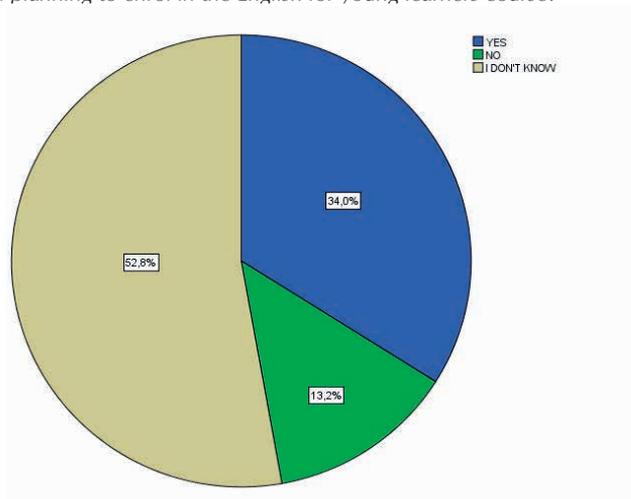
The participants were first asked to give their opinion about the most difficult thing in teaching a foreign language. As we can see from Table 1, 16 respondents (23.5%) reported that the most difficult thing was teaching tenses, followed by teaching in a way suitable for young learners (14.7%) and explaining the meaning of words and developing vocabulary (14.7%), while 9 respondents (13.2%) stated that the most difficult thing was teaching and learning grammar.

Table 1: What do you think is the most difficult thing in teaching a foreign language?

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Tenses	16	23.5%	32.0%
Grammar	9	13.2%	18.0%
Developing writing skills	4	5.9%	8.0%
Teaching in a way suitable for young learners	10	14.7%	20.0%
Developing vocabulary	10	14.7%	20.0%
Developing speaking skills	4	5.9%	8.0%
Developing reading skills	1	1.5%	2.0%
Speaking in English in front of the class	6	8.8%	12.0%
Being good enough in English to be able to teach	4	5.9%	8.0%
Teaching spelling	4	5.9%	8.0%
Total	68	100.0%	136.0%

The respondents were then asked whether they intend to enrol in the English for young learners course which is an optional module the students can choose in the second year of their studies. As we can see from Graph 1, only 34% of the respondents are planning to enrol in this course while the majority (52.8%) are indecisive about this option.

Graph 1: Are you planning to enrol in the English for young learners course?



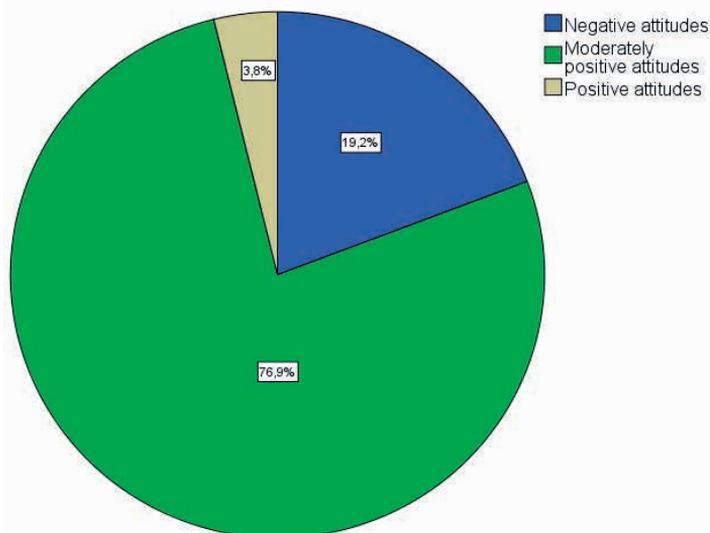
As a follow-up question the respondents were asked to give the reasons for or against choosing to enrol in the English for young learners course. As we can see from Table 2, two categories stand out; the most frequently reported reason is that they do not feel good enough in English, selected by 22.6% of the participants, followed by 18.9% of the participants who would choose the course owing to better employment opportunities after graduation.

