Introduction

The concept of intercultural citizenship draws on foreign language education and citizenship education, combining an international perspective from the former with an action orientation from the latter. The purpose is to improve both disciplines so that learners acquire competences to act in their own communities, competences which are enriched by acquiring new concepts and ways of seeing associated with another language and context, and a new identification with an international perspective on local issues and how they can be addressed.

This means that learners have to translate and understand concepts they meet in another language and context in order to reflect on their significance for their own context and how they might take action on local issues. In some cases it also means that learners interact with partners in another country and have to act as interpreters and mediators of concepts in their own language and context to help their partners understand the relevance for their context.

The theory of intercultural citizenship has been implemented in practice in a number of projects which usually take place in foreign language classrooms. The practice has been realized by bringing together learners from different countries and continents through the internet. Learners and teachers choose a topic of common interest, a topic which will lead to activities in their respective communities, and in some cases to changes and improvements in the lives of people in those communities. References to these projects and practices are included in the remainder of this chapter, after an overview of the history and theory of intercultural citizenship.

Historical perspectives

The evolution of the theory of intercultural citizenship took place in several stages over more than a decade but it can be summarized as a move from the concept of ‘intercultural speaker’ to an ‘intercultural citizen’. The phrase intercultural speaker was coined by Byram and Zarate (1996) in a working paper for the Council of Europe. Byram and Zarate defined four competences: savoir être, the abandoning of ethnocentric attitudes and perceptions; savoir apprendre, the capacity to interpret cultural phenomena which reveals unknown meanings; savoirs,
knowledge of the cultural references which structure knowledge of another culture; and savoir faire, the ability to combine the three previous competences or savoirs in specific situations of interaction using the target language. In 1997, Byram published a monograph, Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence that built on but also substantially modified this work.

In the first paper, Byram and Zarate (1996) coined the phrases intercultural competence and intercultural speaker. In the monograph (Byram 1997), the latter was further refined to become ‘intercultural communicative competence’. ‘Intercultural competence’ is needed whenever there is interaction of people of different social groups with different cultures using the same language. However, whenever such interaction involves at least one partner using a foreign language, then the term ‘intercultural communicative competence’ is used.

The phrase intercultural speaker was a deliberate attempt to emphasize that the competence needed in such interactions is not the same as the cultural competence of a member of a social group, whether small or large, i.e. the competence they have acquired through socialization into the group. Intercultural competence is composed of different skills, knowledge, and attitudes, namely the ones which are necessary for overcoming incomprehension and inappropriate attitudes in communication and action among people of different social groups.

In foreign language teaching, the social groups and social identities which are usually the focus of attention are national, i.e. the group or groups which are perceived as the ‘native speakers’ of the language being taught and learned. Although this is under revision in some kinds of language teaching, and the very term ‘native speaker’ is challenged (see Houghton et al. 2018), learners are usually expected to model themselves on the linguistic competence of native speakers. It has also often been at least tacitly expected that learners will model their cultural competence on that of native speakers, learning to act culturally as much as possible like native speakers. The introduction of the phrases ‘intercultural speaker’ and ‘intercultural communicative competence’ implied that, whatever might be decided about linguistic competence, the imitation of native speakers’ cultural competence should not be the purpose of language teaching. Learners need an intercultural competence which enables them to interact with people of other languages and language groups, not a competence which implies that they identify with native speakers in such groups.

In 2006, the book Education for Intercultural Citizenship: Concepts and Comparisons was published by a group of scholars at the University of Durham (Alred et al. 2006) who had brought together experts from foreign language education and citizenship education. This book defined the axioms of education for intercultural citizenship and included chapters about education systems in different countries and how and to what extent there were already curriculum theory and practice which could be described as education for intercultural citizenship.

Two years later, Byram (2008) published a monograph in which he examined in detail the similarities and differences between the objectives of citizenship education as presented by Himmelmann (2001) and the objectives of teaching intercultural communicative competence in foreign language education. This became the basis for later pedagogical projects, one of which is described in the following section.

