

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF THE GLOBAL CITIZEN

تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في عصر المواطن العالمي

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ABSTRACT

The present article attempts to explain the relationship of the recent concept of the 'Global Citizen' and English Language Teaching; assuming that the late profession aims to produce a world citizen with more intercultural awareness and empathy towards other languages and cultures helping to contribute to international peace and understanding. Using historicism as an approach; we will trace the emergence and development of this concept. We will first, highlight the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching; providing different definitions of culture from different perspectives, namely: the anthropological, the sociological, and the semiotic perspectives. Emphasizing the intrinsic relationship of culture and language. In the second place; we attempt to explain the fundamental notions of intercultural competence and intercultural awareness, and to trace the emergence and development of intercultural studies in language education, specifically in the multicultural European context. Ultimately, this article introduces the reader to the newly emerging concept of 'the Global Citizen' proving that it is a direct result of promoting English language learning worldwide and encouraging intercultural learning and intercultural contact.

Keywords:

Culture; intercultural awareness; intercultural competence; intercultural dimension ;the Global Citizen.

ملخص:

تحاول هذه المقالة شرح العلاقة بين المفهوم الحديث للمواطن العالمي وتعليم اللغات الأجنبية؛ على افتراض أن المهنة الحديثة تهدف إلى إنتاج مواطن عالمي يتمتع بوعي ثقافي أكبر وتعاطف تجاه اللغات والثقافات الأخرى مما يساعد على المساهمة في السلام والتفاهم الدوليين. سنقوم أولاً بتسليط الضوء على البعد الثقافي في تدريس اللغات الأجنبية؛ وتقديم تعريفات مختلفة للثقافة من وجهات نظر مختلفة؛ وهي المنظور الأنثروبولوجي، والمنظور الاجتماعي، والمنظور السيميائي. التأكيد على العلاقة الجوهرية بين الثقافة واللغة. ومحاوّل أيضاً شرح المفاهيم الأساسية للكفاءة بين الثقافات والوعي بين الثقافات، وتتبع ظهور وتطور الدراسات بين الثقافات في تعليم اللغة، وتحديدًا في السياق الأوروبي متعدد الثقافات. وفي الأخير، تقدم هذه المقالة للقارئ مفهوم المواطن العالمي الذي نشأ حديثاً.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الوعي المشترك بين الثقافات؛ بعد التفاعل الثقافي؛ الثقافة؛ كفاءة التفاعل بين الثقافات؛ المواطن العالمي

1. INTRODUCTION

In the global village that our planet has become, exchanges of all sorts between people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds are becoming more than necessary. The need to learn the English language to allow effective communication is more and more urgent, and with the advent of intercultural studies; teachers and language experts are more than aware now that a good language mastery presupposes a good knowledge and an awareness of the target culture.

It is only over the last decades that intercultural studies emerged, and that the cultural dimension in language learning and teaching has gained the value it deserves. We absolutely know today that what enables us to communicate effectively is not the inventory of language items we know, but rather the pragmatic knowledge that equips us to select appropriately from that inventory. The intrinsic relationship of language and culture is currently recognized worldwide; there is no doubt now that there is a correlation between at least the vocabulary of a language and the beliefs, values, and needs present in the culture of its native speakers.

In the present article, we are using historicism as an approach to try to highlight the relationship between the newly emerging concept of 'Global Citizen' and foreign

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language education, by highlighting the intercultural dimension in language teaching, explaining the notions of intercultural awareness and intercultural competence, and trying to trace the emergence and development of Intercultural Studies in Europe. To ultimately show how foreign language education can create the Global Citizen in our modern times, and to demonstrate that the concept itself is a direct result of Promoting English language learning at a Global level.