Table 2: Are you planning to enrol in the English for young learners course? Why yes? Why not?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Better employment opportunities	10	18.9	25.6	25.6
	I haven't decided yet.	6	11.3	15.4	41.0
	English is important today.	3	5.7	7.7	48.7
	English is useful.	2	3.8	5.1	53.8
	My English is not good enough.	11	20.8	28,2	82.1
	I would like to teach young learners.	7	13.2	17.9	100.0
	Total	39	73.6	100.0	
Missing	System	14	26.4		
Total		53	100.0		

The third part of the questionnaire looked at the participants' attitudes towards learning English. As we can see from the pie chart below (Graph2), the majority of the respondents (76.9%) show moderately positive attitudes towards learning English, while a relatively high percent, almost a fifth (19.2 %) of all the students expressed negative attitudes.

Graph 2: Attitudes towards learning English



In the last part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to give their opinion about several aspects of teaching English by ranking the given statements from strongly disagree to strongly agree. As we can see from Table 3, the majority of the students (66.1%) agree that teaching English is very difficult but at the same time most of them (56.6%) do not agree that it is more difficult than teaching other subjects. With respect to the profile of the foreign language teacher, the majority (67.9%) agree that a primary school teacher is best qualified for teaching young learners although they mostly disagree (64.2%) with the statement that all primary school teachers should also be teachers of a foreign language. Next, the respondents largely (68%) agree that native speakers of English are not better English teachers than non-native speakers. 71.7% students agree that being familiar with different approaches used in language teaching is more important than English proficiency. Finally, when asked whether they can imagine themselves teaching English in the future, the majority of the respondents (71.7%) agreed or completely agreed with the statement.

Table 3: Attitudes towards teaching English for young learners

STATEMENTS	I completely disagree	I disagree	I agree	I completely agree
It is very difficult to teach English.	1 (1.9%)	17 (32.1%)	34 (64.2%)	1 (1.9%)
Teaching English is more difficult than teaching other subjects.	2 (3.8%)	29 (52.8%)	18 (34.0%)	5 (9.4%)
The best English teacher for young learners would be a primary school teacher.	4 (7.5%)	13 (24.5%)	27 (50.9%)	9 (17.0%)
The best English teachers are English native speakers.	10 (18.9%)	28 (49.1%)	12 (22.6%)	5 (9.4%)
Familiarity with different approaches to teaching English to young learners is more important than English knowledge.	3 (5.7%)	12 (22.6%)	32 (60.4%)	6 (11.3%)
I can imagine myself teaching English one day.	4 (7.5%)	11 (20.8%)	26 (49.1%)	12 (22.6%)
All primary school teachers should also be teachers of a foreign language.	9 (17.0%)	25 (47.2%)	18 (34.0%)	1 (1.9%)

Finally, the respondents' attitudes towards learning and teaching English were compared with their self-reported English language proficiency and their grades in English in secondary school and the type of their secondary school leaving examination. However, no statistically significant differences were observed between these variables.

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Discussion

This small-scale study aimed to analyse pre-service primary school teachers' attitudes in terms of three different perspectives: their attitudes towards learning and teaching a foreign language and their self-reported English proficiency. While the majority of the respondents expressed moderately positive attitudes towards learning English, it is also important to note that almost a fifth of all the students expressed negative attitudes and that a little less than a third will probably never teach English. This is especially relevant if we consider that the respondents are future primary school teachers whose attitudes towards foreign-language teaching may have a considerable impact on the attitudes of the learners.

The results of the study suggest that the teaching of foreign languages is still considered a separate subject, unlike mathematics, Slovene and other subjects taught in lower levels of primary school by a single teacher. In other words, according to the majority of the respondents primary school teachers should not also automatically be foreign-language teachers. This is also reflected in the respondents' opinion about the level of difficulty associated with teaching English. On the other hand, the majority of the teachers think that the best teacher to teach English to young learners would be a primary school teacher and that teaching English using the appropriate approaches is more important than the level of English proficiency. This does not confirm the results of the research reported by Emery (2012) which suggest that language proficiency is deemed more important than any other quality, including teaching knowledge. The perception of foreign language competence is also related to the question whether native speakers would be better English teachers. However, according to the results above, native speakers are generally not considered more competent to teach English which suggests that native-like proficiency is not a highly-valued quality. One of the explanations for this may be in the nature of teaching different subjects in lower levels of primary school, namely teachers may view the teaching of a foreign language just as any other subject taught at this level – from a generalist perspective. We may conclude that trainee teachers have diverse attitudes towards teaching a foreign language to young learners, which has important implications for the introduction of a foreign language in the first primary school cycle.