Research approaches and key findings

Research on intercultural citizenship is both conceptual and empirical. The historical evolution of conceptual work has been presented in the previous section. Here we explain in more detail the concepts and theory in a systematic overview before describing the outcomes of empirical curriculum research and development.
Mediation and intercultural (communicative) competence

Although in foreign language education, the focus is usually on communication with and interactions among people of different languages – in the same country or in two or more countries – people of the same language may find themselves in a situation where the social identities which are salient lead them to potential misunderstandings. For example, two people may identify each other as having the same profession and be able to communicate and act together as professionals, where their professional identity is salient. Yet when they move to a different situation where the salient identities differ – e.g. each sees the other as from a different ethnic group or social class – then they draw upon different beliefs, knowledge, and behaviours and fall into partial or even complete misunderstanding. In this second situation, they need intercultural competence (IC) which enables them to take the perspective of the other, seek ways of enquiring about and understanding the other’s preconceptions, and find a common ground on which they can create successful communication.

When, in either situation, at least one of the people involved is using a foreign language – the language of their partner or a lingua franca foreign to both of them – then they need intercultural communicative competence (ICC) i.e. a combination of linguistic and intercultural competences. This is described at length in Byram (1997) and summarized in Byram (2008). This model of ICC has been influential (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009) and also criticized (e.g. Belz 2007; Risager 2007; Kramsch 2009).

In some circumstances, two people may need the help of a third, or a ‘mediator’, someone who has the IC or ICC which the other two lack. In the original work on IC, Zarate et al. (2004) put more emphasis on this function of IC than did Byram (1997). In the meantime, work at the Council of Europe has promoted the concept of ‘mediation’ in two documents, the second of which is particularly relevant here. The first document (Coste and Cavalli 2015) uses the concept of mediation to analyze the processes of education in general. The second document is a Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2018a) to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2001) and contains a revised and more complex concept of mediation than was found in the CEFR itself. In the Companion Volume (Council of Europe 2018a, p. 103), it is stated that:

In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional.

Where ‘cross-linguistic mediation’ takes place, the linguistic competences of the mediator are more obvious and the distinction between ‘intercultural competence’ (IC) and ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (ICC) becomes evident. For language teachers this is an extension of the existing concept of ‘communicative competence’, where there is emphasis on the ability to use a language not only with correct grammar but also in socially appropriate ways (Savignon 2013).

Comparing foreign language education and citizenship education

In the model of ICC presented in Byram (1997), the crucial development from the work of Byram and Zarate (1996) and the CEFR (2001) was the inclusion of the fifth savoir, the
concept of ‘critical cultural awareness’ or ‘savoir s’engager’. This was influenced by theory of ‘politische Bildung’ which is usually translated as ‘political education’, but this is a translation which misses some of the connotations of Bildung as a process of drawing out the human potential of learners (Løvlie and Standish 2002). At approximately the same time, theoretical work in Germany on ‘politische Bildung’ was beginning to use the term ‘Demokratielernen’ (Himmelmann 2006) where the emphasis on learning to be and act in a democracy was more evident in the label.

A comparison of the competences described in models of ICC with models of the competences needed to be and act as a democratic citizen, reveals much overlap but also some differences. Byram (2008) presents a ‘Framework of Education for Intercultural Citizenship’ which integrates appropriate parts of Himmelmann’s (2001) approach to setting objectives for citizenship education/learning for democracy with the approach in Byram (1997) to setting objectives for language teaching for ICC. Byram (2008) suggests that there are limitations to both approaches which can be remedied by a combination of ideas from both. The objectives of citizenship education and learning to act democratically include the notion that learners should become active in their world, not only in the future – a learning for later life – but also at the time that they are learners in a classroom. On the other hand, the world where learners should act is assumed to be their community, whether their local community or their national community. There is no reference to communities beyond the national.

