

## Developing Global Citizenship among EFL learners: a Pivotal Notion for the Global Citizen

تطوير المواطنة العالمية بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: فكرة محورية للمواطن العالمي

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### Abstract:

One of the core objectives of education is to equip learners with the prerequisite skills that permit them to successfully integrate into the global world. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is part of education. Henceforth, it should emphasize and target specific skills among learners. Critical thinking, communication and collaboration, digital literacy, self-discipline and cross-cultural awareness are objectives worth considering. This paper aims to analyze the extent to which the aforementioned skills are respected by teachers and addressed by the programs used to teach English at Batna -2 University. Regrettably, the analysis of responses to the questionnaire administered to thirty EFL teachers at the Department of English highlights that only some skills are promoted through different subjects. Furthermore, teachers mention the need to include those skills and affirm that citizenship skills should immediately be looked at as necessary goals to be achieved by the process of teaching English as a Foreign Language. Finally, they suggest some ways that would help in the effective formation and construction of the global citizen.

**Keywords:** Citizenship, Foreign Language Education, Global, skills

مُلَجِّصُ الْبَحْثِ

يتمثل تزويد المتعلمين بالمهارات التي تسمح لهم بالاندماج في عالمنا الحالي أحد الأهداف الأساسية للتعليم. يعتبر تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية جزءاً من العملية التعليمية التي يجب ان تستهدف تطوير مجموعة محددة من المهارات

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كالتفكير النقدي والتواصل الناجح والتعاون والمهارات الرقمية والانضباط الذاتي والوعي الثقافي بين متعلميها. يهدف هذا البحث الى دراسة مدى احترام المعلمين لهذهمهارات ومعالجتها وتطويرها، من خلال البرامج المستخدمة في تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة باتنة 2. للأسف ، فإن تحليل نتائج الاستبيان الذي تم إجراؤه على ثلاثين من معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بهذه الجامعة يسلط الضوء على أن بعض المهارات فقط يتم الترويج لها من خلال مواضيع ومقاييس مختلفة. علاوة على ذلك، اشار المعلمون الى الحاجة الى إدراج هذه المهارات وأكدوا أنه يجب النظر إلى مهارات المواطنة على الفور كأهداف ضرورية يجب تحقيقها من خلال عملية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. أخيراً، اقترح المعلمين بعض الطرق التي من شأنها أن تساعد في التكوين والبناء الفعالين للمواطن العالمي.



### 1.Introduction

Equipping learners with the necessary knowledge that permits them to successfully integrate into the global world is one of the essences of education (Ban-ki Moon, 2012). The foreign language teaching and learning process is an integral part of education. Subsequently, it would be inevitable and imperative for this process to address and accentuate the skills that would effectively found and structure the active global citizen.

According to many international organizations and confederations like the U.S Fund for UNICEF and Oxfam (2015), the education of the global citizen necessitates and highly requires a capital of knowledge that would enable the individual to have a clear and all-inclusive perception of multidimensional and intercultural perspectives. Indeed, the global citizen should be civically educated. In other words, he should appropriately perform his duties and claim his rights. Moreover, He must be aware of the global issues and the different ideologies that underpin the world. Also, the global citizenship education should promote a package of indispensable skills like critical thinking, collaboration, communication, multilingualism, and digital literacy (Crawford, 2013). Assuredly, the mastery of these competencies with proficiency in the required knowledge would lead to the development of positive attitudes and the manifestation of appropriate actions and behaviours in international contexts.

This paper aims at scrutinising the extent to which global citizenship skills are respected and pointed up by teachers of English as Foreign Language (EFL) and programs used to teach EFL at the Department of English at Batna-2 University. Additionally, it inquires into the significance and the relevance of these skills in yielding the responsible citizen who would engage in the maintenance of the world's peace and harmony. Besides, it suggests some ways that would help in the formation and construction of the active global citizen.

