PLURILINGUISM IN TEACHERS' PROFESSIONALIZATION: VIEWS OF NEWLY QUALIFIED PEDAGOGUES OF SOCIAL WORK

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Abstract

Teachers' professionalization is promoted by language education that includes mother tongue across the curriculum, foreign languages and professional language. Aim of the research is to analyze views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization. The object of the present research is views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization. The present research involves a process of analyzing the meaning of the key concepts "professionalization", "language" and "plurilinguism". An explorative research aimed at developing hypotheses, which can be tested for generality in following studies (Mayring, 2007) has been used in the empirical study. The empirical research was carried out in the English course of the professional bachelor programme „Social pedagogue" at the University of Latvia in 2011. The newly qualified pedagogues of social work do not consider English as a foreign language and Latvian as a professional / academic language as languages of professionalization.

Key words: professionalization, plurilinguism, view of pedagogues of social work

INTRODUCTION

Construction of nation's identity is shaped and influenced by its teachers' professionalization and plurilinguism.
Professionalization and plurilinguism are inter-related: professionalization is based on the linguistic mediation. Moreover, linguistic mediation of professionalization is placed within the stable understanding of the unity of all language (Robbins, 2007). Language education that

includes mother tongue across the curriculum, foreign languages and professional language promotes teachers' professionalization.

Aim of the research is to analyze views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization.

The object of the present research is views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization.

The present research involves a process of analyzing the meaning of the key concepts "professionalization", "language" and "plurilinguism". Moreover, the study demonstrates how the key concepts are related to the idea of "view of newly qualified pedagogues of social work". The study presents how the steps of the process are related: determining professionalization in teacher education → defining plurilinguism → empirical study within a multicultural environment. Methodological background of the present research is formed by the System-Constructivist Theory. The System-Constructivist Theory introduced as New or Social Constructivism Pedagogical Theory is based on

- Parsons's system theory (Parsons, 1976) on any activity as a system,
- Luhmann's theory (Luhmann, 1988) on communication as a system,
- the theory of symbolic interactionalism (Mead, 1973) and
- the theory of subjectivism (Groeben, 1986).

System-Constructivist Theory and, consequently, System-Constructivist Approach to learning introduced by Reich (Reich, 2005) emphasize that human being's point of view depends on the subjective aspect:

- everyone has his/her own system of external and internal perspectives that is a complex open system (Ahrens, Zaščerinska, 2010) and
- experience plays the central role in the knowledge construction process (Maslo, 2007).

Therein, the subjective aspect of view of newly qualified pedagogues of social work is applicable to the present study. However, the emphasis of the System-Constructivist Theory on the subjective aspect of human being's point of view and experience that plays the central role in a construction process does not allow analyzing the views and needs of newly qualified pedagogues of social work objectively: human beings do not always realize their experience and their wants (Maslo, 2007).

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of the present contribution involves the meaning of the key concepts of "teacher professionalization", "languages in teacher professionalization" and "plurilinguism in teacher professionalization" studied.

1.1. Teacher Professionalization

First, it should be mentioned that the terms "teacher professionalization" and "teacher professional development" are used synonymously.

It allows considering the following definition of teacher professionalization: professional development in pedagogy is defined as a qualitative change taking place in the professional involving process, growth, expansion, and striving for perfection in his/her professional activity, with regard to the conditions, opportunities, and needs of society, and the situation of the profession (Kacapa, 1999).

Hence, teacher education is part of teacher professionalization and professional development as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Relationship between teacher professionalization and teacher language education

Teacher Professionalization
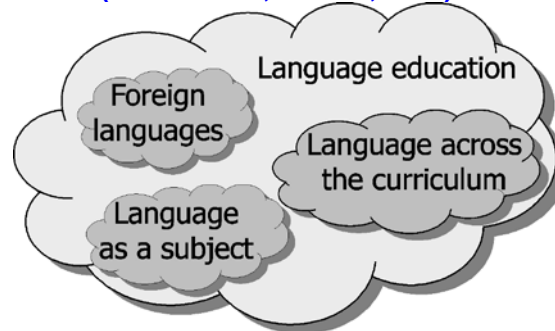
Teacher language education

1.2. Languages of Teacher Professionalization

Language has attracted a lot of research efforts. The results of research activities demonstrate diversity in terms of scientific and theoretical fundamentals as well as complexity of prevailing concepts and current practical applications.

