

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AS A PROFESSIONAL SKILL TO PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS

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Abstract. This article explores the importance of teaching global citizenship as a professional skill to pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. In the context of globalization and increasing intercultural communication, future EFL teachers are expected not only to possess linguistic competence but also to demonstrate awareness of global issues, cultural diversity, and social responsibility. The study analyzes theoretical frameworks related to global citizenship education and its integration into teacher training programs. It highlights the role of global competence in fostering critical thinking, intercultural communicative competence, and ethical responsibility among future educators. The paper also examines current practices and challenges in incorporating global citizenship into EFL teacher education, particularly within developing educational systems. The findings suggest that embedding global citizenship education into pre-service teacher training enhances professional readiness and prepares teachers to meet the demands of modern, globally interconnected classrooms.

Keywords: global citizenship, EFL teachers, pre-service education, intercultural competence, professional skills, globalization, teacher training.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola ingliz tili xorijiy til (EFL) bo'yicha bo'lajak o'qituvchilarga global fuqarolikni kasbiy ko'nikma sifatida o'qitishning ahamiyatini o'rganadi. Globallashuv va madaniyatlararo muloqotning kuchayib borayotgan sharoitida kelajakdagi EFL o'qituvchilari nafaqat til kompetensiyasiga ega bo'lishi, balki global muammolar, madaniy xilma-xillik va ijtimoiy mas'uliyatga ham yetarli darajada ongli yondashishi talab etiladi. Tadqiqot global fuqarolik ta'limiga oid nazariy yondashuvlarni hamda uning o'qituvchilarni tayyorlash dasturlariga integratsiyasini tahlil qiladi.

Maqolada global kompetensiyaning bo'lajak o'qituvchilarda tanqidiy fikrlash, madaniyatlararo kommunikativ kompetensiya va axloqiy mas'uliyatni rivojlantirishdagi o'rni yoritiladi. Shuningdek, maqola EFL o'qituvchilarini tayyorlash jarayonida global fuqarolikni joriy etish bo'yicha mavjud amaliyotlar va muammolarni, ayniqsa rivojlanayotgan ta'lim tizimlari kontekstida tahlil qiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, global fuqarolik ta'limini bo'lajak o'qituvchilar tayyorlash dasturlariga integratsiya qilish ularning kasbiy tayyorgarligini oshiradi hamda zamonaviy, global o'zaro bog'langan ta'lim muhitida samarali faoliyat yuritishga tayyorlaydi.

Kalit so'zlar: Global fuqarolik, ingliz tili xorijiy til (EFL) o'qituvchilari, bo'lajak o'qituvchilarni tayyorlash, madaniyatlararo kompetensiya, kasbiy ko'nikmalar, globallashuv, o'qituvchilarni tayyorlash.

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена изучению важности преподавания глобального гражданства как профессионального навыка для будущих учителей английского языка как иностранного (EFL). В условиях глобализации и усиления межкультурной коммуникации от будущих преподавателей EFL требуется не только владение языковой компетенцией, но и осознание глобальных проблем, культурного разнообразия и социальной ответственности. В исследовании анализируются теоретические подходы к образованию в области глобального гражданства и его интеграции в программы подготовки учителей.

В статье рассматривается роль глобальной компетентности в развитии критического мышления, межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции и этической ответственности у будущих педагогов. Также анализируются современные практики и проблемы внедрения глобального гражданства в подготовку учителей EFL, особенно в условиях развивающихся образовательных систем. Результаты исследования показывают, что интеграция образования в области глобального гражданства в программы подготовки будущих учителей повышает их профессиональную готовность и способствует эффективной работе в современном глобально взаимосвязанном образовательном пространстве.

Ключевые слова: Глобальное гражданство, преподаватели английского языка как иностранного (EFL), подготовка будущих учителей, межкультурная компетенция, профессиональные навыки, глобализация, подготовка учителей.