## **2.The Learner of Foreign Languages, The Future Global Citizen**

The realm of Foreign Language (FL) education witnessed shifts and transformations due to the various processes of globalization (Byram, 2008). Profoundly, the objective of FL education is no more the mastery of the foreign language's linguistic and grammatical systems. Instead, it is the preparation and the equipment of learners with the fundamental foundations that would inevitably enable them to act appropriately in real intercultural situations (Byram, 2008). In this regard, intriguing questions should be posed here: "is it possible to teach citizenship principles in foreign language classes?", if yes, "how would it be possible?" and "which skills should be emphasised to yield multilingual active global citizens?"

As maintained by Byram (2008), it is tremendously feasible to incorporate citizenship principles in a foreign language classroom through "Content and Language Integrated Learning" (CLIL). This latter was suggested by Marsh and Langé (2000), who posit that CLIL implies "any educational situation in which additional language is used for teaching and learning subjects other than language itself" (p.1). Consequently, the concept of CLIL would permit EFL learners to acquire another knowledge using the foreign language itself. Hence, it is practical for EFL Algerian learners to learn citizenship standards in EFL classes. This would be effective and successful if the following elements were taken into account: "content", "cognition", "communication" and "culture"(Byram, 2008, p.129). In other words, the inclusion of citizenship standards in EFL classes demands a specific knowledge that provokes learners' thinking, enlarges their cultural perceptions, and develops their intercultural communicative competence. Likewise, in parallel with this knowledge, some skills should be addressed and stimulated. Literature in the field is affluent with frameworks that aim at promoting and boosting the competencies that would grant and facilitate the path for the learner to become an active global citizen. A myriad of guides for teachers and students was proposed and highly recommended by international organisations and

confederations such as OXFAM, the U.S Fund for UNICEF, and Teach UNICEF. These organisations have the propensity to mainly and commonly focalise specific skills that sustain global citizenship, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, intercultural awareness, digital literacy, and multilingualism (Crawford, 2013). Each of those skills is of paramount importance in the maintenance of justice, peace, and harmony.

Critical thinking, for instance, is the cognitive mode that enables the individual to inquire into the situation, evaluate all probabilities, and then yield a rational judgment. It is considered as a “skilful responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because it relies upon criteria, it is self-correcting and sensitive to context” ( Lipmann, 1988, p.39). Critical thinking involves inquisitiveness, open-mindedness, flexibility and fair-mindedness (Facionne, 1990). Consequently, critical thinking is a determined way of thinking that relies on logic to reach solution and decisions. Hence, it would inevitably help the individual to become more responsible for resolving conflicts, challenging inequalities and injustice, and fulfilling civic duties in their due time.

Collaboration and cooperation, on the other hand, are fundamentals of the global citizen. They are acts that necessitate cohesion with the group, containing people of diverse identities and different cultures. Therefore, they would develop the individual’s intercultural awareness and enrich his insights and understandings. Also, those processes might boost positive attitudes and values among individuals. Similarly, digital literacy authorises the individual to stay connected with the whole world. It provides him with new opportunities to know people from different backgrounds. Moreover, it facilitates for him learning new languages and speculating new cultures. Furthermore, digital literacy helps the individual to discover and acquire effective ways of communication.

In a few words, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, intercultural awareness, digital literacy are interrelated competencies. All together could result in better understanding, fewer conflicts, effective performance of duties and appropriate way to claim rights. Therefore, these skills are integral to the sustenance of world harmony, peace, and stability. This is why educating the global citizen should be one of the principal targets of the process of education.

As mentioned before, the above skills have paramount and tremendous gains and benefits. This what justifies the following queries: “ Are these skills targeted by the process of education and mainly by Foreign Language

Education?” ” If yes, to what extent are those skills addressed in the curricula meant to teach English as FL?” and ” If no, what should be done in order to enrol the Algerian FL education in the global education?”

### **3.Methodology procedures**

To lucidly provide appropriate answers to the aforementioned questions, and to profoundly analyse the extent to which the global citizen’s skills are promoted by EFL teachers and appropriately addressed by the programs used to teach English in the Department of English at Batna2 University. A questionnaire composed of a set of open-ended questions (see Appendix A) was administered to a randomly selected sample of thirty (30) teachers of English at the same department. The analysis of teachers’ responses is detailed in the following section.

