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IS GLOBALISATION CHANGING STUDENTS' LEARNING?

*Változnak-e az egyetemi hallgatók tanulási
szokásai a globalizáció hatására?*

This paper reports on a small scale project that aims to contribute to the ongoing debate on globalization and education. Forces of globalisation condition the context in which educators operate and it seems that it has already altered students' educational experiences. The primary aim of this research is to investigate whether learning happens in different cultural contexts in culturally distinctive ways or whether under the influence of technology and globalized approaches to pedagogy students' knowledge acquisition happens in a similar way. Three groups of English teacher education students were involved in this research. Two were located in two different European countries and one in Australia. The data for this project were gathered through daily oral feedback of students on their learning experiences and perceptions on teaching, a questionnaire, the researcher's diary notes and the students' assignments. The research revealed that the students' academic work was highly globalized. Although two of the three groups were required to function outside of their own cultural-semiotic space and produce academic work in English – which was not their native language – the student output was highly adjusted to the Anglo-Saxon academic conventions and very similar to the output of the native English speaker students. There was a high level of similarity noticeable between the two European student groups' preferences and approaches to learning and there were some not significantly marked differences in comparison to the Australian group. It seems that the geographic location at which the students gained their education and their educational experiences and the technology utilized in their learning played a more significant role in the ways they constructed the conditions for their learning and their knowledge than their ethnic and cultural background. It is justified to assume that thanks to the electronic tools and the unimpeded global flux of professional knowledge and expertise a globalized type of English as a Foreign Language teacher is becoming a reality.

Keywords: globalization, cultural differences, English language teaching methods, knowledge acquisition, interactive

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND BACKGROUND

The basic questions that prompted this research were: is globalization changing the way how students learn? Or do students from different cultures have different perceptions and preferences in relation to how they want to be taught and how they learn? An interesting sub-question emerged during the investigation which is: what shaped the students' approach to learning more significantly their educational experiences and personal beliefs about how they learn best, or the educational environment in which they gained their learning habits.

On many international conferences of academics who work in foreign language teacher education, it appeared to me that the discussion contributions of the participants were very similar. Educators from diverse countries and ethnic backgrounds quoted the same literature sources and findings in order to underpin their arguments, and it was obvious that the majority of them shared the same knowledge schemas. Most probably, in their lectures these academics convey pedagogic content knowledge to their teacher trainees by referring to the same relevant literature sources. Therefore it can be assumed that novice English language teachers gain similar pedagogic knowledge and skills in most countries. This is in line with the declared goals of the Bologna agreement that aims at unifying education all over Europe and assuring a free flux of professional expertise. However this development is not restricted to the Common European Market only, it goes far beyond its borders.

Globalization is a process that promotes 'supraterritorial' or transworld relations between people. The rapid development of technology has made it possible to overcome geographic constraints and time zones. Globalization allows people to study at home or at work, at any time that is suitable to them. It allows people from very different parts of the world to engage in the same programme - and student contacts can happen across great physical distances. There is a shift in the understanding of the role of the learners as well. Learners are not only individual agents who gain their knowledge in educational institutions, in schools, where learning is organized and guided, but also agents with the potential to learn from their own experiences and the context in which they live and work.

CULTURE AND LEARNING

Most of the literature on learning (DAVIES, 1996; HENSHALL, 1992; HOFSTEDE, 1986; MILNER, 1994) highlight the culturally situated nature of learning. For example, HOFSTEDE (1986) found that collectivist societies tend to value memorization and authoritarian teaching methods. MILNER (1994) argued that East Asian education strongly reflects the governments' interest in pre-

serving ancient traditions. As opposed to this, LEVINE, REVES and LEAVER (1996) claimed that the learners' educational background and learning habits determine their preferred ways of learning. LEVINE et al. compared the language learning behaviour of immigrants from the former Soviet Union (UDSSR) with that of Israeli learners. Some of the generalisations found in these sources sound stereotyped and require further critical investigation and verification. One of the common characteristics in these sources is that they focus on the educational context as the determining force in learners' approaches to learning. As opposed to this orientation, OXFORD (1996) suggested that national origin had the most crucial impact on the learning strategy choices of learners. Oxford contrasted Japanese students' learning behaviour with Hispanic students' learning behaviour. A large scale investigation undertaken by LIYANAGE (2004) established that Sri Lankan high school students' personality type, gender, and ethno-religious affiliations determined their learning strategy choices in learning English as a second language. As opposed to these findings, DOBRENOV-MAJOR's (2007) research on Bosnian students was more compliant with the findings of LEVINE et al. (1996). It was not the national origin or cultural background but the common educational system and context that formed the learning habits and strategies of the investigated Bosnian students, who came from three different ethnic cultures (Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim) but from the same geographic and educational background. BREEN (2001) identified student perceptions, attitudes, metacognitive knowledge and beliefs as the most significant factors in learning success.

The theoretical framework that guided this research was inspired by YEAGER, FLORIANI and GREEN (1998). This framework helped to identify students' learning behaviour in diverse cultural contexts by looking at: a) how students interpreted what was happening in the classroom; b) what roles and relationships emerged in the interactions and what their purpose was; c) how students performed tasks and recognized the value of the gained knowledge; and d) how students reflected on their learning and what they thought about the assumption that learning is culturally determined.

A range of publications (BALLARD & CLANCY, 1991b; BAUMGART & HALSE, 1999; CONNOR, 1985; HOFSTEDE, 1986; LIYANAGE, 2004; OXFORD, 1996) has shown evidence of the interrelationship between culture and learning. The investigated cultural backgrounds in these sources were mainly Hispanic, Confucian heritage background and Sri Lankan. The novelty in the here presented project is that Germanic and Slavic background students were the subjects of investigation besides a group of English native speaker students.

THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

The research focused on tertiary learners and their perceptions of their learning in three culturally distinct contexts: two western-values-based systems, one in a Western European context (called Western University henceforth) one in an Australian context (AU University in the following text) and the third in an Eastern European context (called EU University).

The two European universities have signed the Bologna Declaration and are currently in the process of reforming their programs and pedagogy. The important requirements of this Declaration are: the unification of the study structure throughout Europe (according to a 3-year bachelor and 2-year master level scheme); the introduction of productive pedagogies that encourage inquiry-based critical thinking and learning; flexibility in delivery (on-campus, web-based, intensive courses and summer schools); and quality assurance with comparable criteria and methods. The Australian university that participated in this research served as a *tertium comparationis* that had a similarly structured Bachelor program as the two European universities and students who were involved in a postgraduate English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher training program. The syllabus specifically developed for the purpose of this project met all the requirements mentioned above. Its implementation provided important information about student experiences and student reception of the same pedagogic approach in diverse cultural contexts.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

THE SETTINGS

The Western University in which the investigation took place looks back at a four centuries long history. It offers a range of challenging courses, easy student access to technology and a very well equipped library. Most of the courses at the English department are offered in English immersion mode. This implies that the majority of the courses are delivered to students in English by native speaking English lecturers or lecturers whose English is native like. The students enjoy a supportive learning environment. According to BEREITER and SCARDAMALIA (1996), such environments promote high levels of self-efficacy and self-motivation and learning is used as a primary transformative force.

The Eastern University is a significantly younger university, only half a century young. It is located in a country that was involved in the recent wars at the Balkans. For quite a long period of time, it experienced international sanctions and isolation, leading the researcher to assume that the students might have less developed technology literacy skills and difficulties in accessing the newest

literature sources. Computer literacy was relevant to this course, as the students were expected to use it for communication, research, and development of tasks and peer-teaching materials.

However, the researcher's assumption proved to be incorrect: All the students had access to the Internet and demonstrated quite advanced computer literacy skills. The library had a modest collection of linguistic literature sources in English. A few copies of the prescribed textbook were bought by the University and made available to the students during the course.

There were a range of similarities noticeable between the two European universities, despite the differences regarding the social contexts in which they functioned. These were mainly related to the structure of study programs, the hierarchical system, including the academic titles, positions, the ways in which academics and students interacted and addressed each other and the modes of assessment (consisting of extensive written exams combined with oral exams). The high level of similarity between the two universities might be explained by the fact that both institutions are geographically located on the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. This Empire had a centralized and well developed education system. Some established educational beliefs and academic habits as well as assessment procedures have probably survived many decades and are still being used at both locations.

The third university was a large, modern, technologically extremely well equipped, 40 year old Australian university that has a large proportion of international students and that is proud to be seen as one of the most multicultural universities on the continent.

PARTICIPANTS

Three groups of students participated in this project. The first group (the Western group) consisted of 14 students of whom 12 were German native-speaking students and 1 was bilingual (German and Italian) – and 1 multilingual (German Hungarian and Serbian). All these students majored in English language and literature and were in the last (fifth) year of their Arts degree. Their English proficiency was estimated as advanced to near-native--between 3+ and 4+ on the International Scale of Language Proficiency rating (ISLPR) at which 5 represents native-speaker proficiency. The near-native-speaking students had a longer in-country experience in an English speaking country.

The second group (the Eastern group) consisted of 6 Master degree students. These students completed a 4-year long combined arts and education degree and were enrolled in the first year of their Master of Arts in Linguistics studies. Four of these students had five years of intensive exposure to English in an academic

English immersion context whereas two had acquired English during their high school education and through private tuition. The majority of these students had Serbian as their native language. Among them, two students were fully bilingual with equal skills in Slovakian and Serbian. One of the students had lived in the USA for an extensive period of time. The students' English proficiency ranged from upper intermediate (3) to near-native proficiency (4+) on the ISLPR. In all three groups the students' age ranged from 24-32 years.

The third group consisted of 10 Australian students who were enrolled in a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics program. All the students were English native speakers. Three of them were already experienced foreign language teachers who worked in the local schools. One taught Japanese, and two taught Italian and German.

COURSE DESIGN

An interactive intensive course was delivered to all three groups on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. There were 24 contact hours (which is the equivalent to the contact time offered during a whole semester in the European universities – 12 weeks x 2 hours/week). Every morning there was a 90-minute interactive lecture, followed by a 90-minute workshop (guided by the researcher). The afternoon sessions were interactive student-led seminars in which the new concepts acquired in the morning sessions were discussed, cognitivized and applied. The assessment comprised two items: an oral seminar, which carried 30% of the overall mark and an analytical essay that carried 70% of the overall mark. For the second piece of assessment the students were given two months time to submit it after the completion of the intensive course. The course aimed at equally developing generic skills and content knowledge. It required active learning through inquiry, doing tasks, problem solving, and reflection on learning. The pedagogic approach implemented can be described as task-based, hermeneutic, and cognitive-affective. The students were encouraged to think aloud while utilizing their cultural and contextual knowledge and experiences for making sense of the newly learned concepts and structures and for interpreting meanings. An intensive course with six hours of linguistics daily over four days was a new experience for all the participating students. However, this mode of offering was the only possible way to fit into the semester a new course without disturbing the normal flow of the study programs. At the same time, this course was a good opportunity to enhance the universities' offerings not only in terms of the students' choices in courses and flexibility in study mode but also in terms of internationalisation of the programs.