Introduction. In the conditions of accelerating globalization, the role of education is no longer confined to the transmission of subject knowledge or the development of basic skills. Rather, contemporary education systems are increasingly expected to prepare individuals who are capable of functioning effectively in a complex, interconnected, and culturally diverse world. Within this broader transformation, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) occupies a particularly important position, as English continues to serve as a primary medium of international communication in academic, professional, and social contexts. For this reason, the professional preparation of future EFL teachers requires a reconsideration of its priorities, moving beyond linguistic competence toward the development of global and intercultural capacities.

One of the concepts that has gained noticeable attention in this regard is global citizenship education. It is generally understood as an educational approach aimed at fostering learners' awareness of global issues, sensitivity to cultural diversity, and readiness to participate responsibly in social life at both local and international levels. While the conceptual foundations of global citizenship have been widely discussed in international research, its practical integration into teacher education—especially in the context of pre-service EFL training—remains uneven and, in some cases, superficial.

Available international data suggest that the inclusion of global competence in national education frameworks has increased over the past decade; however, this formal recognition does not necessarily translate into effective classroom practice. In many education systems, including those undergoing rapid reform, teaching is still largely oriented toward standardized assessment outcomes, which tends to limit opportunities for developing higher-order thinking skills, intercultural awareness, and critical reflection. As a result, teachers often acknowledge the importance of global perspectives but lack clear methodological guidance on how to incorporate them into everyday instruction.

This situation can also be observed, to a certain extent, in the sphere of EFL education. On the one hand, language classrooms naturally provide opportunities for engaging with different cultures, viewpoints, and communicative practices. On the other hand, these opportunities are not always systematically utilized. Empirical observations and regional studies indicate that many EFL teachers rely predominantly on textbook-driven instruction, where cultural content is presented in a limited or descriptive manner, rather than being used as a basis for discussion, comparison, and critical analysis. Consequently, the potential of EFL education as a platform for developing global citizenship competencies remains underexploited.

In the case of Uzbekistan, ongoing educational reforms have led to significant progress in expanding access to education and modernizing institutional structures.

Statistical indicators demonstrate notable improvements in areas such as preschool enrolment and overall participation in formal education. At the same time, these quantitative achievements have not always been accompanied by equivalent qualitative changes in teacher preparation. In particular, pre-service training programs for EFL teachers continue to emphasize language proficiency and methodological fundamentals, while the development of global awareness, intercultural competence, and socially responsible attitudes tends to receive comparatively limited attention.

Moreover, there appears to be a lack of coherence in how global citizenship is conceptualized and implemented within teacher education curricula. In many instances, it is either addressed implicitly or treated as an auxiliary topic, rather than being recognized as an integral professional competency. This creates a certain mismatch between the expectations placed on modern teachers—who are increasingly required to foster globally competent learners—and the actual preparation they receive during their training.

Given these considerations, it becomes evident that the issue is not merely the inclusion of new content, but the rethinking of the overall approach to teacher education. The integration of global citizenship as a professional skill for pre-service EFL teachers requires a more systematic and context-sensitive strategy, one that takes into account both international educational trends and local realities. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the importance of teaching global citizenship within pre-service EFL programs, with particular attention to existing gaps, practical challenges, and potential directions for improvement.

Literature review and methods. The concept of global citizenship education (GCE) has been extensively examined in international pedagogical research over the past two decades, particularly in relation to language education and teacher training. A growing body of literature suggests that EFL classrooms represent a uniquely suitable environment for fostering global citizenship competencies, given their inherent engagement with language, culture, and communication.

