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The Development of Global Citizenship Competence within Professional Public Relations Education

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Abstract. In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution aggravated by new challenges facing the humanity, there is a need to consider the significance of developing global citizenship competencies. Public discourse together with those who manage the flows of information in the globalizing world is an indicator of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of the present stage of development. Professional public relations (PR) education at the present stage is closely linked to the ESG system (environmental social governance) and the language instilled in the future specialists, as it reflects the mode of life of society at a particular moment in time. The milieu determines the way of thinking, the worldview which is reflected in the lexical units used to determine new trends and common concerns, having in their turn a reciprocal influence on the changing world view of the people of the globe. The objective of the research is to identify the structural elements of the global citizenship competence development as well as the words and phrases, revealing the major challenges of the present day international community. The methodology concentrates on the recent research of international public relations discourse of different scholars with special regard to global issues. The methods of analysis, synthesis, classification alongside philological analysis were used to contribute to the present holistic study. The results of the investigation have shown that to develop global citizenship competence within ESG paradigm PR undergraduates should concentrate on tackling the urgent issues confronting the world by means of problem discussions that raise awareness and suggest solutions to them. Certain exercises are given to identify certain verbal clusters used in the English language and beyond to become international words and phrases to be taught as part of global citizenship competence in terms of professional PR education governing the way to mass adoption of the universal language.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, ESG system, Discourse Analysis, English, Universal Language

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Развитие компетенции глобального гражданства в профессиональном образовании в области связей с общественностью

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Аннотация. В эпоху четвертой промышленной революции, усугубленной новыми вызовами, стоящими перед человечеством, возникает необходимость в рассмотрении значимости развития компетенций глобального гражданства. Коммуникация тех, кто управляет потоками информации в глобализирующемся мире, является индикатором нестабильности, неопределенности, сложности и двусмысленности современного этапа развития. Профессиональное образование в области связей с общественностью (PR) на современном этапе тесно связано с системой ESG (экологическое, социальное и корпоративное управление) и языком будущих специалистов, поскольку он отражает образ жизни общества в конкретный момент времени. Среда определяет способ мышления, мировоззрение, которое отражается в лексических единицах, используемых для обозначения новых трендов и общих проблем, оказывающих взаимное влияние на меняющееся мировоззрение людей по всему миру. Цель исследования состоит в том, чтобы выявить структурные элементы развития компетенций глобального гражданства, а также лексические ресурсы, отражающие основные вызовы современного международного сообщества. Методология сосредоточена на исследованиях международного дискурса связей с общественностью различными лингвистами с особым вниманием к глобальным проблемам. Для проведения комплексного исследования были использованы методы анализа, синтеза, классификации и филологического анализа. Результаты исследования показали, что для развития компетенций глобального гражданства в рамках парадигмы ESG студенты PR должны сосредоточиться на решении актуальных проблем, с которыми сталкивается мир, посредством обсуждений проблем, которые повышают осведомленность и предлагают решения. Определенные упражнения приведены для выявления определенных вербальных кластеров, используемых в английском языке и за его пределами, чтобы стать международными словами и фразами, которые должны преподаваться как часть компетенции глобального гражданства в контексте профессионального образования PR, определяющего путь к массовому принятию универсального языка.

Ключевые слова: эмоциональный интеллект, система ESG, дискурс анализ, английский язык, универсальный язык

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Introduction

The history of competence-based approach to L2 professional education dates back to the late 1950s and the early 1960s. American professor Noam Chomsky was the first to introduce the idea of competences as an act of language [1] to be developed

within university undergraduates, including those specialising in public relations (PR), especially relevant for the ESG system. The focus of researchers' interest was revived in 2004 with the acknowledgement of four competences (4Cs) indicated in the CEFR official documents. They included the competences of critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration.

With the time the competence-based approach to professional language education developed and two more competences were added, such as citizenship and character, to increase the total number to 6Cs [2]. The frames of the European approach extend to various fields of knowledge including public relation (PR) professional education. “The complexity of today’s global society and the accelerating rate of change require a citizenry that continuously learns, computes, thinks, creates, and innovates. That translates into a critical need to become extremely efficient in the use of the time we spend learning, since we are being required to continuously learn throughout our lives” [3].

In the globalizing world, the development of citizenship competence is regarded to be of primary importance however we consider that at this time it is necessary to develop not only citizenship, but global citizenship competence, which is induced by common threats including climate change, biodiversity extinction, coronavirus pandemic and others, which have blurred all the borderlines of different registers and functional styles of language. Ecological, social, economic, gastic, kinship, medical terminology [4; 5] gained the upper hand to be dispersed in General English, which has spread worldwide to demonstrate and reflect the situations in different parts of the planet.

