



# *Akademik Eğitim ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (AJESS Journal)

## *Teaching English for global citizenship : Foundations for developing intercultural communication skills for global dialogue*

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### **Abstract:**

Education for global citizenship is a topic that has recently become a form of modern civic education and of great importance, as it involves the active participation of people, especially young students, in projects that address global issues of a social, political, economic, and environmental nature.

Anyone looking at the structure of societies considers the educational system to be highly influential and affected by global changes. Education is one of the most important pillars for shaping values, building generations, and contributing to the development of important concepts such as establishing peace, achieving sustainable development, and educating individuals to accept others and respect diversity. All of these reflect the values of citizenship. Indeed, they extend to global citizenship by preparing individuals to be citizens who have a sense of their roles as global citizens, who are aware of the wider world around them, who appreciate and respect diversity, and who are willing to work collectively and make the world more just and sustainable.

For global citizenship, there must be a global language for dialogue, which is the language of science or the language of the world, "English". Teaching English for global citizenship means integrating language skills with awareness of global issues and moral values to enable learners to interact and develop intercultural communication competence for a conscious and purposeful global dialogue.

In this research paper, we wanted to examine the phenomenon of teaching English for global citizenship; attempting to integrate language skills with awareness of the most important global issues between cultures for open global dialogue and linking language to global concepts and understanding its use. So, what are the most important foundations and values of global citizenship? And where does the English language play a role in achieving global citizenship? The answers for these questions are detailed through the current research paper.

**Keywords:** Teaching English, Global citizenship, Global dialogue.

### **Introduction:**

Education has undergone a transformation in both its linguistic discourse and practice. This transformation recognizes the value of education and learning and their role in understanding and resolving various global issues in the social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental spheres. Education has gone beyond its role in developing and improving knowledge and skills to providing learners with values, interpersonal and social skills (soft skills), and global behaviors. It is expected to facilitate international cooperation and promote social transformation in an innovative way for a sustainable and inclusive world characterized by justice, peace, tolerance and security.

This was confirmed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who said verbatim, "We must promote global citizenship. Education does not only mean providing the individual with literacy and numeracy skills, but also education in the field of citizenship." Education should fully play its essential role of helping people build just, peaceful, and tolerant societies. (United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 26 September 2012, on the occasion of the launch of the Secretary-General's global initiative on "Education First").

Through this, language education plays a leading role in spreading a culture of peace, tolerance and human rights. Indeed, the global language is the most important means of developing global citizenship among various learners. Rather, it must be mastered for the sake of global citizenship in all school curricula, by addressing global topics and covering obstacles that our contemporary world suffers from.

Language is considered a link between individuals and peoples, and it is an indispensable bridge in connecting people with each other. It is also one of the most important means of communication, especially in the present era, which is considered the age of digitization and technology, where the whole world has become like a small village thanks to modern science and technology.

For global citizenship, there must be a global language for dialogue, which is the language of science or the language of the world, "English". Teaching English for global citizenship means integrating language skills with awareness of global issues and moral values to enable learners to interact and develop intercultural communication competence for a conscious and meaningful global dialogue. By learning and being able to speak English, any individual, community, or country can further strengthen internal and external relations.

In this research paper, we wanted to examine the phenomenon of teaching English for global citizenship; in an attempt to integrate language skills with awareness of the most important global issues between cultures for open global dialogue and to link language to global concepts and understand its use. So what is global citizenship? What are the most important values of education for global citizenship? And where does the role of the English language lie in achieving global citizenship?

### 1. Global Citizenship:

The concept of global citizenship is subject to disagreement and debate in the language of scientific discourse, as there are several interpretations of what the term "global citizen" implies and what it means for an individual to be a global citizen. (UNESCO, 2013). Some have called global citizenship "transnational citizenship". (A. Weale, 1991, pp. 155–156) Others have noted that the term "planetary citizenship" emphasizes the responsibility of the global community to preserve planet Earth (Henderson and D. Ikea, 2004).