In foreign language teaching, in contrast, the attention of learners is directed to the world beyond their national community, especially to countries where the language they are learning is spoken. Yet in the concept of critical cultural awareness in Byram’s (1997) model of ICC, there is no suggestion that criticality should lead to action in the learners’ world or community/ies. Combining the two approaches to setting objectives for teaching, which develop the competences of an ‘intercultural citizen’ is, therefore, the purpose of the analysis and the heart of the framework which is presented in Byram (2008). It was argued there that ‘transnational communities’ should be created in foreign language teaching and that these become the basis of political action/action in the world.

These principles of intercultural citizenship education were further developed in the collection of articles, already referred to, which deal with policy and practice in several countries. Axioms and characteristics of education for intercultural citizenship were stated in Alred et al. (2006, pp. 233–234). They are reproduced in Table 3.1.

Criteria of ‘criticality’ were added to this list for projects which would implement a theory of intercultural citizenship. ‘Criticality’ criteria were taken from Barnett (1997) who identifies three domains of educational experience:

- **propositions, ideas and theories** – i.e. what learners learn about the world (in formal education what they learn in their ‘subjects’).
- **the internal world**, that is oneself, a form of critical thought that is demonstrated in critical self-reflection – i.e. what learners think about themselves as individuals.
- **the external world**, a form of critical thought that is demonstrated in critical action – i.e. what learners do as a result of their thinking and learning.

He also identifies four levels or degrees of criticality which are increasingly complex:

- **critical skills**: at this first level the emphasis is on skills, on learning how to be critical (and ‘critical’ of course does not mean being negative or attacking something/somebody – it means evaluating positive and negative).
Table 3.1 Education for intercultural citizenship: axioms and characteristics

There are two purposes for this statement of ‘axioms and characteristics’ of education for intercultural citizenship. They act first as an approach to planning of education for intercultural citizenship in whatever form deemed desirable, and second as criteria for evaluating the degree of intercultural citizenship education already present in existing education systems.

The axioms define what being intercultural entails and the characteristics are what might be expected in education in any form which helps people to think about their experience and to determine how they should respond to it.

Axioms

– intercultural experience takes place when people from different social groups with different cultures (values, beliefs, and behaviours) meet
– ‘being intercultural’ involves analysis and reflection about intercultural experience, and acting on that reflection
– intercultural democratic experience takes place when people of different social groups and cultures engage in democratic social and political activity – not avoiding values and judgements
– intercultural citizenship education involves:
  – causing/facilitating intercultural citizenship experience, and analysis and reflection on it (and on the possibility of further social and/or political activity, where ‘political’ is taken in broad sense to mean activity which involves working with others to achieve an agreed end);
  – creating learning/change in the individual: cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural change; change in self-perception/spirituality; change in relationships with Others i.e. people of different social groups; change which is based on the particular but is related to the universal.

Characteristics of education for intercultural citizenship

– a comparative (juxtaposition) orientation in activities of teaching and learning e.g. juxtaposition of political processes (in the classroom, school, country) and a critical perspective which questions assumptions through the process of juxtaposition;
– emphasis on becoming conscious of working with Others (of a different group and culture) through (a) processes of comparison/juxtaposition and (b) communication in a language (L1 or L2/3/ . . .) which influences perceptions and which emphasizes the importance of learners becoming conscious of multiple identities;
– creating a community of action and communication which is supranational and/or composed of people of different beliefs values and behaviours which are potentially in conflict – without expecting conformity and easy, harmonious solutions;
– having a focus and range of action which is different from that which is available when not working with Others, where ‘Others’ refers to all those of whatever social group who are initially perceived as different, members of an out-group;
– emphasizing becoming aware of one’s existing identities and opening options for social identities additional to the national and regional etc. (e.g. the formation of perhaps temporary supranational group identities through interaction with Others);
– paying equal attention to cognition/knowledge, affect/attitude, behaviours/skill;
– all of the preceding with a conscious commitment to values (i.e. rejecting relativism), being aware that values sometimes conflict and are differently interpreted, but being committed, as citizens in a community, to cooperation.
• **reflexivity**: at this second level the skills are applied to the knowledge learners have acquired, to their own selves and to the world.

• **refashioning of traditions**: at this third level, the criticality leads to change, in the sense of modification of what has so far been accepted as ‘common sense’ in knowledge, in oneself, and in what we do in the world.