The course was web supported. A detailed course outline, with clearly described objectives, rationale, study chart, readings, assessment tasks and criteria

and extensive lecture notes, were made available to students via the Internet prior to the course commencement. The students were required to purchase the textbook *Using functional grammar: An explorer's guide* (BUTT et al., 2000), that comprised a large range of exercises and provided models for application of the discussed theories. They were also expected to choose the topic for their interactive seminars and start with their reading and research one month prior to the beginning of the course. A Book of Readings with a range of seminar-topic-related articles provided additional readings.

DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

At the end of each day, oral feedback was sought on the students' learning experiences and approaches to learning (Researcher's diary). This reflective approach attempted to lower the students' stress and encourage them to process and cognitivize the daily input. By the end of the course a questionnaire was administered that comprised questions grouped into the following sections: students' perceptions about the course (structure, resources, design); students' perceptions about the course delivery and the pedagogic approach applied; students' preferred ways of learning; students' views on their overall learning; and students' views about the culturally determined nature of learning. Further data collection techniques included the researcher's observation notes, the students' oral feedback on their learning, and further e-mail clarifications where necessary.

The data analysis was undertaken as an ongoing activity during and after data collection. The approach to the data is best described as SILVERMAN's (2000) constant comparative method, in which tentative conclusion are derived from the data and then tested through comparison with different participants and their different situations.

RESULTS

1. WHAT HAPPENED IN THE CLASSROOM

Student expectations

Learner perceptions were central to this project. It was assumed that the three groups would enter the course with culturally determined differences in expectations. The students were asked to give responses to two different questions in relation to their expectations. The first was related to course content expectations, and the second to expectations regarding the learning experience. There were no significant differences between the groups. Generally, there were no clearly defined initial expectations, because the majority of the students had no previous experience either with Halliday's theory or with intensive courses. Ex-

peceptions are in strong interrelationship with motivation. In the Western group, two students displayed a low level of initial motivation, such as “*I’m usually not into linguistics that much*” or “*I thought that grammar won’t be much fun*”, but they enrolled in the course as it was an obligatory course within their study program just as well as in the Australian program. The Eastern group entered the course without pre-formulated expectations either. However, their motivation was generally higher than the other two groups’ motivation, as their course was offered as an elective and they chose to do it. The Australian students relied on their previous experiences with interactive lectures and looked forward to participating in discussions and group work. However they expressed their doubts that linguistics can be ‘digested’ quickly without getting bored.

Student perceptions

Learners conceptualize the conditions that they believe to be supportive of their learning or inhibitory (BREEN, 2001). According to WENDEN (1998), learners’ knowledge of how they learn best is a metacognitive knowledge that needs to be distinguished from metacognitive strategies, which regulate and guide the learners’ actual learning process. Data gained about the course design, materials, delivery and student attitudes towards intensive courses were relevant. Firstly, because it was assumed that differences in students’ perceptions about the design might reveal culture specific needs. Secondly, in the light of the increasing flexibility in the modes of course offerings and internationalization of programs, it was important to find out how students felt about their learning via an intensive course. It must be noted that for the Eastern students this was the first course evaluation that they undertook, whereas the Western and Australian students had previously gained experiences with giving feedback on courses. The following table presents the learners’ beliefs based on a normative approach that is characterized by the use of a Likert-scale questionnaire.

*Code: SA=strongly agree, A=agree, U=uncertain,
DA = disagree, SD= strongly disagree*

Questions	W University	E University	AU
The course outline clearly described the course structure, content and assessment criteria	8 SA 5 A 1 DA	2 SA 4 A	5 SA 4 S 1U
The materials, the Book of Readings, the Textbook and the Task sheets promoted learning and were useful	13 SA 1 A	6 SA	7SA 3A

The interactive lectures encouraged me to think about language structures in my own way	8 SA 6 A	3 SA 3 A	8 SA 2A
The lecturer did not deliver ready made solutions but encouraged us to figure out and research how language functions in different socio-cultural contexts	11 SA 3 A	6 SA	10 SA
The interactive seminars helped me to understand the new theoretical concepts and taught me how to apply them to texts	7 SA 7 A	4 SA 2 A	6SA 3A 1U 5SA 3A 2U
I find such intensive courses useful, as I get the big picture delivered in a short time and can study later in my own pace	3 SA 7 A 3 U 1 DA	1 SA 3 A 2 U	6 SA 4 A

Table 1. Student perceptions on the course design, materials, delivery and students' attitudes towards intensive courses

The two European groups had no previous experience with criteria based assessment whereas the Australians were familiar with this way of knowledge presentation and evaluation of learning outcomes. All the students found the materials developed for the course and the textbooks conducive to learning. For the two European student groups, interactive lectures were new: they were used to traditional lectures in which they were not required to discuss issues or share their already given knowledge. The most positive response was yielded for the research and inquiry based learning that the lectures facilitated (11 Western group students and all the 6 Eastern group students including the 10 Australians spoke favourably about it). A considerable number of the Western group students (10 out of 14) evaluated the intensive course experience positively. The Eastern group students provided 2 undecided and 4 positive answers and the Australians 6 positive, 3 uncertain and 1 negative answer. In sum, there were no significant differences in the student perceptions in relation to course design, materials, delivery approach, and mode.