### **4.Results as reported**

Responses demonstrate that the sample contains subjects of both genders who belong to different categories of age (24 - 62). Additionally, teachers have been instructors of various modules like psychology, methodology, culture and civilisation of language, oral expression, social sciences, literature, and written expression.

**Item 1: To what extent do you agree with the following: “one of the main aims of education is to equip the learner with the knowledge that permits him/her to successfully integrate into the global world and become an active global citizen.”?**

The constant majority (100%) agreed with the statement. Indeed, teachers put forward that the process of education should intrinsically arm and supply students with the capital of knowledge and skills that help them successfully confront real situations through the appropriate application of the gained knowledge. Furthermore, teachers posited that knowledge alone is not enough. Henceforth, learners should acquire some skills and develop some competencies that would enable them to be flexible when dealing with various circumstances in different contexts. Ultimately, teachers postulated that the new requirements and parameters of the global world initiate the necessity and the immediate configuration of the Algerian process of education. This is the only way that would mould the Algerian learners to fit the global requisites and allow them to effectively merge in the new world.

**Item 2: What is citizenship?**

The respondents’ definitions manifested a higher degree of commonality. Actually, they approached citizenship as the state of partiality and belonging to a given country. According to those teachers, citizenship involves a set of

duties and rights shared among all citizens that belong to a particular state. Consequently, all citizens should be aware of their duties and rights. They must perform their duties in their due time, and be apt to suitably claim their rights. In a few words, according to respondents, citizenship could be defined as a membership to a given social context that dictates to the member a set of obligations and prohibitions to be respectively accepted and acknowledged. Furthermore, this membership vests citizens with immunities and privileges that should unavoidably be gained and granted to all those who possess the status of citizen.

**Item 3: what are the skills and characteristics of a good citizen?**

Respondents' answers comprise various skills and characteristics which have been classified into two principal categories. The main feature that differentiates and cleavages the two categories is age. One was represented by teachers whose age ranges from 24 to 39, and the other encompasses instructors whose age varies from 40 to 62 years old. Thus, diversified perceptions and conceptualizations would inevitably be the inherent consequence.

Accordingly, the first category agrees on the fact that the good citizen should be well-educated and well-instructed. Also, he should be responsible for his behaviours, respectful to others, and clean and tidy. Moreover, the good citizen should master how to perform his duties appropriately. On the other hand, the second category had the propensity to ponder and deeply speculate the main skills and principles that fundamentally found the good citizen. According to this category, the good citizen should be aware of the intrinsic foundations of his country and work towards gaining the country's objectives and maintaining its balance and security. That is, the good citizen should flexibly assist and positively contribute to the achievement of his country's goals. He should constantly respect the rules and the laws and perfectly complete and execute his duties. Additionally, he should be conscious of his privileges and rights and adopt effective ways to demand them. Besides, He must constantly generate positive behaviours and respectful attitudes that sustain the security and flourishing of his country.

Thoroughly, these differences in the conceptualisation of the good citizen among the two categories could be drawn back to the exposure to different regimes of education. Indeed, the Algerian education system has noticed many transformations and ideological shifts that would certainly yield different mentalities and dissimilarities in the degree and potentiality of intellect. Hence, individuals would perceive, value and reason differently.

**Item 4: To what extent do you find it necessary to target those skills among foreign language learners?**

Almost half of the respondents (49 per cent ) assumed that developing the skills of the good citizen should be the aim of primary education. FL higher education should target other essential skills among learners that might enable them to act and communicate effectively in intercultural situations. Those respondents suggested that the phase of higher education should be dedicated to the discovery of the foreigner, his culture, and his attitudes to raising intercultural awareness among learners. This type of awareness is imperative to integrate individuals into the global world.

