

The Didactic Dimension of Communication and Culture within Language Education in the new Reality of Globalization

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Abstract

We live in a world of increasing globalization, the effects of which are creating fundamental changes in the way we live and manage to construct our identities. Intercultural education is a relatively new and very complex concept that includes a number of psychological, anthropological, linguistic, geopolitical, religious, etc. aspects. Carrying out pedagogical activity in a multicultural environment requires special rigor for respecting some principles and values: respecting human rights, the absence of discriminatory phenomena, encouraging the expression of views, respecting different cultural values, capitalizing on cultural sensitivity. In this study we will focus on the Didactics of Culture in the framework of Language Education. Starting from a synthetic historical analysis, we will try to define the intercultural perspective by considering the model of intercultural communicative competence. The didactic dimension of intercultural communication (which due to its nature cannot be taught, but simply observed) represents the arrival point of our reflection. The heterogeneity of the student group requires a special approach from the teaching staff. He should have at least basic, common information about ethnic and national diversities, elementary notions of the anthropology of peoples. This contribution deepens a reflection already started on the teaching of culture within language teaching. The purpose of this short study is to analyze the development of the concepts of

multilingualism and cultural diversity, and how they interact with education, considering both the benefits and also the difficulties arising from their implementation. In conclusion, the argument of many researchers is basically that the way language education has treated culture is insufficient and should be replaced by practices that develop in students a global cultural consciousness. In an era in which the forces of globalization push and pull in ways that can make the construction of self-identity difficult, the call to develop "global cultural awareness" in students based on the notion of cultural realism is a welcome move toward a greater culture of understanding in a global society.

Keywords: didactic dimension of communication, linguistic and cultural diversity, globalization, study, society.

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, where cultures and languages interact more than ever, the intercultural approach to language education has taken on extraordinary importance. Globalization has brought new opportunities for communication and cultural exchange, but it has also opened up new challenges for teachers and students, who must adapt to a new reality,

where an understanding of cultural diversity is essential. The intercultural approach to language education is essential for the development of students' linguistic and cultural skills, helping them to understand and respect cultural differences and to communicate in a way appropriate to each cultural context.

In the didactic process, language is no longer seen simply as a means of transmitting information, but as a bridge connecting identities, cultures and global perspectives. Communication and culture are inextricably intertwined, and language education must address this interdependence in order to develop linguistically and interculturally competent individuals.

Globalization has transformed the dynamics of communication, deepening the connections between cultures and creating an urgent need for linguistic and intercultural competences. This process has prompted a reconceptualization of the role of language education as a space to develop skills that support international cooperation, cultural sharing and respect for diversity. Giddens (2003) argues that globalization is not simply an economic phenomenon, but a process that permeates culture, politics and education, creating new challenges and opportunities for language learning.

According to Appadurai (1996), globalization fosters an increase in intercultural interactions, but at the same time tests the capacity of individuals to understand and respect cultural diversity. In this context, language education plays a key role in preparing individuals to be capable citizens of an increasingly interdependent world. This study aims to explore the didactic dimension of communication and culture in language education, drawing on contemporary literature and the perspectives of leading scholars.

Globalization has increased the demand for learning foreign languages, making language proficiency a vital necessity for personal and professional success. According to Crystal (2003), English has gained the status of a "global language," being used as the main tool for international information and business exchanges. However, this tendency should not limit the importance of other languages, which carry unique cultural assets and contribute to global diversity.

Communication in the didactic process

Communication in language education involves not only the effective use of language to convey thoughts, but also the development of the skills to interpret and understand messages in different cultural contexts. According to Kramsch (1993), language is a "carrier of culture" and effective communication requires more than grammatical knowledge; it requires sensitivity to the cultural norms and values that construct meaning. In the didactic context, this means creating activities

that encourage authentic interaction, such as intercultural simulations, the use of authentic media, and projects that involve international cooperation. For example, the use of audiovisual resources from different cultures can help to understand the cultural differences that affect the way people communicate.

According to Byram (2008), language education should not focus only on technical language skills, but also on the development of intercultural competence that allows individuals to interact with respect and understanding in different cultural contexts. This is a critical aspect of language education in the era of globalization, where intercultural communication has become an inseparable part of everyday life.

Intercultural communication refers to the ability to build meaningful connections with individuals from different cultures, overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers. Kramsch (1993) emphasizes that language is not only a means of communication, but also a carrier of values, norms and cultural identity. For this reason, language learning should be accompanied by an in-depth exploration of the culture of the speakers of that language.