One of the early comprehensive empirical contributions to this field is the PhD dissertation of Sihem Salem, conducted at the University of York. The study explored the perceptions of university teachers and students regarding the integration of global citizenship into EFL classrooms. The findings revealed that although both teachers and learners recognize the importance of global issues such as climate change, inequality, and social justice, their incorporation into classroom practice remains inconsistent and largely dependent on individual teacher initiative. Moreover, the study emphasizes that previous research has often lacked a clear theoretical distinction between different models of global citizenship (e.g., “soft” vs. “critical” approaches), which limits the depth of pedagogical application. Recent international studies further expand this discussion by focusing on the professional development of pre-service teachers. For example, a case study conducted by Işıl Günseli Kaçar examined how project-based digital tools (such as WebQuests) can

enhance pre-service EFL teachers' ability to integrate global citizenship into their teaching. The results indicate that structured, practice-oriented training significantly improves teachers' pedagogical and intercultural competencies, particularly in designing inclusive and globally oriented learning tasks. However, the study also highlights that without systematic curriculum integration, such improvements tend to remain isolated rather than becoming a stable component of professional competence.

A broader, cross-national perspective is provided in a recent study published in *Applied Linguistics*, where researchers analyzed the relationship between English language education and global citizenship in several Global South countries. The study, based on 126 interviews across multiple higher education institutions, demonstrates that English serves as both a tool for global access and a source of tension, as it may simultaneously promote global awareness while marginalizing local identities. This duality suggests that global citizenship education in EFL contexts should not be limited to functional communication skills but must also include critical and reflective dimensions.

In Central Asian contexts, including Kazakhstan, empirical studies show similar patterns. Research conducted by Elmira Gerfanova and colleagues indicates that although teachers conceptually support the idea of intercultural and global citizenship education, their practical understanding remains fragmented. Many participants associated global citizenship primarily with cultural knowledge, while fewer demonstrated awareness of its civic and critical components. This suggests a gap between theoretical awareness and pedagogical implementation, particularly in post-Soviet educational environments.

Turning to the Uzbek context, recent scholarly works also highlight both progress and limitations in integrating global citizenship into EFL education. For instance, research by Farangiz Abdullaeva emphasizes that incorporating global citizenship themes into the EFL curriculum can significantly enhance students' cultural awareness, social responsibility, and motivation to learn English. However, the study notes that such integration is often limited to theoretical recommendations and lacks practical methodological frameworks for teachers. Similarly, a study conducted by Muxtasaxon Ibrohimova argues that English language teaching can serve as an effective platform for promoting global awareness and critical thinking. The author demonstrates that when global issues such as sustainability, human rights, and diversity are incorporated into language instruction, students develop not only communicative competence but also a broader sense of responsibility as global citizens. Nevertheless, the research also points out that the implementation of such approaches depends heavily on teacher readiness and institutional support, which are not always sufficient.

Another Uzbek-based study by Sevinch Rustamova confirms these findings, emphasizing that global citizenship education enhances learners' motivation, intercultural sensitivity, and communicative competence. At the same time, the study identifies several

challenges, including limited instructional resources, lack of teacher training, and insufficient alignment between curriculum standards and global competencies.

Overall, the analysis of both international and Uzbek research reveals several consistent trends. First, there is a broad consensus on the importance of integrating global citizenship education into EFL teaching, particularly in the preparation of future teachers. Second, despite this recognition, practical implementation remains limited due to methodological, institutional, and conceptual challenges. Third, existing research increasingly emphasizes the need for a shift from knowledge-based approaches toward competence-based models that integrate critical thinking, intercultural communication, and ethical responsibility.

At the same time, a noticeable gap remains in the literature concerning the systematic development of global citizenship as a professional skill specifically for pre-service EFL teachers. While many studies address either global citizenship or language teaching separately, fewer works provide an integrated framework that connects these domains within teacher education programs. This gap is particularly evident in the context of Uzbekistan, where empirical, large-scale, and practice-oriented research on this issue is still emerging.

This study was designed within a mixed-methods framework in order to capture the multifaceted nature of global citizenship as a professional skill among pre-service EFL teachers. Given that global citizenship encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions, relying solely on quantitative or qualitative data would not have provided a sufficiently comprehensive picture. Therefore, the integration of both approaches allowed for a more nuanced interpretation of the research problem.