The concept of citizenship has expanded to become multi-faceted and linked to global well-being and the common good beyond borders. Despite this diversity, everyone agrees that the concept of global citizenship involves a sense of belonging to a larger community where humanity is shared, and promotes an idea that connects the national with the international. To understand others, based on universal values and through respect for diversity and pluralism.

Global citizenship expresses a set of values that include belonging, active participation, democracy, tolerance, and justice. These values influence an individual's personality, making them more positive in understanding their rights and duties towards the country they live in, their nation, and the world at large. With the need to respect the cultural particularities of each people, along with possessing sound, conscious and responsible behaviors to overcome all the challenges facing present and future generations.

### 2. Core values of global citizenship:

- - Respect for human rights: Defending the dignity and rights of all individuals as part of the human family.
- - Social and economic justice: striving to achieve equality of opportunity within and between countries.
- - Tolerance and respect for diversity: Appreciating the cultural, religious, linguistic and social differences between people.
- - World Peace: Working towards a more peaceful and secure world by rejecting violence and conflict.
- Environmental responsibility: Taking responsibility for protecting our planet for current and future generations.
- - Interdependence: Understanding that our actions have far-reaching effects on others around the world.
- - Active participation: Participating in building more equitable and sustainable local and global communities, including contributing to decision-making at various levels.
- Empathy and cooperation: Building relationships based on mutual understanding and cooperation to solve global problems.
- Global dialogue: It is considered a bridge and creates a conducive environment for enhancing understanding of global issues and is one of the fundamental tools used in global citizenship education. (Al-Saeed Bin Azza, Fawzi Louhidi, 2021, pp. 24-25).

### 3. The basic conceptual dimensions of global citizenship education are as follows (UNESCO, 2015, p. 15):

**The cognitive domain:** To acquire knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking regarding global, regional, national, and local issues, and the interdependence and interrelationship between different countries and populations.

**The socio-emotional sphere:** the feeling of belonging to common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity, and respect for difference and diversity.

**Behavioral domain:** Taking effective and responsible actions at the local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

### 4. Teaching English for global citizenship:

Teaching English for global citizenship means using language as a means to acquire knowledge about world issues, develop empathy and critical thinking skills, and facilitate communication between different cultures to enable individuals to participate as responsible members of a global community. This includes teaching English as an international language to learn about the peoples of the world, their cultures and problems, as well as promoting mutual respect and understanding between individuals from diverse backgrounds.

In general, teaching English for global citizenship involves integrating language skills with awareness of global issues and ethical values to enable learners to interact and develop intercultural communication skills for a conscious and meaningful global dialogue. Global dialogue for global citizenship is an approach to fostering mutual understanding, respect for diversity, and cooperation to address global challenges through open dialogue and shared learning. This dialogue aims to build global citizens who understand their responsibilities towards a global community that extends beyond their own country, and focuses on integrating values such as human rights, social justice, and equality into all aspects of life. This integration requires content that addresses global issues such as human rights and climate change in language lessons, with an emphasis on building critical thinking skills.

#### **5. Integrating global citizenship into English language teaching:**

**English as a central tool:** Making English a tool to get to know diverse cultures and understand other people's perspectives and beliefs.

**Integrating global issues:** Integrating discussions about global issues into English language classes, with an emphasis on how they are interconnected at the local, regional and international levels.

**Focus on dialogue:** Encouraging dialogue and discussion among learners about global and ethical issues to promote mutual understanding and respect.

**Leveraging global resources:** Using materials and resources from organizations such as the United Nations and UNESCO to promote global citizenship goals.