2. WHAT ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS EMERGED IN THE INTERACTIONS AND WHAT THEIR PURPOSE WAS

The lecturer applied a constructivist and hermeneutic pedagogic approach that maintained an ongoing dialogue with the students. Its purpose was to establish what the students already knew and to involve them actively in the knowledge construction process. The philosophy behind this approach could be best described through HUNFELD's (1998) recommendations: a) to ask for clarification because this refines both the students' knowledge and the lecturer's knowledge; and b) to bear in mind that the opportunities for understanding are always also potential instances of non-understanding which should be avoided. As a result of this approach, the classical roles of lecturer and students disappeared. Quite frequently, the lecturer took up the role of a learner and the learners acted as learning facilitators. In other words, the joint efforts in developing the understanding of new concepts were made visible, or more accurately, "hearable", through an ongoing dialogue and thinking aloud. At the beginning of the course this appeared somewhat disturbing for two students of the Western group however they overcame it quite quickly. All the Eastern group students gave positive feedback on this approach.

In order to gather more extensive data on students' perceptions of the course and understanding of roles and relationships in the classroom, the students were required to compare the newly experienced teaching method with the one they were used to.

The Western group responses included the following:

I am not used to such extensive courses in a very brief period of time. It was very intense. I had problems to follow my "normal" courses during the week since we had to prepare the presentation. However, I did like the approach and learned a lot!

This response demonstrates that some students struggled with the amount of new information gained in a short period of time and experienced difficulties with time management. The following two excerpts highlight the students' perceptions about the dialogic nature of the teaching approach and the changed role of the lecturer and the students:

- 1. I liked it, much more discussions, no "absolute truth" solutions.*
- 2. It was more interactive than many other courses and this team work and upcoming discussions made it easier for me to understand. We used the given time optimally for a better understanding.*

Overall, the Western students felt that this course required active listening and participation, pair work, team work, peer teaching and responsibility for their own learning. The lecturer (who was also a participant observer in the re-

search) maintained a monitoring role in the learning process rather than delivering formal lectures. Consequently the course was more interactive than the other courses to which the students were previously exposed.

The Eastern group students experienced the student-led seminars as significantly different in comparison to those they were used to:

The structure of the crash course is definitely new to me. It was very demanding but also very exciting to be able to develop a completely new knowledge in such a short time. The student seminars were different in the sense that they were indeed interactive and not lecture-type presentations performed by the students, which are usually boring and difficult to follow, and the students who are listening to them are not in the position to check their understanding, or to hear someone else's opinion. This part was excellent.

Obviously, this student referred to seminars that were copies of traditional lecture models. Therefore, hearing each other's explanations and thinking processes was felt as new, unusual, learning-promoting and motivating. Another student referred to peer learning as the main difference between this intensive course and the courses they experienced prior to it:

Yes, it differs in many ways, most importantly that unlike professors on our University who use the ex-cathedra method (the lecturer talks the students take notes), in this course the lecturer insisted on peer learning and teaching.

The Eastern group's comments are highly similar to those of the Western group. Interactivity, peer learning, and reflection on thinking processes were identified as the main differences between the intensive course and the courses they completed in their regular study programs. This implied a changed role for both the students and the lecturer. The students were responsible not only for their own learning, but also for designing learning-promoting tasks for their peers. This approach gave the student-led seminars a specific weight. The designing process was seen as an additional opportunity for learning. The responses allow the assumption that the 20 European students were previously mainly exposed to traditional, monolinear, transmissional pedagogic models. Two responses (quoted below) underpinning this assumption demonstrate the impact this model had on the students' preferences in learning strategies.

One Western group student:

Although I find interactive courses useful and interesting, I still prefer to listen to lectures and study the notes.

One Eastern group student:

I am used to learn much more from lectures, books and lecture notes than from discussion and tasks. I also would claim that I normally concentrate on my own topic (presentation) and then do my paper etc. so I concentrate only on this single topic without thinking on the topics of the others.

All the Australian students gave positive responses that reflected their familiarity with interactive lectures. Student no3 claimed:

I could not sit and listen to the lecturer for 6 hours daily, this would drive me crazy. I need interaction and sharing. It is not true that always the same students speak. We all take part in the discussions.

In order to gain further data about the students' preferred ways of learning and to verify the already given information through a different questioning technique, the following statements were expected to be answered by yes or no:

Statement	% Western	Eastern group	Australian
I learn best: when I listen to lectures and take notes	64% yes 36% no	83% yes 17% no	15% yes 85% no
when I work in pairs	85% yes 15% no	50% yes 50% no	73% yes 27% no
when I work individually	64% yes 36% no	66% yes 34% no	60% yes 40% no
when I work in team	32% yes 68% no	16% yes 84% no	77% yes 23% no
when I memorize things	50% yes 50% no	66% yes 34% no	12% yes 88% no
when I do tasks and apply new concepts	85% yes 15% no	83% yes 17% no	90% yes 10% no

Table 2. Students' preferred ways of learning

The data show a clear preference in the two European groups for listening to lectures and taking notes as opposed to the Australian group that preferred learning by doing. Most of the European students preferred to carry the responsibility for their own work individually and did not feel comfortable with being responsible for the quality of group or team work and the use of socio-affective strategies. Memorization was more strongly represented in the Eastern group as a preferred cognitive strategy than in the two Western groups. This situation might be explained by two issues: the nature of the exam tasks in the Eastern University and the collectivist nature of the Eastern students' culture. HOFST-EDE (1986) claimed that collectivist cultures use memorization as a safe way of performing. In a collectivist society, the individuals are strongly linked to their "in-group" in which their individual interest is put behind the group interest. In the discussions, one of the Eastern group students expressed this clearly by stating that she studies in order to enhance not only her professional standing but also the social position of her family, and *"it is an honour for my family to have a member who is just about to gain a Master degree"* (Researcher's diary,

p. 3). Another example that points towards the collectivist nature of the Eastern society was related to the hesitance of some of the Eastern group students to give course evaluation feedback, because it could have been seen as criticizing the lecturer. In the students' culture it is most inappropriate to "criticize" a guest (or evaluate his/her work), in particular if the guest comes from a foreign country.