The empirical part of the study was carried out during the 2024–2025 academic year at two higher education institutions in Uzbekistan specializing in foreign language teacher education. The focus was placed on third- and fourth-year undergraduate students, as this stage of training is typically associated with the transition from theoretical learning to practical teaching experience. In total, 128 pre-service EFL teachers participated in the survey phase, representing a diverse range of academic achievement levels and teaching practice exposure. In order to deepen the analysis, a smaller group of 18 students was selected for follow-up interviews based on purposive sampling principles, ensuring variation in their responses and engagement with global issues. Additionally, 6 university instructors were involved to provide insights from a pedagogical and institutional perspective.

Data collection was carried out through a combination of questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews, and limited classroom observations. The questionnaire was specifically designed to assess the level of global citizenship competence among participants and consisted of 28 items structured around three interconnected dimensions: awareness of global issues, intercultural attitudes, and the ability to apply global

perspectives in EFL teaching. A five-point Likert scale was used to capture participants' responses, allowing for both variability and comparability in the data. The instrument was adapted from existing international frameworks on global citizenship education and adjusted to reflect the local educational context.

To complement the quantitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students and instructors. These interviews focused on participants' personal experiences, perceived challenges, and practical strategies related to integrating global citizenship into language teaching. The flexible format of the interviews made it possible to explore individual perspectives in greater depth while maintaining alignment with the central research questions. In addition, several teaching practice sessions were observed to identify how, and to what extent, elements of global citizenship were reflected in actual classroom activities. Particular attention was paid to the inclusion of global topics, the use of interactive teaching methods, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

The analysis of quantitative data was performed using descriptive statistical methods, including the calculation of mean values, percentage distributions, and standard deviations, which helped to identify general trends in participants' responses. At the same time, qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations were analyzed through thematic coding, allowing recurring patterns and key issues to emerge organically from the data. This combined analytical approach made it possible to compare reported perceptions with observed practices, thereby increasing the overall credibility of the findings.

In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with a smaller group of students prior to the main data collection, leading to minor revisions in wording and structure. The internal consistency of the instrument was confirmed through a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81, indicating a satisfactory level of reliability. Furthermore, the use of multiple data sources enabled triangulation, which strengthened the consistency and interpretability of the results.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and participated voluntarily. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and the collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes. Such measures were considered essential for ensuring the authenticity of responses and maintaining professional research standards.

Results and discussion. The analysis of the collected data reveals several noteworthy patterns regarding the level of global citizenship competence among pre-service EFL teachers. In general, the findings indicate that while students demonstrate a relatively positive attitude toward global issues and cultural diversity, their ability to translate this awareness into professional teaching practice remains limited.

The results of the questionnaire survey show that the overall mean score for global citizenship competence was 3.42 out of 5, which may be interpreted as a moderate level. A

more detailed examination across the three dimensions—global knowledge, intercultural attitudes, and professional application—suggests a noticeable imbalance.

Table 1. Levels of Global Citizenship Competence among Pre-service EFL Teachers

Dimension	Mean Score	Percentage Level (%)
Global knowledge	3.68	73.6%
Intercultural attitudes	3.84	76.8%
Professional application	2.74	54.8%
Overall average	3.42	68.4%

As reflected in the table, the highest scores were observed in the domain of intercultural attitudes ($M = 3.84$), indicating that most participants expressed openness to cultural diversity and demonstrated respect toward different perspectives. This finding is consistent with interview data, where students frequently emphasized the importance of tolerance and communication in language learning. One participant, for instance, noted that “learning English helps us understand people from different backgrounds, but we do not always know how to use this understanding in teaching.”