From educational point of view, it has become essential to include into the curriculum the vocabulary to describe global problems to show the general concern uniting all the humanity. The aim of the study is to identify possible ways to develop global citizenship competence within professional PR education, including the study of the necessary vocabulary units as well as the acquisition of professional skills.

Literature Overview

For a start it is necessary to define the term ‘competence’, which is understood as the combination of emotional and communicative knowledge, skills, attitudes and values¹. Sometimes this combination is grouped around different trends, but the elements are interconnected and superimposed on each other. The capacities of the future PR specialists can be developed in higher institutions, professional practices and part-time projects, where undergraduates get a chance to communicate with other people of different countries, tackle the problems arising before humanity in the face of new challenges, such as the global pandemic.

One of the recent competences is that of citizenship, which is understood as duties and responsibilities of every member of human society to be implemented

¹ McCallum, E., & Coster, I. (2017). Eurydice Report: Citizenship Education at School in Europe. URL: <https://doi.org/10.2797/396908> (accessed: 10.06.2024)

in their every day and professional activities. The citizenship competence deals with the values of every nation and culture individually that separates the peoples but makes them responsible for their actions [6–8]. European educators insist on the necessity to start citizenship competence development at schools for pupils to become responsible, emphatic, caring citizens of the world [9]. Citizenship competence for public relations undergraduates allows them to commit to harmonious coexistence with the people of the world, to take an active part in spreading the plurality of values and beliefs in the community of the planet within the professional discourse [10; 11].

As a result of the carried out research it was established that citizenship competence includes such types as the competence of knowledge, emotional competence, cognitive competence, communicative competence and integrative competence², ³. It should be noted, however, sometimes the competence of communication and collaboration are singled out as self-standing ones [7]. Other scholars consider them to be an integral part of global competence.

The competences developed within PR undergraduates should prepare them to be not only responsible citizens of their countries, but responsible citizens of the whole world. When we discuss public relations activity on the world stage we are to introduce the citizenship competence with regard to the global interests of humanity.

In this context we proceed to discuss global competence, which presupposes the ‘capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development’ [12]. Global competence is associated with skills, values and behaviours [4; 13] preparing PR undergraduates to prosper in the rapidly changing and unified world. “A culturally competent global citizen” [14] is not born but becomes by way of teaching to be so, which can be achieved by specialized training [15–18].

The development of global citizenship competence is the way to bring up responsible citizens of our planet. One of the tasks of a global citizen deals with taking care of the biodiversity of the planet and its environmental protection which is part of the planetary culture which is closely connected with cultural competence and emotional intelligence. Only caring, emotionally sensitive people with high personal culture, emotionally sensitive can cope with the tasks facing them. The behavioural etiquette of global citizenship is determined by the ideas and emotions. Emotions help to perceive the knowledge of the most urgent problems of the day.

To introduce global citizen competence to be developed within future PR specialists, it is necessary to instill all the knowledge, skills and attitudes

² Ministry of National Education. (2017). Basic standards of citizenship competences: Forming for citizenship Yes it is possible! Series Guides No. 6. URL: <https://warbletoncouncil.org/competencias-ciudadanas-5328> (accessed 12.07.2024).

³ Citizen competences. (2017). *Presentation of the Ministry of National Education*. URL: [Es. slideshare.net.](https://www.slideshare.net/) (accessed 02.28.2017).

to prepare them to thrive in the future professional life. Global citizenship competence is important for implementation of international practices of PR communication, as it has been vividly illustrated by the spread of communicable diseases throughout world, which have been of truly global character and a threat to human existence. Such issues of global concern make PR undergraduates be globally competent concerning diverse global forces, events, conditions and problems.

Global PR practice is connected with interaction of the people of different countries speaking different languages and belonging to different cultures. This process however is also characterized as communication in the English language with certain regards to cultural and ethnic differences. Some scholars call it international competence, that becomes most relevant for public relations undergraduates who will work within the system of the new world order in the ESG paradigm. Biodiversity preservation, climate change, environmental protection, energy security, healthcare issues have become not only economic, ecological, social or medical phenomena to strike the humanity, but the intercultural phenomena which were actualized and fully realized by intercultural communication, especially at the vocabulary level. Global citizenship competences can be developed by means of special language acquisition which will shape and develop a new worldview and new attitudes to the global processes.