However, many researchers agree that language plays a significant role in society: "the key to the evolution of human consciousness and society lies in the linguistic mediation of consciousness" (Lee, 1987). Hence, language and, consequently, language education is the cornerstone of teachers' professionalization.
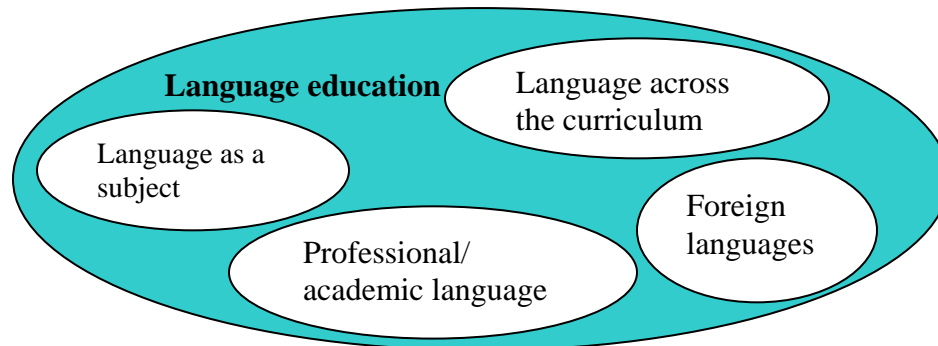
Language education or the languages of education is an overarching concept for language as a subject, language across the curriculum and foreign languages (Aase, 2006) as depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Languages of education (Zaščerinska, Ahrens, 2011)

However, the concept of language education or the languages of education is complemented by professional language (Zaščerinska, 2010) as demonstrated in Figure 3. Moreover, it should be mentioned that the terms "professional language" and "academic language" are used synonymously.

Figure 3. Complemented concept of languages of education

Hence, the concept of language education or the languages of education includes language as a language subject, language across the curriculum, foreign languages (Aase, 2006) and professional / academic language (Zaščerinska, 2010).

Professional / academic language is defined as native language for specific purposes (Zaščerinska, 2011a).

In language education the paradigm has changed from what students can do with the language (Rimšāne, 2010) to why students use the language. This paradigm shift emphasizes that language education is formed by a stable understanding of the unity of all language (Robbins, 2007) - language as a subject, language across the curriculum, foreign languages and professional / academic language. These languages are linked, united in various ways, forming a whole (Robbins, 2007).

Moreover, the paradigm change from what students can do with the language (Rimšāne, 2010) to why students use the language emphasizes the shift of focus from language to use of language.

1.3. Plurilinguism in Teacher Professionalization

Use of several languages by an individual is defined as plurilinguism (Saulescu, Saulescu, Capatan, 2009).

It should be mentioned that Chomsky made a "fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations)" (Chomsky, 1965). The finding of Chomsky implies use of terms such as language activity (Fedjukova, 1998), languaging (Garcia, 2009), language studies and use of language. However, in order to follow the European tradition of terms, the term "use of language" is further used in the present research.

Based on the complemented concept of languages of education and taking into consideration that teacher professionalization does not always comprise language as a subject, Figure 4 demostrates languages of plurilinguism in teacher professionalization within the present research.

Figure 4. Languages of plurilinguism in teacher professionalization

2. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The present part of the contribution considers the research design that includes
- o   the research purpose, question and paradigm,
- o   the sample of the present research and
- o   the research methodology.

Furthermore, feedback of newly qualified pedagogues of social work regarding their views on languages of professionalization is analyzed in the present part of the contribution.

2.1. Research Design

An explorative research aimed at developing hypotheses, which can be tested for generality in following studies (Mayring, 2007) has been used in the empirical study (Tashakkori, Teddlie, 2003; Mayring, Huber, Gurtler, 2007; Kogler, 2007).

This study is oriented towards the revealing of views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization.

The research question is: What are views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization?

It should be mentioned that in the present research view is defined as a central, organizing stance (Portelli, Vilbert, 2002). The view comprises

- vision,
- mission and
- objectives.

View in pedagogy is usually regarded as the concept of learning organization that focuses on the teaching and learning process design (Garavan, 1997; Thomas, Allen, 2006), namely, plurilinguism.

It also should be mentioned for further studies that viewing the world as a subject (learner, educators and educational managers) refers to the internal perspective whereas viewing the world from the observer's or scientist's point of view – to the external perspective (Huber, 2010).

The interpretative research paradigm which corresponds to the nature of humanistic pedagogy (Lūka, 2008) has been determined for the present empirical study. The interpretative paradigm creates an environment for the development of any individual and helps them to develop their potential (Lūka, 2008). The core of this paradigm is human experience, people's mutual everyday interaction that tends to understand the subjectivity of human experience (Lūka, 2007). The paradigm is aimed at understanding people's activity, how a certain activity is exposed in a certain environment, time, conditions, i.e., how it is exposed in a certain socio-cultural context (Lūka, 2007). Thus, the interpretative paradigm is oriented towards one's conscious activity, and it is future-oriented (Lūka, 2007). Interpretative paradigm is characterized by the researcher's practical interest in the research question (Cohen, L. Manion et.al., 2003). The researcher is the interpreter. Thus, the interpretative paradigm in the present empirical study has been underpinned both by the researcher's practical interests – views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization – and the correspondence of the social constructivism theory, symbolic interactionism theory as well as the action and activity theories to the given paradigm (Lūka, 2007).