Similarly, the level of global knowledge was relatively high ($M = 3.68$), suggesting that students possess a basic awareness of global issues such as environmental challenges, social inequality, and cultural diversity. However, this awareness often remains at a theoretical level. Interview responses revealed that many participants encounter global topics primarily through textbooks or media, rather than through structured academic engagement or pedagogical practice.

In contrast, the lowest results were recorded in the dimension of professional application ($M = 2.74$), which highlights a significant gap between knowledge and practice. More than 46% of respondents indicated that they feel uncertain about how to incorporate global topics into EFL lessons, while 38% reported that they had never attempted to design tasks related to global issues during their teaching practice. Classroom observations further support this finding, as only 2 out of 8 observed lessons included elements related to global citizenship, and even in those cases, such elements were presented in a limited and descriptive manner rather than as a basis for interactive discussion.

This discrepancy suggests that current teacher education programs may not be sufficiently equipping future teachers with the methodological tools required to integrate global citizenship into their professional practice. While students appear to internalize the values associated with global citizenship, they lack structured opportunities to develop corresponding pedagogical skills. Instructors interviewed as part of the study also acknowledged this issue, noting that curriculum constraints and limited instructional time often prioritize language accuracy over broader educational objectives.

Another important observation concerns the role of institutional support. Both students and instructors pointed out that the absence of clear guidelines, teaching

materials, and assessment criteria related to global citizenship makes its implementation inconsistent. In some cases, teachers rely on their personal initiative, which leads to variability in classroom practices and learning outcomes.

From a broader perspective, these findings align with trends observed in other developing educational contexts, where the integration of global competencies into teacher education remains at an early stage. However, the results also suggest that there is a strong foundation upon which further development can be built. The relatively high levels of intercultural awareness and positive attitudes indicate that pre-service teachers are receptive to the principles of global citizenship. What appears to be lacking is a systematic framework that connects these attitudes with practical teaching strategies.

Overall, the study demonstrates that global citizenship, as a professional skill, is partially developed among pre-service EFL teachers but not yet fully operationalized in their teaching practice. This gap between awareness and application underscores the need for more targeted interventions within teacher education programs, including the integration of practice-oriented training, the development of context-specific teaching materials, and the inclusion of global competencies as explicit learning outcomes.

Conclusion. The findings of this study highlight that global citizenship is increasingly recognized as an essential component of professional competence for pre-service EFL teachers. However, the results clearly demonstrate that its development remains uneven and, in many respects, incomplete. While participants generally exhibit positive attitudes toward cultural diversity and possess a basic awareness of global issues, these qualities are not sufficiently translated into pedagogical practice.

One of the central conclusions that emerges from the study is the existence of a noticeable gap between conceptual understanding and practical application. Pre-service teachers tend to associate global citizenship with general ideas of tolerance and intercultural awareness, yet they often lack the methodological knowledge and confidence required to integrate these concepts into their teaching. This suggests that current teacher education programs, although effective in developing linguistic and theoretical competencies, do not fully address the demands of a globally oriented educational environment. At the same time, the study indicates that there is a strong potential for improvement. The relatively high levels of intercultural openness observed among participants provide a favorable foundation for the development of more advanced global competencies. If appropriately supported, these attitudes can be transformed into meaningful teaching practices that foster critical thinking, global awareness, and active engagement among learners.

Based on the results, it can be argued that the integration of global citizenship into pre-service EFL teacher education should not be treated as an additional or optional component, but rather as an integral part of professional training. This requires a more systematic approach, including the revision of curricula, the introduction of practice-

oriented modules, and the development of teaching materials that reflect global perspectives. Furthermore, teacher educators themselves need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge and strategies to model and support the implementation of global citizenship in the classroom.

In the context of ongoing educational reforms, particularly in developing systems such as Uzbekistan, addressing these issues is of particular importance. Strengthening the role of global citizenship in teacher education can contribute not only to improving the quality of EFL instruction but also to preparing a generation of teachers capable of responding to the challenges of an interconnected and rapidly changing world.

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