2. The Intercultural Dimension in Foreign Language Teaching

To comprehend the intercultural dimension in foreign language teaching, one must initially delve into the concept of culture and explore its multifaceted definitions across various disciplines. The term "culture" remains elusive, subject to diverse interpretations from different academic perspectives. For instance, the anthropologists' definitions converge all in considering it as the whole way of life of a particular group or community. That is clarified in the renowned definition of Goodenough:

Culture is what we learn to do without thinking about what we are doing, we learn it from our environment and it is passed from generation to generation by parents, peers, teachers, institutions and finally by arts, literature, music, manners, one of its key elements is language. (quoted in Byram. M, 2002, p. 194)

The sociologists' definitions, from another perspective, see it as all that links a society together, as is clear in the definition of (Peron, 1987); who argues that culture is all that we have to know or believe, to behave in an acceptable manner in the eyes of its people.

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From a third perspective, the semiotic definitions identify culture as a system of symbols or signs and significations, passed from generation to generation. As clarified in the definition of Geertz quoted in (Byram M. , 1992, p. 113), Culture is a structure- transmitted historically of significations incarnated in symbols; a system of ideas inherited and expressed symbolically, with which humans communicate and extend their knowledge.

Additionally, Kramsh (1993:p. 2)-argues that there are two primary definitions of culture. The first definition, originating from the humanities, centers on how a social group portrays itself and others through its cultural expressions, including art, literature, social structures, and everyday objects. The second definition, as proposed by Howard Nostrand pertains to the underlying attitudes, beliefs, cognitive frameworks, and collective memory shared by members of a community. It is clear from all the previous definitions that culture is-what links a speech community together. All that is accepted by a social group as correct and appropriate; it is their whole way of life and is apparent in their beliefs, customs, arts; and their vision and assumptions about life and existence. This makes language the vehicle of culture. In this sense to be in a contact with a foreign language is forcibly being in contact with its culture. In the 1960's and the 1970's many books investigated the relation of language and culture. Hall, for instance, argues that culture and communication are one, he said: "Culture is communication and communication is culture" (Hall,1959: p. 186) Language; thus, cannot exist apart from culture; it is not an autonomous construct. However; for long, the teaching of culture as an integral part of language teaching didn't have the necessary attention it deserves, language was rather taught as a means of communication.

It is only recently that the intrinsic relationship of language and culture has been widely recognized; now all educators agree that the teaching of culture should constitute an integral part of language curricula. Kramsh (1993, p. 1) argues that the

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growing emphasis on culture in language teaching stems from various political, educational, and ideological factors. Both in Europe and the U.S., there is increasing pressure on foreign language educators to address societal issues. Educators are concerned that focusing solely on language acquisition may not contribute to international peace and understanding. Consequently, some educators are advocating for a shift towards incorporating culturally relevant content alongside communication skills to facilitate the integration of newcomers into society.

Recent works demonstrated that encouraging students' positive attitudes towards the foreign culture and its people is a successful way to promote foreign language learning. Jacobovits (1971) stated that the language of a people is a living growing changing reflection of that people's heart and mind: "when we learn a foreign culture we intermingle with a foreign people'. language contact, according to him, is inseparable from culture cont act, he said: "in a real sense becoming bilingual entails becoming bicultural" (p.62). It is the same view of Edward Sapir, who said that languag e is a social product and must be understood as such. He argues that language cannot exist apart from culture; that is from the socially inherited assemblages of practices and beliefs that determine the texture of our lives.

In a similar vein, Saville (1996, p. 360) asserts that the vocabulary of a language provides an interesting reflection on the culture of the people who speak it, since it is a catalogue of things of import to a society, an index of the way speakers categorize experience, and often a record of past contacts and cultural borrowings. It is now understandable that a language cannot be taught without an understanding of its cultural context. Since language is the expression of a People's culture, the vehicle of their values and assumptions, and the expression of their identity, that identity normally emerges from the Dynamic of **the self** in relation to **the other** as is clarified by Rosebicki (2015, p. 1) , who clarifies that **Interculturality** can take place when people come into contact with cultural **Otherness**. At that point, he

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advocates for people becoming aware that they have been *taking for granted* certain perceptions of reality shared by their own group.