A little over a third of the respondents are planning to enrol in the English for young learners' module. The main reason for not planning to take the course is their self-reported poor English proficiency, reported by a fifth of the students, while the majority of the students who are planning to enrol in the course would do so because of better chances of getting a job when they graduate. This suggests a strong instrumental and extrinsic motivation for learning English. On the other hand, several students stated that their motivation for enrolling in the module is in the desire to teach English to young learners and that English is important and useful, which implies a more integrative orientation and intrinsic motivation.

The participants were also asked to give their opinion about the most difficult thing in teaching a foreign language. According to the results, the most difficult is learning and teaching tenses which are proverbially believed to be the hardest nut in acquiring this particular language. Aside from tenses, the respondents emphasised other language related competences, such as learning and teaching grammar, vocabulary, developing writing and speaking skills. In addition, several students expressed their concern for their insufficient English language proficiency and the fear of speaking in English in front of the class. On the other hand, only 14.7% of the students stressed the need for special approaches suitable for teaching young language learners. This suggests a strong emphasis on the linguistic aspects of teaching a foreign language, which may also be explained by the fact that the respondents are all first-year students of a primary school university programme with very little or no teaching experience.

One of the aims of the study was to establish the correlation between the trainee teachers' attitudes towards learning and teaching English and their L2 proficiency. The latter was measured using the self-evaluation grid developed within the CEFR initiative. It was assumed that respondents with a lower level of L2 proficiency would show less positive attitudes towards teaching and learning English. However, no significant correlation was found between these variables, suggesting that the actual L2 proficiency level might not play such a significant role in the attitudes towards teaching and learning English. This is in line with the conclusions of the ELLiE case studies mentioned above (Enever 2011) according to which the level of L2 proficiency does not directly relate to successful foreign language teaching. In fact, teachers who participated in the case studies and were considered successful L2 teachers with positive attitudes towards teaching English showed varying degrees of English linguistic competency. On the other hand, the lack of correlation between attitudes and L2 proficiency may partly be attributed to the small size of the sample or may bring into question the appropriateness of the self-evaluation grid as a measuring instrument in this type of research.

The limitations of this research are clear. The sample of the study is small and limited to the context of foreign language learning and teaching in Slovenia. While the nature of the research is mainly exploratory, it is also meant to shed light on the complex nature of future teachers' attitudes towards language learning and teaching and the important differences between the attitudes of pre-service specialist and generalist L2 teachers.

Conclusion

This exploratory research has raised several questions about the attitudes to learning and teaching a foreign language. First of all, it has been suggested that attitudes should be considered from the perspective of the differences between specialist and generalist language teachers. The results of the study have revealed

that and only a third of the pre-service primary education teachers would enrol in the young learners training course without hesitation. What are the implications of these results for the model of teaching English to young learners in Slovenia? It is worth noting at this point that the introduction of a foreign language as an obligatory subject in lower grades of primary school in Slovenia is still in progress which may be one of the reasons why future teachers may not consider teaching a foreign language a feasible option. Secondly, the results of the survey suggest that not all the trainee teachers have positive attitudes towards learning a foreign language. How do attitudes towards learning a foreign language translate into attitudes towards teaching it? Thirdly, attitudes are not static, they change over time and primary education teachers might change their attitudes towards teaching a foreign language through effective teacher training. A longitudinal study would shed light on this aspect. And finally, the present research is based on the premise that teachers' attitudes are a key factor influencing learners' attitudes, which in turn influence successful foreign language learning and acquisition. As suggested by several authors, further research is necessary to investigate the nature of the relationship between these key aspects of foreign language teaching.