The qualitatively oriented research allows the construction of only few cases (Mayring, 2007). Moreover, the cases themselves are not of interest, only the conclusions and transfers we can draw from this material (Mayring, 2007).

Selecting the cases for the case study comprises use of information-oriented sampling, as opposed to random sampling (Flyvbjerg, 2006). This is because an average case is often not the richest in information. In addition, it is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Random samples emphasizing representativeness will seldom be able to produce this kind of insight; it is more appropriate to select some few cases chosen for their validity.

Thus, the present empirical research was implemented in a group of part-time students who had participated in the English course of the professional bachelor programme „Social pedagogue" at the University of Latvia in 2011.

The professional bachelor programme „Social pedagogue" at the University of Latvia is delivered in Latvian. The professional bachelor programme „Social pedagogue" at the University of Latvia comprises English as a foreign language course.

The sample of the present empirical study involved four respondents. This sample of four bachelor student social pedagogues consisted of three females and one male which is a typical

representation to the proportion of female and male students in the professional bachelor programme „Social pedagogue" in Latvia. It should be mentioned that the terms "social pedagogue" and "pedagogue of social work" are used synonymously in the present research.

The age of the respondents differentiated from 20 to 40. All four bachelor students had got different working experience:
- two students were police officers,
- one student worked as a social pedagogue at school and
- one student worked as a waiter at a coffee shop.

The sample is multicultural as the respondents with different cultural backgrounds and diverse educational approaches from different parts of Latvia were chosen. That emphasizes the study of individual contribution to the revealing of views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization (Lūka, Ludborza, Maslo, 2009).

English is a foreign language for all the students in the group. The students' mother tongues considered to contribute to successful foreign language learning and become an instrument of bringing the students together more closely are as follows:
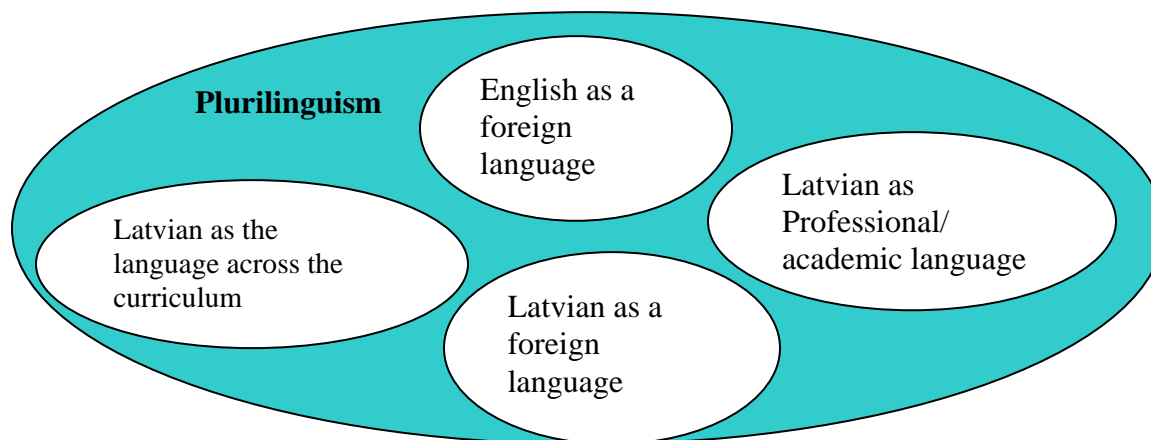- Latvian for two students and
- Russian for two students.

What seems very positive is that the students are willing to learn languages. All four students had indicated that they had participated in the *English* course in order to get experience of learning English.

Hence, the group's socio-cultural context (age, field of study and work, mother tongue) is heterogeneous.

The sample description allows defining the languages of plurilinguism of student social pedagogues at the University of Latvia as depicted in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Languages of plurilinguism of student social pedagogues at the University of Latvia

The study consisted of the following stages:
- analysis of the views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization,
- data processing, analysis and data interpretation,
- analysis of the results and
- elaboration of conclusions and hypothesis for further studies.

2.3. Survey Description
Analysis of views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization comprised non-structured interviews.

Non-structured interviews to analyze views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization included one question as following: What are languages of teacher professionalization?

Respondent 1 emphasized the importance of knowledge of Latvian language in communication with other people.

Respondent 2 implied that Latvian is significant in order to work successfully with other people in Latvia.