In learning a foreign language, we are not only gaining access to a different way of seeing the world, but also, reconsidering our own worldview. Hence, all cultural learning is said to be intercultural, that is also the view of Starkey who claims that language learning is an intercultural experience, he said: "Language learning, by definition, is an intercultural experience" (quoted in Byram. M, 2002). Speaking about foreign language education leads us always to English language teaching, given the place that English gained in the late decades. (Byram, 2008, p. 9) argues that foreign language learning has become more important for societies responding to globalisation and internationalisation, and that governments today pay more attention to policy-making. In many cases, he advocates, the focus is on the teaching and learning of English, and in many countries, particularly in East Asia, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is almost synonymous with Foreign Language Learning. This is an automatic consequence of British colonialism, On the one hand, and the American dominance in commerce and world affairs on the other hand.

For Byram the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching and learning is undeniable; and he has been of great help to teachers and pedagogues in Europe and elsewhere. He observes that culture constitutes the 'hidden' curriculum in language teaching. In all his publications, he emphasizes that language teaching is culture teaching and that encouraging learners to learn about the foreign culture can equip them with an **intercultural awareness** that will lead them ultimately to develop an **intercultural competence**. The two concepts indeed necessary to foreign language pedagogy today, have been the subject of many of his books and conferences and projects within the programmes and the projects of the Council of Europe in foreign language Teaching and learning. He claims that the mere acquisition of linguistic competence is insufficient; he observes that the teaching of culture often represents an aspect of language teaching that is unfamiliar to language teachers, whose professional training largely focuses on structural facets of language. While he asserts

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that, the incorporation of a cultural content in foreign language classes may bring positive attitudes towards language learning and the people from other cultures, thus spreading tolerance and encouraging the dialogue between cultures and civilizations. Ultimately creating the Global citizen; who is open to other cultures and is able to connect and communicate with representatives of other cultures and languages.

3. The Concepts of Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Awareness

3.1. Intercultural Competence

Byram argues that the 'intercultural dimension' in language teaching aims to develop learners as **intercultural speakers** or **mediators** who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping, which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity. It is based on perceiving the interlocutor as an individual, whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally ascribed identity. Intercultural communication is communication based on respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction (Byram 2002, p. 1).

So, language teaching with an intercultural dimension, according to him, continues to help learners to acquire the linguistic competence needed to communicate in speaking or writing, to formulate what they want to say/write in correct and appropriate ways. Nevertheless, it also develops their **intercultural competence** i.e., their ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality. In the same perspective, Meyer defines Intercultural competence as: “The ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures” (Meyer (1991, p. 138).

According to Byram, **intercultural competence** comprises four components: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values derived from belonging to various social

groups. **Attitudes**, forming the foundation of intercultural competence, include; curiosity, openness, and the willingness to suspend disbelief about other cultures while relativizing one's own values and beliefs. **Knowledge** encompasses understanding social groups, their products, practices, and societal interaction processes. **Skills** entail interpreting, relating, discovering, and interacting with cultural nuances in real-time communication.

Starkey quoted in further claims that intercultural competence depends on developing both intellectual and affective capacities to relate to others; it demands a respect for the essential dignity of all human beings and an acceptance of the **equal rights of individuals**. Seeing It from this perspective; it seems completely incompatible with racist or colonialist ideologies. He and Byram, assert that to be interculturally competent the learners need to attain an Intercultural Awareness.

3.2. Interculturel Awareness

To have an intercultural awareness is a first step to achieve intercultural competence. It presupposes knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relations; the similarities and the differences between one's original world and the world of the target culture. Thus, Intercultural awareness covers how each community is seen from the perspective of the other; that is an awareness of one's own culture, the target culture, and how each is seen from the perspective of the other. Byram defines it as "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries". (Byram, 2007, p. 53)

4. The Emergence and Development of Intercultural studies in Europe

Intercultural studies, as a discipline, which emerged recently is capable of investigating many cultural and intercultural relations and intercultural encounters, since it presupposes the intervention of many disciplines. That is clarified in the words of Rozbiki, who argues that a recognition of the peculiarities of each culture's historical formation and of the unique arsenal of meaning that it attaches to people's experience of reality, is wide spread across all the scholars around the globe. In the

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sense that each cultural community has its own standards, categorizations, and a repertoire of things of import to its members. He observes that there is a growing understanding that ‘although no discipline alone can answer the questions that arise from intercultural encounters, the notion **of intercultural studies** is big enough to include most disciplines (Rozbicki 2015, p. 2).