• **transformatory critique**: at this fourth level, the change is more radical and change is not just modification of what is ‘common sense’ or ‘taken for granted’ but in fact overturns this and develops something new.

There would be therefore certain characteristics in intercultural citizenship projects, i.e. teaching and learning which include critical thinking as intended outcome; teaching and learning which leads to learners becoming aware of the presuppositions they hold and the national basis of many of these.

These characteristics are in turn related to ‘critical cultural awareness’ (Byram 1997) and refer to questioning/challenging/wondering about what learners would have done/thought if the project had not involved people from another country.

A further theoretical question was the that of identification. There would be:

opportunities for learners to create and cooperate in groups of several nationalities, forming ‘bonded’ international groups, i.e. learners identify with ‘our (international) group’ during the course of the project; such identification may only be temporary but leads learners to suspend their identification with the national culture/way of thinking and acting to find new ‘international’ ways of acting.

(Byram et al. 2017, p. xxvi)

All of this was summarized in the following terms for teachers and learners (Byram et al. 2017, p. xxviii):

create a sense of international identification with learners in the international project;
challenge the ‘common sense’ of each national group within the international project;
develop a new ‘international’ way of thinking and acting (a new way which may be either a modification of what is usually done OR a radically new way);
apply that new way to ‘knowledge’, to ‘self’ and to ‘the world’.

and it became fundamental to a series of experimental projects, one of which is described in the following section.

We should note that the principles on which this version of intercultural citizenship education for the foreign language classroom rest have been criticized as too Eurocentric (Li and Dervin 2018) or inoperable in some contexts (Phipps 2014). Osler and Starkey (2015, p. 31) have also pointed out that they think this version is insufficient as it needs to be “explicitly linked to human rights principles and standards”.

**Pedagogic approaches and methods**

**The project**

The intercultural citizenship project described here was created within an international online network (Byram 2016) where participants discussed their plans and agreed that their
intercultural citizenship projects would attempt to implement the concepts described in the previous section. The project used a content- and task-based approach derived from the tenets of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Cenoz 2015). All 99 participants were studying languages at university and were aged 18–22, with a language proficiency of B1/B2 (Council of Europe 2001). Seventy-six were Argentinian students in the second year of study of English as a foreign language intending to become either teachers or translators and 23 were students in the first year of a British university course of Spanish as a foreign language.

The topic selected for this project was the 1978 Football World Cup, which took place in Argentina during the last military dictatorship period (1976–1983). During that time, many young people ‘disappeared’, being killed or kidnapped by the regime, and there were demonstrations by the ‘mothers’ of the generation of ‘disappeared’, whose symbol was to wear a white headscarf. The dictatorship tried to shift attention away from the events and onto the attractions and excitement of the World Cup.

The project comprised four stages: introduction, awareness-raising, intercultural dialogue, and citizenship (see Porto and Byram 2015; Yulita and Porto 2017). In the introductory stage, students separately in each university researched the topic of the ‘78 World Cup using the foreign languages that they were learning. A wide range of materials was used in various sign systems, media, and languages. Peer discussions of these materials followed and the students designed posters summarizing key information using IT tools, such as Glogster, Prezi, and movie-maker.

During the awareness-raising stage, students searched for texts about the topic of different kinds – written, audio, and visual – using the internet and following their curiosity and specific needs for information. They reflected on the power of the media in manipulating thinking and behaviours in those representations. The students compared and contrasted these materials, with the goal of addressing issues of bias, prejudice, and naturalized assumptions.