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Stališča študentov razrednega pouka do učenja in poučevanja angleščine v otroštvu

Z uvajanjem tujega jezika kot obveznega predmeta v prvem vzgojno-izobraževalnem obdobju osnovne šole v Sloveniji se porajajo številna vprašanja in dileme. Med njimi je nedvomno vprašanje stališč različnih deležnikov do tujega jezika, za katere številni strokovnjaki ugotavljajo, da pomembno vplivajo na učinkovitost učenja in usvajanja tujega jezika. V prvem delu članka obravnavamo pomen ugotavljanja stališč do učenja in poučevanja tujega jezika. Na osnovi pregleda relevantne literature ugotavljamo, da so stališča tesno povezana z motivacijo in uspešnostjo pri tujejezikovnem pouku (Gardner 1985; Masgoret in Gardner 2003). Obenem pa številni avtorji (Ehrman et al. 2003; Noels 2001; Dörnyei 1998) poudarjajo, da gre med omenjenimi pojmi za kompleksno razmerje, ki vključuje še mnoge druge vidike, kot so osebnost, vprašanja identitete in drugi. Večina raziskav na področju stališč in motivacije do učenja tujega jezika je bila opravljena na učencih jezika, razmeroma malo pa je raziskav, ki bi se osredotočale na učitelje oziroma na bodoče učitelje. Ob tem je poudarjen pomen razlikovanja med učitelji razrednega pouka in diplomiranimi učitelji angleščine, saj smo domnevali, da se stališča teh dveh skupin bistveno razlikujejo. Zanimala

so nas torej zlasti stališča študentov razrednega pouka, ki se odločajo za dodatno usposabljanje za poučevanje angleščine.

V drugem delu članka predstavljamo rezultate preiskovalne raziskave, v kateri smo raziskali stališča študentov razrednega pouka do učenja in poučevanja angleškega jezika. Gre za študente, ki se še odločajo, ali bodo v nadaljevanju svojega študija izbrali modul, ki jim bo omogočil dodatno kvalifikacijo, in sicer kot učiteljev angleškega jezika v prvem in drugem vzgojno-izobraževalnem obdobju osnovne šole. Uporabljena sta tako kvantitativni kot kvalitativni pristop, stališča smo ugotavljali s pomočjo vprašalnika na vzorcu 53 študentov prvega letnika Pedagoške fakultete Univerze na Primorskem. Raziskava je pokazala, da so stališča večine vprašanih do učenja tujega jezika zmerno pozitivna, medtem ko 19 % študentov izkazuje negativna stališča do učenja angleščine. Poučevanje angleščine se večini študentov zdi zelo težko, vendar ne težje kot poučevanje drugih predmetov. Večina vprašanih je tudi mnenja, da je razredni učitelj najbolj primeren za zgodnje učenje angleščine, ne strinjajo se pa, da bi morali vsi učitelji razrednega pouka biti tudi učitelji tujega jezika. Čeprav je na vprašanje, ali nameravajo izbrati modul za zgodnje učenje angleščine, le tretjina vprašanih odgovorila pritrdilno, se je večina (71,7 %) strinjala ali povsem strinjala s trditvijo, da si lahko predstavljajo, da bi nekoč učili angleščino. V dodatnem vprašanju so študenti navedli razloge, zakaj bi oziroma zakaj ne bi izbrali modula za zgodnje učenje angleščine. Nekaj več kot petina vprašanih je navedla, da modula ne bi izbrali zaradi pomanjkljivega znanja jezika, medtem ko so kot glavni razlog za izbiro modula navedli boljše zaposlitvene možnosti po zaključku študija. Eden od osnovnih ciljev raziskave je bil tudi ugotoviti, ali obstaja korelacija med znanjem tujega jezika, ki smo ga ugotavljali na temelju samoocenjevalne lestvice Skupnega evropskega jezikovnega okvira, in stališči do učenja in poučevanja angleščine, vendar statistično pomembnih razlik nismo ugotovili. V zaključku so podani predlogi za nadaljnje raziskovanje, kot je uporaba longitudinalnega raziskovanja; z njim bi ugotavljali spremembe stališč študentov v izobraževalnem procesu in s tem prispevali k učinkovitemu pouku tujega jezika na zgodnji stopnji.

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