Methodology

Methodology plays an important role in traditional research in general and in research of PR discourse concerning ecological social governance in particular. Theoretical works focus on various approaches concerning the development of L2 PR undergraduates' competences. The methods of questionnaire, analysis, synthesis, classification alongside philological analysis were used to study major challenges as well as common words and phrases that contribute to the dissolution of terminological borderlines and unification of languages to create global worldview, which influences attitudes, values and behaviours of the competent future PR specialists.

The authors put out the following hypothesis: Global citizenship competence can and should be developed within PR undergraduates, assisting them to be successful specialists in the globalized world with regard to the ESG system.

Participants of the survey:

The research has been carried out within PR undergraduates at the Lomonosov Moscow State university to assess global challenges facing humanity at present. A questionnaire was disseminated among the students of the 1st and 2nd years of education, which amounted to 72 respondents (aged 17–20).

Materials or Measures:

The method of original questionnaire as well as classification and generalization of the results were used to help visualizing the outcome. The authors have also produced visual graphs to illustrate the results of the surveys.

Procedure:

A questionnaire was disseminated among the groups by means of Internet, the results were collected and analysed by the authors. The respondents were asked about the most urgent problems of today facing the humanity. An analysis of the answers allowed the authors to draw certain conclusions. The novelty deals with the development of the global citizenship competence on the basis of the global problems and special lexics entailed in its recognition. The authors also analyse the topics chosen by PR undergraduates for round table discussions as well as suggest certain exercises to be implemented for in-class topic discussions and professional vocabulary acquisition.

Results and Discussion **Identifying major challenges for humanity** **for global citizenship competence**

The most important characteristics of the present day are the ideas of digitalisation and globalisation. Digital technologies are being implemented into the system of higher professional education worldwide. New developments of human scientific thought including high speed internet, high capacity digital computer and mobile technologies, Internet instruments, social networks, cloud storages, blogging and wiki services — all have already become new realities of the present day life, business and education. The advances in technology can be used not only for education but for the professional orientation and performance in the chosen field of activity. In the new world of digital globalization there arises the demand for the global citizenship competence to be instilled in the future PR specialist, digital literacy being part of it. The necessary global values, skills, attitudes are expressed by means of language, which reflect the situation of the world. Mankind is destined to live in ‘new normal’, radically different world [19], which is to be discussed, realized and accepted.

Special attention has been paid to investigating how PR undergraduates at the Lomonosov Moscow State university assess global challenges facing humanity at present. A questionnaire was disseminated among PR undergraduates, who were supposed to suggest most urgent issues confronting the wellbeing of the humanity per se.

The answers of the undergraduates can be classified to fit the following categories:

- Biodiversity preservation;
- Environmental protection;
- Climate change;
- Energy security and the renewables;
- The quality of life;
- High tech technologies and AI (artificial intelligence);
- Healthcare and the fight against communicable diseases;
- Human rights advocacy;
- Equality of the people of the planet;
- Space exploration.

When asked to identify the most urgent and relevant issues among those listed above, PR undergraduates of the first and the second years of education (72 in total) gave the following answers — see Picture 1.

The major issues concerning humanity in the opinion of PR undergraduates

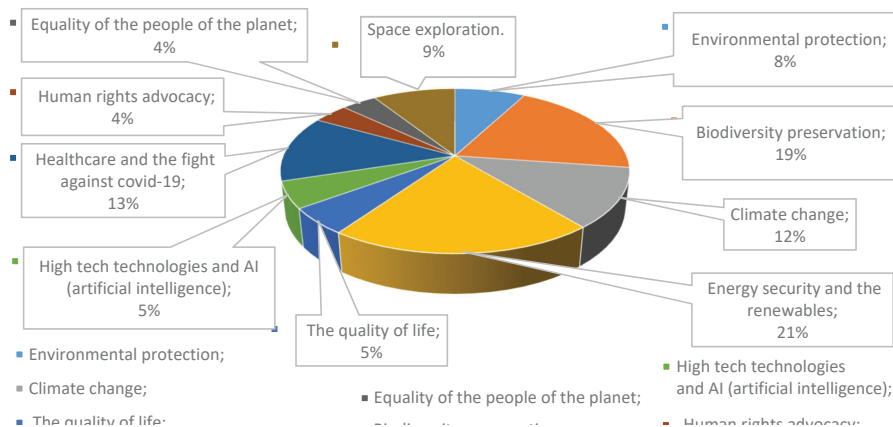


Figure 1. A chart showing the percentage distribution of most urgent issue for the present day humanity in view of PR undergraduates

Source: compiled by Alla P. Minyar-Beloroucheva, Polina I. Sergienko, Natalia Yu. Nelyubova

Picture 1 represents a pie chart showing the attitude of PR undergraduates towards the most important issues of today. When asked to grade the most important ones, they gave the following answers. The majority of PR undergraduates (21 %) consider energy security and renewable sources of energy to be of primary concern. The second important issue is biodiversity preservation (19%), followed by healthcare and the fight against communicable diseases (13 %). The issue of space exploration (9 %) goes hand in hand with climate change (12 %) and environmental protection (8 %) and is followed by high tech technologies and AI (5 %), as well as the quality of life (5%). The final topic to raise public concern in the opinion given during the questionnaire is equality of the people of the planet and human right advocacy — 4 % each.