In the intercultural dialogue stage, students from each country met virtually, using Skype to work on a collaborative task. They worked in small, mixed-nationality groups and designed a bilingual (Spanish-English) leaflet to express their joint, international perspective on the events of the time. The purpose of the leaflet was to raise awareness among other people of human rights violations during the military dictatorship, e.g. fellow students and people in their neighbourhood. Finally, during the citizenship stage, students in each university planned civic or social actions in their local, regional or global communities intended to raise the awareness of people today about the dictatorship and human rights violations in the past. For example, some Argentinian students created internet campaigns, whilst others designed leaflets and distributed them in a local square. Talks in primary schools and the local university were delivered by groups of students, classroom materials for primary education were designed by student teachers in collaboration with our students, and first-hand testimonies, such as an interview with a 95-year-old man whose son had disappeared, were obtained. In addition to the questions about identity changes, which were part of the original planning of the project, it was also evident that interesting processes of mediation were taking place. Intercultural citizenship leads to and is dependent on learners becoming mediators.

**Mediation**

Mediation is a concept related to translation and interpreting and was discussed in this context in the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001, pp. 87–88) and developed further in the *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe 2018a, pp. 33–34, 103–127). Mediation may happen within the
same language or between languages (‘cross-linguistic mediation’) and the *Companion Volume* identifies (Council of Europe 2018a, p. 104) three separate types of mediation, although they are often combined:

- *Mediating a text*, which “involves passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access”.
- *Mediating concepts*, which “refers to the process of facilitating access to knowledge and concepts for others”.
- *Mediating communication*, the aim of which is “to facilitate understanding and to shape successful communication between users/learners who may have individual, sociocultural, sociolinguistic or intellectual differences in standpoint”.

In the project just described, it became evident that intercultural citizenship involved ‘mediating concepts’. This was clear from different data types collected during the ten months that the project lasted, namely: recorded Skype conversations in mixed-nationality groups; written reflection logs, posters, PowerPoint presentations, and videos (from the first two stages); bilingual leaflets (one per mixed-nationality group from the third stage, ‘intercultural dialogue’); and, from the Argentinian participants, *76 Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (AIE) (Byram et al. 2009). The AIE is a tool designed by the Council of Europe intended to encourage users to analyze and reflect upon an intercultural experience. The data revealed that: (a) mediating concepts was difficult; (b) students used a variety of mediation strategies and activities; (c) cross-linguistic mediation took place on a foundation of democratic values; and (d) translation was used as mediation for social justice.

**Mediating concepts**

Students often revealed gaps in knowledge on two levels: (1) the Argentinian learners had only indirect experience of the ’78 World Cup and the military dictatorship through history lessons, books, stories, and the media, and (2) the UK–based students lacked any prior knowledge of the subject matter. The Argentinian students acknowledged the difficulty and strangeness of mediating ‘an extremely Argentinian topic’ in English, their foreign language:

> we acquired the vocabulary (and also the knowledge) to talk about *something that may be hard to communicate in a language that is not our mother tongue*  
> *(Ana, reflection log, emphasis added)*

> we were able to talk about *something that represents every Argentinian person in English, which was kind of strange, because I’ve always talked about this topic in Spanish (. . .)*  
> This project made me think about *an extremely Argentinian topic* in English  
> *(Paula, reflection log, emphasis added)*

Here the learners engaged in cross-linguistic mediation to discuss the concept of the dictatorship through ‘group interaction’ and ‘collaboration’, two mediation activities highlighted in the CEFR *Companion Volume* (2018a, pp. 52–56, 96–99). Students built bridges from one language to another and communicated ideas previously learned in their mother tongue in the new language that they were learning.

Students interrelated both languages in a process referred to in the *Companion Volume* to the CEFR as the use of a plurilingual repertoire which is analogous to ‘translanguaging’.
Mediation activities and strategies

Lack of prior knowledge ("I didn’t know anything"), wrestling to find appropriate language to express ideas ("the dictatorship . . . dictadores? . . . dictators") and challenges posed by understanding and imagining new conceptual territories ("the most difficult part to understand", "it’s so hard to try to imagine") gave the students a space where clarity was sought through reformulations using a variety of mediation strategies. Students mediated conceptual talk using translations, as well as making comparisons and/or links between new and prior knowledge as scaffolding strategies to enable their peers to construct new concepts (Council of Europe 2018a, pp. 113–126). For example, students used translations ("Proceso de Reorganización Nacional" translated as "National Reorganization Process"), language adaptations ("they took over the government. It was not a democracy"), and prior knowledge ("Have you seen Madonna’s movie about Evita?"). However, when this latter strategy failed due to a British student not knowing the film, the Argentinian students engaged in other forms of mediation activities, such as breaking down complex information ("a group called ‘Los Montoneros’", "they were the opposition to the military") and elaboration of ideas ("they kidnapped people, they killed"). The students thus kept two languages and two perspectives in mind in their mediation activities during group discussions.