The majority of the students in the WU and EU group saw information gained in lectures as non-questionable and the power distance between the students and the lecturer as non-negotiable (Researcher's diary, p. 4). For this reason, a strongly interactive, hermeneutic approach, based on intense dialogues and stimuli to question and confirm ideas through research, rather than to take what the lecturer says for granted, was seen by both groups as unusual and new. As one of the students expressed it, "*there were no absolute truth solutions given*".

In general, the subdivision into collectivist versus individualist societies seems to be problematic. The student responses do not really show a clearly cut border between collectivist and individualist behaviours in the two groups, although the two countries and the students' cultures could be classified along these criteria. It seems safe to say that the two groups were actually on different levels of a transformational stage, showing characteristics of both types. The Western group showed some typical preferences of a collectivist-philosophy-based culture and vice versa: such were the preferences to be guided by lectures and lecture notes and learning through memorizing rather than learning by sharing, investigating, and researching. The Eastern group showed no fear of carrying responsibility to speak up in seminars and to share opinions with others, which pointed more towards an individualist educational behaviour. The Australian students were autonomous learners who were used to learn involving technology, inquiry and research. They displayed a high level of originality in their materials development and seminar preparation and saw their oral seminars as an opportunity to compete and outperform their peers.

In general, the data demonstrated mixed feelings in students and no clear awareness of how they learn best. The WU group and the EU group both liked the classical "ex-cathedra" lectures in which the lecturer speaks and the students take notes, but more than 80% of students appreciated also learning through doing tasks and applying theory to practice. This finding might be explained by the transitional stage in which both universities found themselves in the attempt to adjust their programs and pedagogy to the Bologna requirements.

3. HOW THE STUDENTS RECOGNIZED AND VALUED THE GAINED KNOWLEDGE

The question “What have you learned in this course?” was intended to collect a reflective account of students’ learning. The Western group identified three issues that seemed to be of high relevance to the members of the group: generic skills development; conceptual learning; and the experiences with the learning context and teaching approach.

Western group

1. A lot: how to prepare a presentation in a team; a new grammatical model; that the atmosphere in a classroom has a crucial impact on the learning process.

The response below refers more narrowly to subject matter related learning. It shows that the student became aware of his/her own responsibility in evaluating and understanding language in use and interpreting meanings.

2. I have learned a lot of new terms + definitions concerning the use of language. This was a completely different approach than the ones I knew up to now. I have also learnt that it is important to question what I and others say, because language depends so much on context. Thinking about language made me realize many things I did not know up to now.

Another response underpinned the previous statement about the relative nature of grammatical explanations and elaborated further on the enhancement of linguistic awareness as another positive outcome of the course.

*3. – I learned that there are no right and wrong answers to many points. It’s all in your own perspective.
– Dealing with different grammar systems helps you to understand and explain certain points.
– It is doable to deal with a complex grammatical system like Halliday’s for many hours in a row.*

In sum, the Western group reported on conceptual knowledge acquisition (how language is structured) but also on procedural knowledge acquisition (how language is used). The Eastern group was entirely focussed on conceptual knowledge acquisition which reveals a significantly more traditional view on knowledge and education. Below are some representative responses of the Eastern group stu-

dents. The first focuses on the pedagogic applicability of the new learning experience; the second reports on the student's changed view on grammar that cannot be detached from the context in which language is used; and the third evaluates how the new learning experience will be utilized in the student's career.

Eastern group

1. *Personally, I have only heard of Halliday's grammar, and basically everything that I heard was new to me. It gave me a whole new picture on language, one that seems to envelop human interaction and language means in so far the most effective way. It also offers a way to improve language teaching and as language teachers, this undoubtedly is a wonderful new knowledge.*
2. *I have learned to look at and analyse language in a new and refreshing way. The main strength of this theoretical model is the way it acknowledges context and incorporates it into the framework.*
3. *Given that I'm much into Russian linguistics and Russian school of Functional Grammar, I find it useful to learn more about different approaches to this subject. Also, I think that my future research will benefit from this course.*

Australian group

For the Australian group procedural knowledge acquisition was the main focus. One of the Australian students expressed his particular satisfaction with the skills gained in this course and its relevance to teaching.

Halliday's grammar is a nightmare for many teachers as they don't understand it. Education Queensland forces teachers to do teacher in-service programs in order to upgrade their knowledge. I am lucky, as I know now how to apply this model in my classroom. I don't feel the frustration any more that I felt before.

4. STUDENTS' OPINION ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN LEARNING

The last question attempted to hear the students' voice in relation to the assumption that learning is culturally determined.

Western group responses

1. *I learn best by doing things. This has not much to do with culture.*
2. *I'm not sure if learning happens culturally differently. I for my part learn best when I can apply the things I learn in practice. In this way, I can see that what I learn is useful and has a connection to reality.*

Both of these students prefer learning through doing and evaluate the value of the learned in terms of applicability to real life situations. The following responses demonstrate a psycholinguistic view on learning and point out the individual nature of learning.