The results represented in the pie chart can be explained by the environmental concern of the present day and major challenges facing humanity. Moreover, new sources of energy as well as the issue of biodiversity preservation and the quality of life are inseparably connected with the environmental issues, that drive the most popular PR campaigns [20]. The raised awareness of the challenges and problems of the global society contributes to the formation of the future PR experts and instills the competence of global citizenship.

Global citizenship development through professional discussions and digital literacy

Another way to develop global citizenship competence is to discuss the major issues of the present day with PR undergraduates in groups in the form of panel discussions, professional conferences and round tables. These professional discussions

held in the English language (*lingua franca*) including terminological units, specialized phrases, expressions of challenges, possible solutions and attitudes — all secure the paramount comprehension of the importance of the major concerns of humanity as well as stimulates ways of their resolution. The awareness of the global issues is an essential part of the competence development. Moreover, PR undergraduates should also develop digital competences to secure universal command of the new technologies applied in the profession and education, including online zoom sessions and life broadcasting.

Due to the recent pandemic when the lockdown was imposed globally people started to communicate through the internet more intensely, which became a great impetus for the development of digital instruments, thus making globalization digital. Digital globalization in the twenty-first century is fostered by digital technologies and characterized by accelerating and increasing flows of data and information. In the process of digitalization of the economies, global data flows are surging and digital platforms allow more countries and smaller enterprises to participate [21].

For PR undergraduates digital globalization is of primary importance, as it helps business companies find new clients by coming into new markets and expand its influence among competitors. Besides business issues, PR experts have to cope with ESG problems (environmental and social governance). Scholars note, that developing collaboration on the international level facilitated by social media and multimodal platforms makes coordination and cooperation on the global level possible, thus justifying the development of the corresponding competences in PR classes.

Digital literacy is required as an indispensable instrument in discussing vital issues of universal concern, be it measures to fight the pandemic, or biodiversity preservation. For the academic purposes to practice professional discussions various internet platforms can be used, including skype, zoom, webex. Internet breaks the traditional borderlines, inviting its users worldwide to discuss the urgent issues of today. The example topics suggested by PR undergraduates to discuss the subject ‘The Quality of Life’ during a series of round tables, held at Lomonosov Moscow State university in September 2021 include the following:

- Urgent actions to protect and restore and protect biodiversity for a thriving life on the planet;
- Ecological problems of my city and ways of their solution;
- The relation between the quality of work and the quality of life;
- Attitudes toward ethical issues of genetic testing through the prism of time;
- Is climate change in the Arctic a myth or a reality?
- Digital literacy in the modern world and the life quality;
- Green Economy: the production of pure energy;
- Effects of climate change on human well-being;
- The communicable diseases and their impact on the process and quality of education in Russia and abroad;
- Acute struggle of young Africans for their jobs and education during the recent pandemic;

- The North-South problem: an analysis of the economic situation of developing countries.

The method of classification allows to group all the topics given prominence during students' round tables discussions into the following categories:

- Green economy;
- Environmental protection and biodiversity preservation;
- The level of education in the world;
- communicable diseases consequences;
- Digital literacy;
- Healthcare aspects

When calculating the amount of topics (72 in total) devoted to one of the issues we get the following results — See Table.

Topics discussed during round table series

Topics suggested by PR undergraduates	Amount of talks given
Green economy	15
Environmental protection and biodiversity preservation	14
The level of education in the world	12
communicable diseases consequences	12
Digital literacy	11
Healthcare aspects	9

Source: compiled by Alla P. Minyar-Beloroucheva, Polina I. Sergienko, Natalia Yu. Nelyubova

Table shows that the major concern of PR undergraduates is focused on the green economy and the environmental protection with special regard to biodiversity, as the planet and the living conditions are the most important aspects of the present day.

As it has been demonstrated earlier, “the real life-like experience educational games within the leaner-oriented approach can be described as a favorable factor of L2 acquisition. It facilitates this process of learning because besides pleasure, i.e. the esthetic interest, a game makes the PR undergraduates be engaged in active learning when they use the grammar constructions or the vocabulary naturally and unconsciously” [22]. Moreover, professional real-life discussions, including those held online, contribute to the development of the global citizenship competence, which is important for the present study.