When subject matter was new or difficult, students linked new concepts to prior knowledge. For example, they compared World Wars I and II ("similar to what happened in Germany") with the Argentinian military dictatorship. This strategy involved a translation of perspectives: the explanation of new concepts by linking new concepts to shared common knowledge. Students’ Skype conversations involved much meta-talk. For example, in the following reported exchanges, we find two Argentinian students explaining news items to a British student ("the news talked about", "the thing is") to enable understanding of two armed forces ("the police" and "the rebels"):

Argentinian student 3: The news talked about fights between the police and the rebels, the subversives.

Argentinian student 2: The thing is they made people believe they were going to do a good thing.

(Skype conversation, Group 7, emphasis added)

The Council of Europe (2018a, pp. 96–97) developed a new scale for online conversation and discussion using a goal-oriented approach to the co-construction of meaning. Here, we see the students using their linguistic and translation skills to mediate texts with the goal of relaying specific information to their peers, thus realizing a key competence in the Companion Volume. One of the outcomes of these mediation activities comprised an increased...
awareness of language use, in particular use of lexical items to facilitate understanding and transmission of their ideas:

Vocabulary had to be used very carefully. . . . It made me more conscious about the things I wanted to express and the way I wanted to do it.

(Paula, reflection log, emphasis added)

The project encouraged students to dig for words and ways of expression outside of the typical conversation and exchanges one might have in class.

(Carmen, emphasis added)

Further, the Council of Europe (2018a, p. 106) expanded the notion of mediation to include mediating a text for oneself (for example in taking notes during a lecture) or in expressing reactions to texts. The following illustration shows students creating mind maps to break down complex information gathered from different sources:

**British student:** Yeah. Well . . . I collected a lot of information from what I’ve learned at university, and talking to you guys on Skype. Yeah, so I just collected a lot of information and I did a map of a lot of ideas of what I wanted to say.

(Skype conversation, Group 2, emphasis added)

The adaptation and modification of language as a mediation strategy was pervasive, as most students acknowledged in their reflection logs, for instance by explaining, paraphrasing and recasting for one of the international students at the British university:

I explain[ed] the same idea in different ways as my partner was not a native speaker of English or Spanish . . . this ability of paraphrasing and recasting some of my ideas.

(Patricia, reflection log, emphasis added)

The following Skype conversation extract illustrates language adaptation processes related to the concept of ‘commemoration’ in various ways: explanation (“all the memories and all the stories”); clarification requests (“memory?”); paraphrasing (“things like people do to commemorate”); recasting through comparison (“it’s like when people”); and translation into Spanish (“conmemorar”, “conmemoración”). In this instance, the outcome of this strategy was an A-ha moment, or revelation (“Ah!”, “Yes!”) for a British student, i.e. an indication that understanding had occurred (“Yeah”),

**Argentinian student 1:** So, all the memories and all the stories.

**British student:** Yes. Like you’ve said ‘las Madres de Plaza de Mayo’.

**Argentinian student 1:** Yeah. Things like people do to commemorate.

**British student:** Do you guys know what commemorate means?

**Argentinian student 2:** Yeah. Memory?

**British student:** What?

**Argentinian student 2:** Memory.

**British student:** A memory, yeah. Memory?

**British student:** Yeah.
**Argentinian student 1:** To commemorate.
**Argentinian student 2:** To commemorate.
**British student:** Ahh! Yes!
**Argentinian student 1:** It’s like when people . . . you start to remember something else.

**Argentinian student 2 and British student:** Yeah.
**Argentinian student 2:** Conmemorar, conmemoración.
**Argentinian student 1:** We could do all the things you do to commemorate that time.