Respondent 3 highlighted that Latvian is important for social pedagogues in Latvia.

Respondent 4 meant that Latvian is the language of communication between a social pedagogue and people who are around.

2.3. Findings of the Research

The survey reveals that the newly qualified pedagogues of social work do not realize the possibilities of plurilinguism in teacher professionalization offered by the professional bachelor programme „Social pedagogue" at the University of Latvia.

Table 1 demonstrates the views of the newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization.

Table 1. Views of the newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization

Languages of teacher professionalization	Number of students	Percentage
Latvian as the language across the curriculum	4	100%
Latvian as a foreign language	2	50%
Latvian as professional / academic language	0	0%
English as a foreign language	0	0%

The structuring content analysis (Mayring, 2004) of the data reveals that the respondents belong to one group, namely, a group that involves Respondents 1, 2, 3 and 4 who suggest Latvian as the language across the curriculum to be the language of teacher professionalization. The structuring content analysis (Mayring, 2004) of the non-structured interviews to analyze views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization revealed that

- the views of the newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization are homogeneous,
- the newly qualified pedagogues of social work emphasize Latvian as a language across the curriculum as the language of teacher professionalization,
- the newly qualified pedagogues of social work consider themselves to continue working in Latvia,
- the newly qualified pedagogues of social work do not take into consideration possibilities to work or study outside of Latvia,
- the newly qualified pedagogues of social work put the emphasis on working rather than studying,
- the newly qualified pedagogues of social work do not consider English as a foreign language and Latvian as a professional / academic language as languages of professionalization.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the empirical research allow drawing the conclusion that the views of the newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization are homogeneous. The newly qualified pedagogues of social work emphasize Latvian as a language across the curriculum as the language of teacher professionalization. They do not consider English as a foreign language and Latvian as a professional / academic language as languages of professionalization.

Validity and reliability of the research results have been provided by involving other researchers into several stages of the conducted research.
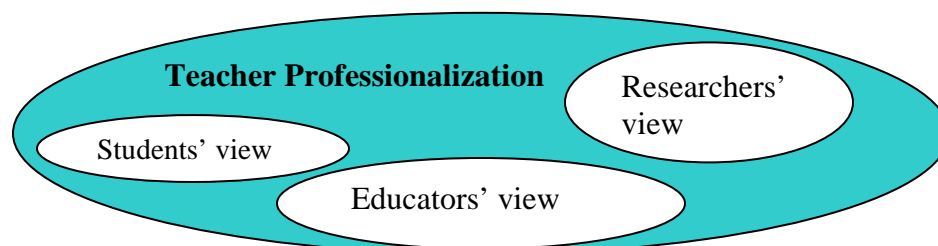
External validity has been revealed by international co-operation as following:
- presentations of the research at international conferences and
- use of individual consultations given by the Western researchers.

Therein, international researchers who took part in the international co-operation in order to analyze the views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of teacher professionalization validate the findings of the present research.

The present research has *limitations*. A limitation is the empirical study conducted by involving the newly qualified pedagogues of social work of one tertiary institution, namely, University of Latvia, Riga, Latvia. Therein, the results of the study cannot be representative for the whole tertiary area. Another limitation is use of only qualitative methods in the present empirical study to the data processing and analysis. One more limitation is that languages of professionalization in teacher education were studied paying attention to the views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work, but it was studied in isolation from the views of educators and researchers. Social nature of development (Vygotsky, 1934/1962) makes view of each partner involved in teacher professionalization as depicted in Figure 5 important (Zaščerinska, 2011b).

Figure 5. Partners involved in teacher professionalization

Thus, the findings of the research allow drawing conclusions that complete analysis of views on languages of professionalization is provided by the synergy between views of
- newly qualified pedagogues of social work,
- their educators and
- researchers.

If the results of educators' and researcher' views on languages of teacher professionalization had been available for analysis, different results could have been attained.

Nevertheless, the results of the research, namely, the complemented concept of language education, languages of plurilinguism in teacher professionalization and the explorative research design, may be used as a basis of analysis of views of the newly qualified pedagogues of social work on languages of professionalization of other tertiary institutions.

The following hypothesis for further studies is put forth: in order to increase teachers' professionalization it is necessary
- to widen teachers' views on languages of professionalization,
- to promote teachers' pluriliguism guided by
  o organizing a favourable learning environment,
  o supporting teachers' needs in languages and

o providing successful use of teachers' languages.

There is a possibility to continue the study. Analysis of views of newly qualified pedagogues of social work of other tertiary institutions is proposed for further research. Another direction of further studies includes analysis of educators' and researchers' views on languages of teacher professionalization. And a comparative research of different countries on languages of professionalization is of great research interest.

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