3. *More than differences in culture, I think there are differences in the way people learn.*
4. *Yes, I believe in cultural differences in learning. I don't know how others function but I write my notes on the computer after the lecture to repeat what I heard, to make the whole topic clearer. I prepare for exams repeating it, maybe reading additional materials.*
5. *I basically think that learning is a very personal or individual process rather than a cultural one. I prefer learning with the help of visual tools.*
6. *I don't know if it is a cultural way or more an individualistic one. I'm a stress learner. I learn most effectively when the exam isn't far, furthermore I can remember things easier using colours etc. I'm a visual learner.*
7. *Learning happens exactly the way how you once had learned to learn (starting at primary school). But of course you can always try out different methods. One has to be flexible.*

Comment 4 points towards this respondent's interpretation of what exams are all about. According to this view, exams are obviously understood as events in which memorization and reproduction of the newly learned concepts are being assessed. This might explain the students' initial worries about the criteria-guided assessment tasks in this course. Interestingly, response 7 was the only one that referred to learning strategy training and to habit formation based on former educational experiences:

Overall, the Western group students thought that learning happens in an individual way rather than in a culturally determined way, and it implies mainly repetition and memorization. The reason for this might lie in the students' interpretation of the learning objectives and assessment types.

The opinions in the Eastern group show a variety of differences. One student believed that due to globalisation a common Anglo-Saxon based approach had emerged to teaching and learning that focuses more on procedural knowledge acquisition than conceptual knowledge acquisition.

Eastern group responses

1. *I think there used to be differences brought on mostly by teaching methods, but in this day and age of globalisation, a common method prevails. However, I don't have much experience with eastern cultures (e.g. Asia).*

One student's comment supported LEVINE's (1996) findings about the impact of educational practices on the development of students' learning approaches. This student noted that the geographic location (such as the Balkans) has some established educational practices that guide the habitual learning strategy choices of students.

2. Cultural contexts determine our entire way of being, learning included. However, the learning process also varies from person to person because of differences in mental and cognitive predispositions. Definitely, it is more frequent that in the Balkans students learn individually with an emphasis on reproduction of information. That I would say is the way I learn too, but that is not the most effective way. The easiest times were when I studied with a colleague and we could learn from each other.

To summarize, a diversity of responses emerged ranging from the belief that certain geographic areas promote and develop a particular profile of learners, and learning approaches, to those who do not see any relationship between culture and learning, or those who consider that globalization has conquered this domain of human behaviour so far that the differences have disappeared.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this project was to find out whether students of diverse cultural backgrounds learn in culturally distinct ways, or is a similar profile of intellectuals emerging throughout the globe, due to the use of similar resources and tools for learning. In other words, the project aimed at establishing whether students from culturally distinct backgrounds and culturally distinct tertiary contexts show differences in reception when exposed to the same teaching strategies and contents or whether they show culturally determined differences in the way they present acquired knowledge.

In terms of the students' course expectations, the European student responses showed no significant differences. Neither groups had previous experiences either with the course content or with intensive courses and did not really know what to expect. The Australian students showed familiarity with interactive lectures and looked forward to gaining new content knowledge and skills. Some anxiety regarding how to cope with a "whole semester stuff" in a short period of time and affective barriers towards linguistics came through in a few responses of the Western group. The Australian and the Western group enrolled in the course mainly because it was offered as a core course. The Eastern group chose to take this elective course voluntarily and displayed a higher level of initial

motivation. All three groups were satisfied with the organisation and content of the course, with the course design, materials and learning opportunities. After the first day that appeared to some of the students confusing, given the new teaching and learning approach, all the students became very involved in their learning and displayed a high level of willingness to trial new strategies, such as peer learning, peer teaching, team work, and group discussions.

The students' perceptions about the roles and relationships that emerged in the classroom were also very similar. The two European groups pointed out the extremely interactive nature of the delivery, the disappearance of the borders between the lecturer (researcher) and the learners through the hermeneutic inquiry approach, the use of technology for research and the criteria-based assessment as the main novelties. Student output produced in the classroom (the interactive seminars that were student and assessment criteria guided) promoted active participation of all students. This component of the course was particularly positively evaluated by the Eastern group students who perceived them as significantly more effective than traditional lecture-type seminars. However, in both groups there were students who claimed that the traditional approach involving listening to lectures and taking notes were their most preferred ways of learning.

The knowledge gained in this course was highly valued by all students. 72% in the Western group, 88% in the AU group and 67% in the Eastern group, were enthusiastic about the option of being exposed to a whole course in a short period of time, to complete a small oral during the course and having time to produce the 'large' assignment later.

The Western group students thought that learning does not happen in a culturally distinct way; it is rather determined by the learners' personality and educational experiences. The Eastern group voiced two divergent opinions: the first claimed that certain geographic regions develop routines and practices that guide the students' learning and performance, whereas the second claimed that there are no differences in how people learn in an academic context, given the exposure to technology and new intercultural pedagogies. The Australians expressed a language bound view on learning that can be illustrated by the statement that if you study in English you learn in the 'English way' and if you study in other languages, you adopt the learning practices of the target language ethnic group. This reflects particularly the view of those two students who spent a considerable time studying in Japan and in Japanese language. Consequently learning is seen by these respondents as a dynamic and flexible category that changes and gets adjusted to the context in which it occurs.

The students output (the interactive seminars and the written assignments) showed differences in terms of the students' effort and research, originality, and creativity. However, given that all the students were guided by the same assess-

ment criteria, the output showed no cultural differences apart from some interference problems and lexematic or grammatical errors that emerged in the work of the non-native English speaking students.