It is a relatively new formal field of social science studies, it is a multidisciplinary field that trains students to communicate, understand and interact with other cultures, either similar or very different from their culture of origin. It involves learning how to see one’s culture and the world from the eyes of another. It is not a small undertaking as Rozbicki put it, since it requires scholars to cross their own cultural boundaries, move beyond the entrenched paradigms of their disciplines, and probably the most demanding task, according to him, would be “to acquire a deep awareness not only of their own epistemological categories, but also those of the diverse actors within the intercultural relationship” (ibid).

Intercultural studies incorporate many disciplines such as Sociology, Anthropology, Political sciences, History, Linguistics, Psychology, Theology, Gender studies and Communication. Some of its major topics are intercultural communication, and intercultural relationships, hence it involves the study of different cultures with a goal of advancing knowledge regarding different people and their cultures. It helps students understand the differences among cultures, the cause of misconceptions among people, the stereotypes and clichés about other cultures that have been created by people over generations. It ultimately; develops their empathy towards other people and other cultures. What the present formulation of inter-culturalism emphasizes is communication; it is the defining characteristic and the central means through which “an intercultural approach aims to facilitate dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different backgrounds” (Wood, 2006, p. 9).

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In his review of the history of intercultural communication, Hart (1996) dates **the beginning of intercultural communication** to the year 1959, the year that Hall's "The Silent Language" was published. Hall is generally acknowledged to be the founder of the discipline of intercultural communication. Thus, intercultural studies started first in the United States as a result of social and political minority rights; then, the idea of intercultural education arose with voluntary movements in Europe in the 1970s,, specifically given the multicultural European context and the considerable flow of immigrants that Europe needed to integrate, which resulted in a sharp increase in linguistic and cultural diversity. Many organisations like the UNESCO, and the Council of Europe started to promote intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue.

Intercultural Studies and intercultural education became stronger in the 1990s, with publications from the Council of Europe and the European commission. writers such as Byram, Zarate, Starkey, Gibroкова, Huber and others, started to emphasize the urgent need for intercultural learning and intercultural dialogue. Under a common European frame of reference these writers and others who contributed to the Council of Europe's publications, served as both theorists of intercultural education and as trainers of young people and students; explaining and clarifying relevant concepts such as: intercultural awareness, intercultural competence with its different components, intercultural dialogue between different European countries and cultures.

5. The concept of the Global Citizen

Though the idea itself may go back to Greek civilization; the concept is recent indeed; it is understood as a direct outcome of intercultural education and the need for intercultural understanding in an international context. Rozbiki argues that Intercultural relationships are one of the most dynamic forces driving historical change (Rozbicki, 2015: p. 1). Indeed, in this age of the Global Citizen, intercultural encounters and intercultural relations in general can aid in eliminating barriers of language, culture, and ethnicity, and make the new internationally oriented citizen think of himself as belonging to the human race, and make him think of the other as defining the self. Thus; encouraging empathy and understanding between people of

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different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and making those who think of themselves as global citizens, participate in humanitarian actions and volunteering to make a positive change in the world.

The Stoics, as Martha Nussbaum argued, stress that to be a citizen of the world one does not need to give up local identifications, which can be a source of great richness in life. They suggest that we think of ourselves not as devoid of local affiliations, but as surrounded by a series of concentric circles. Outside all these circles is the largest one, humanity as a whole. Our task as citizens of the world, she advocates, is to "draw the circles somehow toward the center. Making all human beings like our fellow city dwellers" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 60)

The concept is not a new one, as Schattle argues; it can be traced back to ancient Greece. However, the concept and the term related to it seem to have new currency in our times. They are now widely used in higher education. Many institutions cite global citizenship in their mission statements and/or as an outcome of liberal education and internationalization efforts. Many have “centers for global citizenship” or programs with this label. While he compares **National citizenship** and **Global citizenship** saying:

“National citizenship is an accident of birth; global citizenship is different. It is a voluntary association with a concept that signifies ways of thinking and living within multiple cross-cutting communities—cities, regions, states, nations, and international collectives” Schattle (2009, p. 9) .