*(Skype conversation, Group 10, emphasis added)*

Students also processed texts that they found on the internet for their peers. Two Argentinian students reformulated the main points in the speech of the military junta after the coup, written in Spanish, and transferred it in a condensed form in English:

**Student 1:** Here, in this site, I found the speech they gave to inform they were taking the government that day, and the thing is they were saying something like “this country had too many dictatorships and too much political trouble; because of that, it’s time for a group of people to get the power and finish with everything, get this country to work and get better, and better organized”.* (emphasis added)

Mediation, as proposed in the CEFR *Companion Volume*, can be used in language education across the curriculum, beyond foreign language learning. Descriptors for online interaction have been incorporated, along with descriptors for facilitating a pluricultural space (2018a, pp. 157–161).

**Cross-linguistic mediation on a foundation of democratic values**

Students mediated communication amongst themselves, using the foreign languages that they were learning. They did so by facilitating a pluricultural space, as described in the *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe 2018a, p. 120) through competences such as mutual understanding and support (“make an effort to understand”), respect for and sensitivity to diversity (“other realities and perspectives”, “broaden our minds”), in addition to harmony and solidarity (“as helpful as I could”) (see Yulita 2018 for further details):

**Manuela:** I had to *make an effort to understand others’ opinions and the way they expressed them in English*

**Patricia:** trying to be as helpful as I could for my interlocutor to understand clearly

**Pilar:** I also *learned about others’ realities and perspectives, which also enables us to broaden our minds* (emphasis added)

In particular in the fourth stage of the project, the ‘citizenship stage’, the students mobilized and deployed their competences for democratic culture (Council of Europe 2018b) as they engaged in civic action in their community using the bilingual leaflets that they had designed collaboratively. They identified themselves as responsible citizens (“grow as citizens”) and
engaged in civic action to improve the world (“the mission of building a better and more conscious society”).

By doing this [contributing material to Comisión Provincial por la Memoria], we know that many other people will be able to hear what we have heard, to learn what we have learnt in order to grow as citizens and as a country. It is great to think that something that was so productive to us could reach a higher level and be productive to more people as well. This is why we can say that thanks to this project we feel that we are actively working in the mission of building a better and more conscious society.

(Group reflection on civic action stage, emphasis added)

Remembering the past (“important they are remembered”, “never silenced”, “the photos to remember them”, “it maintains that period”, “must not be forgotten”) to build a better future was a recurrent call by all students.

Others like the journalist Rodolfo Walsh and the comic writer Héctor Oesterheld, payed (sic) with their lives for expressing their ideology against the dictatorship. Now it is important they are remembered so as their voice was never silenced.

(Extract from bilingual poster, Group 17, emphasis added)

Argentinian student 1: For example on the website desaparecidos.com with the photos to remember them. I think it is very important because it maintains that period what was important, I mean, the... what was significant... Disappearance and tortures what happened in that period.

Argentinian student 2: Yes, yes.

Argentinian student 1: I think that it's the part which must not be forgotten.

(Skype conversation, Group 23, emphasis added)

Another group of learners prepared a presentation which they delivered at a community centre for impoverished people in a slum area of Argentina, as one of the participating students explained:

I work as a volunteer in the neighbourhood called San José, Ensenada. Actually it is a “villa de emergencia” (I looked for a translation, but I couldn’t find one. I don’t know if there’s any), and I work with people who don’t know how to read or write. There is a high rate of illiteracy in that neighbourhood. The other students in my group knew about my volunteer work so we thought it was a good idea to inform people about what happened 37 years ago. We prepared some photographs to show them (most of the pictures were taken when we visited “Museo de Arte y Memoria”), a song written by León Gieco, a poster and a documentary which explained what happened at the time. We also thought that every resource we had at hand was very useful because most of the people who attended our talk didn’t know what happened during the last dictatorship. (emphasis added)

Commitment to educating others, coupled with a willingness to “inform people about what happened 37 years ago” constituted an altruistic form of social action mediated by transformations
of written texts into other semiotic systems, such as music, documentaries, posters, and photographs. In one student’s own words, “most of the people who attended our talk didn’t know what happened during the last dictatorship”; therefore her group drew on “every resource at hand” to reach their audience. This example illustrates how learners positioned themselves as social justice activists in the various translation activities they completed during the citizenship phase of the project, an issue to which we turn next.