One of the limitations of this research is related to the quite small number of participants in the project which does not allow generalizations. Further research is needed to determine whether learning happens in a culturally distinct way. This small research has not found significant differences in the students' perceptions and classroom functioning when exposed to the same teaching approach and contents. It might be criticized that the groups were treated as homogeneous although in the two European groups there were two full bilinguals who belonged to a cultural context other than the mainstream (one Italian and German speaking bilingual and one Hungarian, Serbian and German speaking trilingual in the Western group, and two Slovakian and Serbian speaking bilinguals in the Eastern group). Despite this circumstance, both groups showed a high level of homogeneity, which might be explained by the fact that the bi/multilingual students were immersed for 5 years (or in the case of the Eastern group, during their whole student life) in the same education system with the mainstream groups. The shared context shaped their learning beliefs and learning strategies, and allowed them to be fully integrated and accepted members of the dominant language group. In addition, all the students studied for a long period of their academic time in English immersion programs in which native-speaker lecturers were regularly involved. It is likely that these lecturers played a cultural mediator role and introduced the students to the Anglo-Saxon academic conventions. The question of how these lecturers adjust their teaching to the local contexts could be an interesting research topic of another project.

The response to the initial question whether under globalization and internationalisation of knowledge students' ways of learning is changing is positive. Yes, it is changing and it is getting more and more similar no matter from which continent or ethnic background the learners come. Individual differences will of course further shape learning based on learner personality, aptitudes, attitudes, learning styles and strategies, but given the changing context and new technology that has found its place in knowledge development, learning is enriched and knowledge is getting more and more unified. Students are also changing from traditional conceptual knowledge developers, memorizers and receivers of information to autonomous researchers, critical problem solvers and life long learners.

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VÁLTOZNAK-E AZ EGYETEMI HALLGATÓK TANULÁSI SZOKÁSAI A GLOBALIZÁCIÓ HATÁSÁRA?

A tanulmány egy, a globalizációnak a diákok tanulási szokásaira tett hatását vizsgáló kutatás eredményeit mutatja be. A projektum kiinduló hipotézise az volt, hogy a főiskolai tanárképzés (különösen az angoltanárok képzése) világ-szerte olyannyira globalizálódott, hogy az egyetemisták úgyszólván az egész világon hasonló ismeretekre alapozva végzik tanulmányaikat, ugyanazokra az irodalmi forrásokra hivatkoznak, és tudásukat is hasonló módon prezentálják.

A vizsgálat ötlete egy nemzetközi tanárképző konferencián született, melyen a kutató meglepetten tapasztalta, hogy a vitatkozó résztvevők ugyanazokat a szerzőket idézik, hasonló érvekkel igyekeznek másokat meggyőzni állításaik igazáról, azonos kutatási beszámolókra hivatkoznak, függetlenül attól, hogy melyik országból érkeztek. A konferenciát a Fülöp-szigeteken tartották, és a 300 résztvevő hovatartozása az egész világot felölelte.

A régebbi kutatások a tanulás kulturálisan specifikus jellegzetességeit hangsúlyozták (BALLARD–CLANCY 1991b; BAUMGART–HALSE 1999; CONNOR 1985; HOFSTEDÉ 1986; LIYANAGE 2004; OXFORD 1996), sokszor olyan általánosan elterjedt sztereotípiákat fogalmazva meg, hogy az ázsiai egyetemisták

a magolást és a memorizálást részesítik előnyben az önállósággal szemben, mert ezzel elkerülik a felelősségvállalást, illetve a japánok hajlamosabbak a magolásra a spanyoloknál (OXFORD, 1996). Ide tartozik HOFSTEDE (1986) álláspontja, mely szerint a konfuciusi kultúrákból származó egyetemi hallgatók egy olyan kollektivistá társadalom tagjai, ahol nem az individuum a fontos, hanem a jó teljesítmény elérése, illetve hogy ezáltal mások szemében növeljék családjuk tekintélyét. Ezzel ellentétben a nyugati pedagógia arra törekszik, hogy önálló (autonóm gondolkodású és magatartású) tanulókat neveljen és képezzen ki, olyanokat, akik képesek kritikai hozzáállással a problémákat megoldani, miként képesek lesznek önálló munkára és folyamatos tudásfejlesztésre.

Három egyetemistacsoport vett részt a projektumi vizsgálatokban: egy nyugat-európai egyetemről származó csoport (tizennégy végzős, angoltanárnak készülő egyetemista), egy kelet-európai hallgatói csoport (hat nyelvész magisztrandusz) és egy Ausztráliából származó, az angolt anyanyelvként beszélő, tíztagú alkalmazott nyelvészeti magisztráns csoport. Tehát összesen 30 egyetemista vett részt a kutatási programban. A vizsgálatvezető mindhárom csoportban ugyanazt a tananyagot tanította, ugyanazokkal a módszerekkel: angolul, interaktív előadásokat tartva, hermeneutikai kérdéseken alapuló vitákat szorgalmazva.

Az előfeltevés az volt, hogy ha a tanulásmód már globalizálódott, nem lesznek különbségek a tudástartalom recepciójában, ellenben ha a kulturális különbségek kifejezésre jutnak, akkor még nem beszélhetünk a tanulás és az ebből származó tudás globalizációjáról. Az adatgyűjtést és a feldolgozást a következő kérdések vezették: Mi történt az előadótermekben és az előadásokon? Milyen viszonyok és kapcsolatok jöttek létre a csoporton belül, és milyen céllal? Mennyire tudatosult az egyetemistákban az elnyert tudás értéke, és mennyire különbözött ennek a bemutatási módja? Mi az egyetemisták véleménye a tanulás kulturális determináltságáról? Az adatokat a napi viták lejegyzése, a kutató naplója, a hallgatók írott feladatai és szóbeli reflexív analízisei útján gyűjtötte össze a kutató.