He further defines awareness, responsibility, and participation as the abilities one should have for global citizenship. Thus, global citizenship connects us to external

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societies; in that sense Global citizenship becomes a sort of activism. The **global citizen** is the one who is aware of his belonging to the world community, and is willing to help the unfortunate other on local or international levels. The global citizen is willing to volunteer and take action to make a difference in the world, it is the one who respects and is tolerant towards all cultures; he believes in the dignity of every human being.

The concept affirms the interconnectedness of all human beings and their mutual complementarity. It is in that same perspective, that Schattle, (The Practices of Global Citizenship, 2007, pp. 26, 32) thinks that **Awareness, responsibility, and participation** deserve special attention as primary concepts of global citizenship. He further argues that global citizenship and **global responsibility** seem interchangeable for people who describe themselves as global citizens or advocate global citizenship. Michel Edwards and Jhon Gaventa also define Global citizenship as the exercise of the right to participate in decision making in social, economic, cultural and political life, within and across the local, national and global arenas » quoted in (Shattle, 2007, p. 68).

He states that global citizenship often implies an absence of place. He states an eloquent statement of Barbara Moses, a psychologist and career expert based in Canada, who often works with internationally mobile professionals: 'it is really more that am not defined by city, state, or country, I really have no sense of definition, but if I must have a sense of definition, it would be citizen of the world' (Shattle, 2007, p. 60)

In this same perspective, Hall, S. (1994, p. 392) states, the notions of belonging and homeland have been reconceptualised in contexts of migration, deterritorialization, diaspora, virtuality, digitalization, and other features of the globalized world, that make even more pertinent the principle that cultural identities are not fixed, but fluid;

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not given, but performed. Moreover, (Nussbaum M. C. (1997, pp. 67, 68, 69) argues that Education for world citizenship requires transcending the inclination of both students and educators to define themselves primarily in terms of local group loyalties or identities. She further argues that the **global citizen** must develop sympathetic understanding of distant cultures and ethnic, racial, and religious groups. She said that education has to be a multicultural education, one that acquaints students with some fundamentals about the histories and cultures of many different groups, she advocates that it has to include knowledge of the major religious and cultural groups in each part of the world.

On a practical level, Olson (2007)explains that **global citizenship** provides a concept that can create bridges between the work of **internationalization** and multicultural education. Thus, intercultural competence development is conducive to global citizenship . It is from this perspective that the European and American theorists are promoting intercultural competence to create intercultural learners that will participate as **Global Citizens** in promoting peace and understanding among all the cultures and nations of the globe.

6. Conclusion

To conclude , we can see clearly from all the preceding analysis that the notion of ‘the Global Citizen’ emerged from the promotion of English language Education; and the attention States gave to English language as an international language and a lingua franca; which can be explained in turn by American political and cultural dominance of the West. Hence, Intercultural studies with the different subjects they investigate: intercultural relations, intercultural dialogue, intercultural encounters, culture and identity, and the notions of intercultural competence and intercultural awareness in foreign language teaching, along with the notion of interculturalism and the global citizen, make us understand the essence of human beings; human beings

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are unique and different. They are as much defined by their belonging to the human race, as by their being members of different cultures, nations, and ethnic groups. What unites them seems to be in constant struggle with what separates them, and all the efforts of ensuring peace and avoiding cultural clashes or intercultural tensions rely on the dialogue between different cultures, and their interaction.

Tolerance, openness and readiness to accept the others' world views and respect for all the cultures are at the core of intercultural competence, which is today advocated by many language educators in an attempt to integrate a growing number of immigrants in Europe and North America. Acquiring that ability presupposes an intercultural awareness, that is in turn, developed by a good understanding of one's own culture and the target culture and how each culture is seen from the other's perspective. Learners, Teachers and language practitioners, are all encouraged to search for definitions, relations and effects of cultural phenomena, and encourage empathy and understanding among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, so that the overall aim of living in a world of mutual respect, understanding and interconnectedness, can be fully attained.

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