



Sustainability in Language Teaching

Minna, Maijala, School of Languages and Translation Studies / Department of German, University of Turku, Finland

Salla-Riikka, Kuusalu, School of Languages and Translation Studies / Department of English, University of Turku, Finland

Symposium format:

- **Symposium Multimodal**

Symposium mode:

- **Hybrid**

Sub-themes:

- **LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING:** teacher education, curricula and education, classrooms, instruction, task-based learning, EAP, study abroad, (virtual) exchanges, materials and methods

Short abstract in English:

Sustainability in language teaching has become topical due to the requirements to integrate education for sustainable development (ESD) in the curricula. Sustainable development is a complex issue, and a holistic approach addressing the environmental, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability has been suggested to enable its learning process. However, there is no consensus on the integration of ESD in language teaching, and various methods, such as interdisciplinary teaching of transversal competencies, have been applied in different countries and educational systems. In addition, modern theories of language as dynamic and adaptive, and language learning as a continuous reciprocal process have also altered the field of language education. Consequently, there is a growing need to understand the ESD-related attitudes and views of both in-service and pre-service teachers and to evaluate their educational demands. This symposium brings forth recent advances in the study of sustainability and its implementation in language teaching and opens a discussion concerning what aspects of language teaching already are sustainable and could be promoted and further developed to support both the global sustainability goals and the future demands of language education.

Argument:

The theme of our symposium is sustainability in language teaching. Following the Agenda 2030 call for action, education for sustainable development (ESD) has been increasingly added to the curricula of all educational levels. Because of its complexity and wide range of topics, a collaborative approach in ESD has been rather common (Sund, Gericke & Bladh, 2020; Howard-Jones, Sands, Dillon & Fenton-Jones, 2021). However, the need for a holistic approach to the concept of sustainable development has been issued (see e.g., Sinakou, Boeve-de Pauw & Van Petegem, 2017), which means viewing it through its environmental, economic, social and cultural dimensions (Burford et al., 2013). Hence, ESD has also been



assigned in curricula as transversal competences, which are taught across all subjects (e.g., Bertel, Winther, Routhe & Kolmos, 2021). Consequently, more attention has been raised towards how sustainability is taken into consideration in language teaching. In addition, there has been a shift toward theories viewing language as dynamic and adaptive (e.g. Larsen-Freeman 2019) and learning as a process that is shared both socially and cognitively (Dufva, Aro & Suni 2014). These views see language as a continuous reciprocal process between people, connecting them to the world around them (van Lier 2008). ESD related research on the attitudes, views and needs of both in-service and pre-service teachers has increased (e.g., Borg Gericke, Höglund & Bergman, 2012; Bedir, 2021; de Haan, 2020, Howard-Jones et al., 2021) and there is a further need for more research in language education to evaluate the educational demands of language teachers.

This symposium calls researchers and scholars to bring forth recent advances in the study of sustainability and its implementation in language teaching. The aim is to widen the perspectives around ESD in relation to language teaching, change ideas about its practical implementations in different countries and educational systems, and open a discussion concerning what aspects of language teaching are already sustainable and could be promoted and further developed to support both the global sustainability goals and the future demands of language education.

Bedir, H. (2021). English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Perceptions on Sustainability. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 13(2), 1880–1895.

Bertel, L.B., Winther, M., Routhe, H.W. & Kolmos, A. (2021). Framing and facilitating complex problem-solving competences in interdisciplinary megaprojects: an institutional strategy to educate for sustainable development. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, (n.p.).

Borg, C., Gericke, N., Höglund, H.-O., & Bergman, E. (2012). The barriers encountered by teachers implementing education for sustainable development: Discipline bound differences and teaching traditions. *Research in Science & Technological Education*, 30(2), 185–207.

Burford, G., Hoover, E., Velasco, I., Janoušková, S., Jimenez, A., Piggot, G., Podger, D., & Harder, M. (2013). Bringing the “Missing Pillar” into Sustainable Development Goals: Towards Intersubjective Values-Based Indicators. *Sustainability*, 5(7), 3035–3059.

Dufva, H., Aro, M., & Suni, M. (2014). Language learning as appropriation: how linguistic resources are recycled and regenerated. *AFinLA-e* (6), 20-31.

Howard-Jones, P., Sands, D., Dillon, J., & Fenton-Jones, F. (2021). The Views of Teachers in England on an Action-Oriented Climate Change Curriculum. *Environmental Education Research*, online, 1–20.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2019). On language learner agency: A complex dynamic systems perspective. *Modern Language Journal*, 103 (Supplement 2019).

van Lier, L. (2008). Ecological-Semiotic Perspectives on Educational Linguistics. In: Spolsky, B. & Francis M. Hult, F. M. (Eds.), *The handbook of educational linguistics*. Malden (Mass.): Blackwell Publishing, 597–605.



Sinakou, E., Boeve-de Pauw, J., & Van Petegem, P. (2017). Exploring the concept of sustainable development within education for sustainable development: Implications for ESD research and practice. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 21(1), 1–10.

Sund, P., Gericke, N., & Bladh, G. (2020). Educational Content in Cross-Curricular ESE Teaching and A Model to Discern Teacher's Teaching Traditions. *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, 14(1), 78–97.