A két európai egyetem hallgatói számára e tanítási módszer, amely 24 óra interaktív előadás- és műhelymunka-sorozatot jelentett, meglehetősen idegennek tűnt. Az ausztrálok ilyen előadásokhoz szoktak, így komolyan részt vettek az oktatás folyamatában és a tanulási élmény kialakításában. A két európai csoport eleinte negatív hozzáállást tanúsított, és kételyeinek adott hangot, azt feltételezve, hogy hat óra előadást végighallgatni naponta Halliday funkcionális grammatikájáról fárasztó és unalmas lesz. A program úgy került összeállításra, hogy délelőttönként a tanárnak legyen egy 90 perces előadása, amit ugyancsak 90 perces műhelymunka követ az előadó vezetésével. Itt sor kerülhetett az új fogalmak megtárgyalására és csoportmunkában történő, példákon keresztüli alkalmazására. Delutánonként két-két hallgatói páros vezette a műhelymunkát, s mindkét pár kilencven percet kapott erre a feladatra. A tanfolyam 4 napig tartott,

ugyanakkor egy egész szemeszter anyaga került ismertetésre és feldolgozásra a hallgatók aktív részvételével és kutatómunkája révén. Mindez összhangban áll a Bologna által javasolt flexibilis tanításmóddal és interaktív ismeretsajátítási kognitív-affektív hermeneutikai módszerrel. Az egyetemek elismerték a tantárgyat, és a hallgatók egy kötelező tantárgynak megfelelő kreditpontértéket kaptak érte. A tudás kialakítása feladatok megoldása révén történt az egyetemisták aktív részvételével. Idejében megkapták a témákat, amelyek alapján a műhelymunkát kellett meghatározott napokon megszervezniük; volt idejük kutatni, anyagokat fejleszteni, feladatokat készíteni és bemutatni. Ez elmélyítette tudásukat, de alkalmat adott nekik arra is, hogy bevonjanak másokat a tudás kialakításának folyamatába, illetve tevékeny részvételre ösztönözzék a többieket. A műhelymunka megszervezése és kivitelezése 40%-át tette ki az osztályzatnak. Két hónappal az intenzív program befejezése után az egyetemistáknak házi dolgozatot kellett elektromos csatolmányban küldeni az előadónak, amely 60%-ot jelentett a pontszámok összességében. Ebben bizonyosságát kellett adniuk annak, hogy a funkcionális modellt képesek alkalmazni egy saját maguk választotta szövegen, és tudják, milyen pedagógiai implikációkat lehet levonni a szövegből és annak elemzéséből.

Összegezve az eredményeket elmondhatjuk, hogy a három különböző kulturális közegben ugyanaz a tananyag került előadásra, ugyanazon oktatási módszer alkalmazása mellett. A kelet- és nyugat-európai csoport eleinte idegenkedett az előadások interaktív mivoltától, mert hozzászórtak a tipikus monolineáris egyetemi előadásokhoz, ahol a tanár előadást tart, és a hallgatók jegyzetelnek. De már a második nap bekapcsolódtak a vitákba, és komolyan közreműködtek a tanulási élmény kialakításában. Sokaknak tetszett, hogy a tanár nem kínált kész megoldásokat, nem vezette a gondolkodás fonalát, és nem érvényesítette a tradicionális akadémikusi viselkedés- és megjelenésformákat. Mindhárom csoport magas szintű technikai tudással rendelkezett, és vetélkedés tárgya volt, ki tud érdekesebb anyagokat gyűjteni a műhelymunkához az interneten. Meglepő volt, hogy a kelet-európai egyetemi hallgatók jártasabbak voltak az elektronikai eszközök használatában, mint a nyugat-európai csoport tagjai. Az ausztrálok a 90-es évek óta kombinált módszerrel tanulnak (*blended learning*), ami azt jelenti, hogy valamennyi tárgy előadásait az egyetemen elektronikus verzióban is meg lehet hallgatni, és a vitafórumokon más országokban élő hallgatókkal, akik ugyanazt a tárgyat írták be, megvitatni. Mivel a feladatokat előre megszabott kritériumok alapján kellett előkészíteni, és ugyanazok voltak az osztályozási szempontok is, a három csoport munkája teljesen megegyezett. A kulturális különbségek nem jutottak kifejezésre.

Válaszolva a címben feltett kérdésre, a kutatás alapján kijelenthető, hogy a tanulási módok komoly változásokon mentek keresztül. A technológiai fejlődés

következtében a tanulás határtalanná vált. A diákok tanulási stratégiái egyéniségük milyenségétől és a tanulói magatartásuktól függő, inkább a földrajzi és edukációs kontextus hatása észlelhető, mintsem a kulturális és etnikai háttér. (Ezt bizonyítja a szerző egyik korábbi projektuma is, melyben három boszniai diák [egy szerb, egy horvát és egy muzulmán] ausztrál iskolában – etnikai hovatartozásuktól függetlenül – megegyező metakognitív stratégiák alkalmazásával és hasonló módon oldották meg feladataikat. Ugyanis így tanultak meg tanulni az elemi iskolájukban, hazájukban.) A házi dolgozatokban sem volt jelentős különbség az ausztráliai, a nyugat- és a kelet-európai csoport munkája között.

Kulcsszavak: globalizáció, kulturális különbségek, az angoltanár-képzés módszerei, a tudás elsajátítása, interaktív eljárások