The remaining answers (51 per cent) presumed that principles and skills of the good citizen should be tackled by a compulsory subject through all education phases. Undeniably, students and learners at any level and of different disciplines should be trained and armed with the prerequisite familiarities and experiences that stimulate and provoke their critical thinking. This latter would help them to generate rational judgments and evaluations that might result in good behaviour and positive attitudes; this is how the good citizen should be.

**Items 5 & 6: Critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, self-discipline and cross-cultural awareness are imperative skills for the good citizen. Which one of them do you try to develop among learners while teaching?**

To what extent are these skills targeted by the programs used to teach English in the Department of English?

Critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and cross-cultural awareness are skills that were highly rated in respondents' answers. Respectively, teachers of methodology asserted that one of the main objectives of this module is to provoke learners' critical and analytical thinking. Indeed, learners should learn how to count for each step they took whether in research or life in general. They must take into account all the possible hypotheses, assumptions, probabilities, limitations, delimitations and others' points of view while developing the rationale of their investigations. If what is learned through methodology classes is applied in real-life situations, the results would assuredly be logical and based on a solid and reasonable basis which could emanate satisfactory consequences.

Likewise, teachers of Culture and Civilisation of Language (CCL) tend to focus on developing intercultural awareness among learners through equipping them with the necessary cultural knowledge and allowing them to



speculate their own culture elements and those of the foreigner. Through this subject, learners are permitted to inquire into cultures and compare them. Additionally, they should develop the respect for, and acceptance of the other, which would enhance their understanding and reduce stereotypes and prejudices. This has a significant impact on facilitating communication and diminishing conflicts and misinterpretations. Henceforth, the CCL is devoted to developing cross-cultural competence that encompasses both awareness and communication skills. Moreover, this subject helps learners gain more insights and enlarge their scope of perceptions through adopting positive principles and behaviours from other cultures.

Collaboration and communication are almost targeted by all subjects. Collaboration, for instance, is highly promoted in different modules whereby learners are supposed to work in groups. This would certainly develop a sense of cooperation and team working among learners. It would propel them to respect and effectively deal and communicate with each other. On the other hand, communication is highly emphasised by the Oral Expression subject through which learners are supposed to develop communication skills and formal formulas used in various contexts. Hence, the Oral Expression subject improves learners' communication skills and enriches their capital with new and appropriate ways and forms of communication.

Eventually, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and cross-cultural awareness are some of the skills targeted by the different subjects taught in the Department of English. However, they are addressed in different manners and to various extents. Concerning digital literacy and self-discipline, they are not the direct objectives of the programs designed to teach EFL at the Department of English. They are neglected and ignored, to some extent, by almost the majority of respondents.

Conclusively, the programs aimed to teach English should be rethought and renovated to include digital literacy and self-discipline. Also, programs and lectures should constantly and permanently accentuate and promote critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and intercultural awareness due to their paramount importance in the structure of the active global citizen.

**Item 7: Suggest some practical ways that would help teachers effectively contribute to the formation of the global citizen.**

Answers demonstrate that teachers are aware of the necessity of developing the global citizen's skills among English learners. They called for purposeful training for both teachers and learners. In this regard, they highlighted many programs and frameworks suggested by international organisations like



UNICEF. Indeed, teachers found that these programs are fascinating and fruitful. In addition to the fact that they are very easy to be taught, those programs are global. They comprise complementary knowledge, skills, and values that would culminate appropriate actions and reactions.

Teachers cogitate that curricula meant for teaching English should contain a separate subject that would effectively aim to develop the necessary skills for the learners to integrate into the global world successfully.

### **5. Conclusion:**

Globalization has configured many processes in various domains. This initiated the requirement of specific skills that would permit individuals to become active and positive global citizens. Critical thinking, collaboration, digital literacy, and many others are highly demanded among global citizens. Lamentably, those skills are not the essence of the programs meant for teaching English at the Department of English at Batna-2 University. Nonetheless, some subjects tend to indirectly promote them to different extents and various degrees. Therefore, teachers call for the renovation of the curricula meant for EFL teaching and the immediate integration of global citizenship skills.

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