**Translation as mediation for social justice**

Baker (2013, pp. 23–24) argues that translations are never “neutral”, “disinterested” or “apolitical”, and that those involved in translation processes “actively engage in forms of collective action”, telling and retelling narratives and stories through the medium of translation. Translation is “a site where we exercise our agency” enabling us to use it as a “tool for changing the world”. This was evident when students translated written texts to reach audiences beyond their immediate community. For example, a group of students created bilingual leaflets using translations from English into Spanish (and vice versa) to mediate concepts for audiences of foreign visitors to a museum in Argentina. Other similar leaflets were submitted by students to the Comisión Provincial por la Memoria (www.comisionporlamemoria.org) to contribute to the committee’s work on the collective healing of historical trauma. As an outcome of this social action, the leaflets were archived as cultural resources and made available to the general public.

The students in the project thus adopted an action-oriented approach and acted as ‘social agents’ in their use of translations as described in the **Companion Volume**. This is evidenced by their use of “language as a vehicle for communication rather than as a subject to study” (Council of Europe 2018a, p. 27). Their translations acted as a medium to tell their stories to international audiences in an effort to disseminate their thinking more globally. This action-oriented approach to their mediation activity involved collective political action to raise awareness of human rights abuse, thus students adopting a positioning as social agents “engaged in narrating the world across linguistic and cultural boundaries” (Baker 2013, p. 24).

**Conclusions and future directions**

We started this chapter with a historical overview of the evolution of the theory of intercultural citizenship in foreign language education, with an analysis of the concepts of intercultural speaker and intercultural (communicative) competence. We outlined Byram’s (1997) savoir s’engager, or critical cultural awareness, and Barnett’s (1997) criteria for ‘criticality’ to explain the starting point for an international online network of teachers and researchers who carried out empirical research applying and developing the theory. This was achieved through educational projects with their own students, one of them being described in this chapter.

The project aimed to realize the theoretical principles of intercultural citizenship in foreign language teaching and involved a pedagogical intervention with English and Spanish language undergraduates who communicated virtually to create a leaflet raising awareness of human rights violations. We analyzed this project through the lens of ‘mediation’, a concept that has recently been revised and developed by the **Companion Volume** (Council of Europe 2018a) to the CEFR (Council of Europe 2001). Here, we have demonstrated with empirical data how students overcame conceptual difficulties through the use of a variety of mediation activities and strategies underpinned by their democratic values, one of them being the use of translation for social justice.
In the future, it is likely that education systems in general will, at least in the western tradition, take increasing responsibility for educating for citizenship with an international dimension, and the work presented here will be a foundation for further developments in cross-curriculum, interdisciplinary teaching. Such plans are, for example, already being implemented in Norway. The relevance of intercultural citizenship work will be self-evident for teachers and trainee teachers. In the case of future translators, the first stage will be to make them aware of the potential of translation for political engagement and social change, and of how they, like the students in the projects described in this chapter, can become politically active and take a responsible role in international society.

Further reading

This Special Issue problematizes the notion of global citizenship education by exploring various theoretical dimensions, empirical case studies, pedagogic affordances and research directions.

The argument in this article is that language learning has educational purposes and in this sense, the author’s point is similar to the one we develop in this chapter. In this case, the moral, civic, and political dimensions are explored, with examples from autobiographical and literary texts. Implications for curriculum design are also addressed.

This Special Issue addresses conceptual aspects of intercultural citizenship as well as research, pedagogy, and teacher education concerns. Empirical cases in the Argentinean, Chinese, Korean, and Taiwanese settings challenge more Eurocentric visions, also represented in this issue by work from the United Kingdom and the United States.

Related topics

student agency, secondary school education, content-based instruction

References