#### **6. Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence for Global Dialogue:**

The Intercultural Communicative Competence is widely known as the ability to communicate and interact appropriately with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. Byram (1997) proposed a comprehensive model highlighting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical awareness which individuals need for an effective intercultural communication. His model contributed to show that a person must have curiosity, openness and respect when interacting with people from different cultures; he added that a person should also have knowledge about diverse cultural practices, skills to compare and contrast one's local culture with the target one, skills to discover new cultural characteristics and specifications as a matter of coping with misunderstandings, and lastly to critically and ethically evaluate both the own the other cultures in terms of values and perspectives.

ICC is additionally considered a supportive tool serving the global interactions that fosters peace building, sustainable development, global cooperation and diplomacy. In current times, Global Dialogue is deeply needed, it is a constructive communication between different cultures in order to confront and overcome global challengeable issues. The Intercultural Communicative Competence is considered fundamental today because it is deeply required for migration, online interaction, international collaboration, international business or education and for globalization. That is to say, the ICC is a strong servant for global dialogue which attempts towards the increasing of mutual understanding, enhancing communication skills through cultural diversity and preparing engaged citizens for effective global dialogue.

Nevertheless, one may encounter multiple challenges when maintaining to develop the ICC for global interaction. People might struggle with obvious stereotyping and misunderstanding of a given community, they may confront technological issues when communicating (Flip, Zoom), or even face a serious lack of resources (videos, speakers and readings). From another perspective, plenty of opportunities are being provided out of the present program. It could preserve a long term impact by global citizenship and sustainable development; it also demonstrates tolerance, enhances empathy, leadership and intercultural openness. A further opportunity is that this program of developing ICC for global dialogue copes individuals to recognize cultural differences without stereotypes through adopting cultural awareness which ameliorates the cross-cultural harmony. When discussing the global dialogue, there must be some useful methods to make the communication successes at all levels; the primary local method should certainly be an appointed concrete training using a pedagogical approach such as the Experiential Approach where people from diverse cultural backgrounds could practice and understand norms and attitudes through real active engagements, practical applications and reflective observations (Kolb, 1984). In addition to, the two major methods for a more developed area of engaging in global dialogue are international collaborative projects in different fields and the online forums for a more effective universal communication that integrate the ability to interact and the discussion of global challengeable matters.

#### **7. The Role of Critical Thinking and Global Awareness in Intercultural Communication**

Critical thinking and global awareness are important elements in developing intercultural communication skills, as they enable learners to understand cultural differences beyond their visible characteristics. In intercultural encounters, people may interpret the same situation differently because of their values, beliefs, experiences, and social backgrounds. Therefore, learners need to develop the ability to question their initial assumptions, examine information from different perspectives, and reflect on how their own cultural backgrounds influence their understanding of others. Byram (1997) emphasizes the importance of critical cultural awareness, which involves evaluating cultural practices and perspectives through a reflective and informed approach. From this perspective, intercultural communication should not be limited to

acquiring information about other cultures; it should also encourage learners to examine their own beliefs and recognize that their interpretations are not necessarily universal.

In English language teaching, critical thinking can be developed through classroom discussions, debates, problem-solving activities, and the analysis of authentic texts dealing with global issues. For instance, learners may discuss environmental responsibility, gender equality, migration, or access to education by examining how these issues are understood in different social and cultural contexts. Such activities encourage them to support their opinions with reasons, listen to opposing viewpoints, and reconsider their positions when presented with new evidence. Sun (2023), in a case study of secondary English language education in China, explores how critical literacy pedagogy can connect English teaching with the development of critical global citizenship. This perspective suggests that English lessons can provide opportunities for learners to develop language skills while reflecting on wider social realities. Consequently, integrating critical thinking and global awareness into English language teaching can help learners become more thoughtful communicators who are better prepared to participate in meaningful global dialogue.