L2 exercises for global citizenship competence development

Global citizenship competence should be developed not only by means of internet group discussions and conferences, but by special exercises, what should be introduced into the PR educational process to bring to heart the importance and responsibility of the global citizens. It becomes especially relevant today at the time of the pandemic and the threat to people's health. The present day witnesses the dynamic development

of lexical units in all strata of the English language. The unprecedented time of the pandemic threat has entailed changes of active vocabulary of common speakers and a shift of language registers. Within a short period lasting several weeks, the changes that occurred in the English language are comparable to a revolutionary upheaval caused by communicable diseases. The mass spread of the coronavirus disease influenced the consciousness and the way of thinking, giving rise to a new form of thinking and its linguistic realization. The virus in question is not only the medical challenge, but a psychological and linguistic phenomenon which influences the people's communication, Mass Media, public relations and creative activities. PR undergraduates should reveal their global citizenship competence in dealing with the issue of healthcare, primarily on the level of vocabulary knowledge. Professional lexical units acquisition is usually achieved by memorizing techniques and can be facilitated by exercises developing vocabulary and instilling confidence in the future PR experts, when discussed in class or in the professional areas.

Let us consider the following exercises aimed at enriching professional vocabulary of PR undergraduates basing on the text, describing pandemic and biodiversity issues, found at the WWF website:

“Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in millions of years. The way we produce and consume food and energy, and the blatant disregard for the environment entrenched in our current economic model, has pushed the natural world to its limits. Communicable diseases manifest our broken relationship with nature. It has highlighted the deep interconnection between nature, human health and well-being, and how unprecedented biodiversity loss threatens the health of both people and the planet” [23].

- *Exercise 1: Write out terminological units from the texts. Classify them. Substantiate your criteria.*
- *Exercise 2: Write out the definitions for several terms from the text.*
- *Exercise 3. Write an essay using the words from the text. Discuss it with your fellow students.*

The suggested exercises can be used to practice professional discussions in L2 PR classes to enrich the vocabulary awareness as well as contribute to the development of the assigned competences. It should be pointed out that emotional intelligence plays a big role in developing competences of global citizenship, as emotions and empathy help people assess the situation, critically perceive the information and undertake the required actions to take care of the planet within the ESG system. In general, a special point should be made on the necessity to inform PR undergraduates about the danger and consequences of contagious communicable diseases, the urgency of biodiversity preservation, the current pursuit of the green economy and sustainable development and other issues among current global concern. Such words and phrases can be of help: *independent conservation organizations, the mission to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment, to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, to conserve the world's biological diversity, the use of renewable natural*

resources, sustainable development, to promote the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption, an international conservation charity, to work to create a world where wildlife thrives, a global impact on environment, global analysis of biodiversity, humankind functions in ecosystems, global plant diversity, to overcome the threat to plants presented by climate change, the deepest global disruption and health crisis of a lifetime. The acquired words and phrases during L2 classes help PR undergraduates navigate in the array of problems, raise awareness, shape attitudes and promotes future solutions. It should be said, that nowadays “Humanity’s increasing destruction of nature is having catastrophic impacts not only on wildlife population but also on human health and all aspects of our lives” [23]. Biodiversity is of primary importance at present. The preservation of biodiversity should be carried out within the frame of environmental protection. The notion of global citizenship competence in reference to biodiversity preservation problems is expressed in language and by language. Among the components comprising emotional intelligence are such as self-awareness, social skills, empathy, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and empathy.

Conclusions

The conducted analysis has shown, that in the times of the Fourth Industrial Revolution the development of global citizenship competence is regarded essential, as it allows future PR experts to deal with common global threats and challenges facing the humanity including climate change, biodiversity extinction, coronavirus pandemic and other issues. Drawing up the line, global citizenship competence exists together with the emotional intelligence, as only those PR undergraduates who can feel sympathy and empathy can respond to the challenges and take care of the whole humanity. With the developed global citizenship competence, alongside other six competences, including communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, character and citizenship, PR undergraduates become the vanguard of the global citizens’ group to implement novel ideas into real life. As is known, the change in society and everything connected with it, especially the way of thinking and the mode of life are hard to bring about, as it is difficult to make people think in a different way. PR undergraduates are educated to hold conferences and meetings to persuade the public of the necessity of change to solve the vital issues of the present. The ESG goal of PR undergraduates should deal with the synthesis of knowledge and skills to form a mindset to extract useful information and spread it throughout the world acting in line with environmental and social governance.

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