#### **8. Promoting Cultural Diversity and Challenging Stereotypes through English Language Teaching**

Cultural diversity is an essential aspect of global citizenship education because it encourages learners to recognize and respect the different ways in which people understand and experience the world. However, cultural differences are sometimes presented through simplified descriptions that may reinforce stereotypes rather than promote genuine understanding. For example, learners may develop fixed ideas about how people from a particular country behave, communicate, or express their opinions. Such generalizations can lead to misunderstandings because they overlook individual differences and the influence of social, historical, and personal experiences. Kramsch (1993) highlights the close relationship between language and culture, showing the importance of considering the cultural contexts in which language is used and meaning is constructed. In this sense, teaching English should involve more than presenting facts about English-speaking countries; it should also help learners understand the diversity that exists within and across cultural communities.

To achieve this goal, English language teachers can introduce authentic materials, personal narratives, films, interviews, and literary texts that present different cultural experiences and viewpoints. Learners can compare these perspectives with their own experiences, discuss the limitations of cultural generalizations, and reflect on how stereotypes influence communication. Byram (1997) similarly emphasizes the importance of openness, curiosity, and critical cultural awareness in intercultural competence. These qualities encourage learners to approach unfamiliar cultural practices with a willingness to understand rather than immediately judge them. Moreover, cultural learning should not focus exclusively on foreign cultures, as learners' own cultural backgrounds also provide valuable opportunities for reflection and exchange. By creating classroom environments in which differences can be discussed respectfully, teachers can help learners recognize cultural diversity as a resource for learning rather than an obstacle to communication. In this way, English language teaching can contribute to the development of more inclusive attitudes and support the values of respect, equality, and mutual understanding associated with global citizenship.

#### **9. Fostering Global Citizenship through Collaborative Learning and Intercultural Dialogue**

Collaborative learning and intercultural dialogue offer practical ways of connecting global citizenship education with English language learning. Through collaboration, learners have opportunities to exchange ideas, share experiences, negotiate meaning, and work towards common goals. These interactions are particularly valuable because intercultural communication requires not only the ability to express one's own ideas but also the willingness to listen to others and respond appropriately to different perspectives. Byram (1997) emphasizes that intercultural communicative competence involves attitudes, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness, all of which can be developed through meaningful interaction. Therefore, collaborative activities can help learners move beyond the passive acquisition of cultural information towards the active use of language in situations that require cooperation, reflection, and mutual understanding.

In the English language classroom, teachers can encourage this process through group projects, role-plays, debates, and problem-solving tasks related to global issues. For example, learners can work in groups to propose solutions to environmental problems, prepare presentations on cultural diversity, or discuss how communities can respond to discrimination and social inequality. These activities require learners to use English to communicate their ideas, consider alternative viewpoints, and reach decisions collectively. The British Council's Global Citizenship in the English Language Classroom provides examples and proposals for connecting global citizenship with language teaching in different educational contexts (Gimenez & Sheehan, n.d.). Such approaches suggest that language learning can become a space in which learners practise the communicative and interpersonal skills needed for responsible participation in an interconnected world. Nevertheless, successful collaboration requires teachers to ensure that all learners have opportunities to contribute and that disagreements are handled respectfully. When these conditions are supported, collaborative learning and intercultural dialogue can strengthen learners' communicative abilities while encouraging cooperation, empathy, and a sense of shared responsibility for global challenges.

#### **Conclusion:**

Teaching English for global citizenship aims to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to participate responsibly in an increasingly interconnected world. Beyond developing linguistic competence, this approach encourages learners to promote inclusivity, respect human rights, appreciate cultural diversity, and contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable world. Through the integration of global citizenship education into English language

teaching, learners can develop a deeper understanding of global issues while strengthening their ability to communicate across cultural boundaries and engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue.

Thus, global citizenship education takes on a lifelong learning perspective, starting from childhood and continuing through all educational stages into adulthood. This requires systematic and non-systematic approaches to content, interventions at the curriculum level and beyond, and traditional and non-traditional ways of participating in sustainable development and achieving global security and peace, especially using the language of science and the world, the English language, as a focus and tool for getting to know diverse cultures and understanding the views and beliefs of others.

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