In this regard, Holliday (2011) proposes an intercultural approach to language education, where students learn to develop a sensitivity to other cultures and manage cultural differences effectively. This approach includes not only the study of the cultural aspects of a language, but also building skills to avoid stereotypes and prejudices.

According to Jakobson (1960), communication can be analyzed in terms of its main functions: referential, expressive, conative, phatic, poetic, and metalinguistic. In teaching, these functions should be harmonized to create a balanced process where students learn to use language not only to describe the world, but also to build relationships and negotiate meanings.

Byram and Fleming (1998) suggest that an intercultural model of communication should be integrated into teaching, where students learn to develop "cultural mediation", helping to alleviate cultural misunderstandings and improve intercultural relations.

Culture in language education

Culture is essential in language education as it helps students understand how their way of thinking and acting is shaped by the cultural context. Holliday (2011) argues that the acquisition of a foreign language is always a cultural process, which involves the acquisition of the "hidden ideologies" of the culture of that language. In the didactic process, culture can be integrated in various ways, such as through the analysis of literary texts, discussions about traditions and customs, or the use of authentic materials such as films, songs and stories from different cultures.

Language education and identity building

Learning a foreign language is a process that influences the construction of personal and social identity. Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) argue that the acquisition of a new language helps individuals develop new intercultural identities, allowing them to build meaningful connections with different cultures. This process fosters a transformation of perspectives and an openness to cultural diversity. Thus, students who learn foreign languages often report a sense of "double belonging," adopting aspects of the culture of the new language while maintaining their original identity.

According to Byram (2008), intercultural competence is an essential skill for citizens of a global world. This competence includes the ability to understand and appreciate other cultural perspectives, as well as to communicate with respect and sensitivity. Language education should focus on developing this competence, focusing not only on the technical aspects of language, but also on understanding and respecting cultural diversity.

According to Hannerz (1996), this phenomenon is part of a shared process that helps individuals create an international enterprise of identity and increase interaction between different cultures. This process enables individuals to adapt to an increasingly interdependent world and to successfully manage the challenges that come from sharing a common cultural and social space.

Norton (2000) emphasizes that language not only expresses identity, but also influences the way people are understood and accepted by others.

Intercultural communication and language education: challenges and opportunities

The intercultural approach focuses on language learning through the exploration of different cultures and the development of intercultural skills. Risager (2006) suggests that this approach helps students develop sensitivity to cultural differences and avoid stereotypes. Intercultural competence is the ability to interact successfully with people from different cultures, understanding and appreciating their perspectives. According to Deardorff (2009), this competence includes the development of cultural awareness, the ability to manage cultural conflicts, and the willingness to learn from intercultural experiences.

As Deardorff (2009) emphasizes, the development of intercultural competence is a dynamic process that requires practical experience and continuous reflection. For example:

- organizing international projects where students collaborate with peers from other countries to solve real-world problems;
- using activities such as cultural simulations and role-playing to help students cope with different intercultural situations.

A concrete example is the use of virtual platforms such as Zoom to create "international classrooms," where students learn from each other and share cultural experiences in real time.

While Byram (1997) identifies five dimensions of intercultural competence:

1. Knowledge: Understanding of cultures and cultural products.
2. Interpretive and relational skills: The ability to interpret and compare cultural phenomena.
3. Mediation skills: The capacity to manage cultural conflicts.
4. Curiosity and openness: The motivation to learn and respect other cultures.
5. Self-reflection: Awareness of the influence of one's own culture on thoughts and actions.

Language education through intercultural approach faces several challenges and holds opportunities.

Some of the challenges include:

- The tendency to favor a particular language (such as English) over others, jeopardizing linguistic diversity (Crystal, 2003).
- Resistance to cultural change, which can lead to a lack of acceptance of differences.

Opportunities include among others:

- Developing competencies that help improve global coexistence.
- Building bridges between cultures through intercultural projects and the use of technology.

Although English has been seen as the "language of globalization", many scholars emphasize the importance of preserving local languages. According to Risager (2006), local languages are not only means of communication, but also carriers of unique cultures and identities. For example, the use of the Albanian language in the diaspora not only strengthens family and cultural ties, but also promotes a sense of belonging and pride in heritage.

In this regard, initiatives to integrate local languages into educational curricula help to raise awareness of linguistic diversity. A concrete example is the programmes that support bilingualism and multilingualism in Europe and other regions.

An important aspect of language education is its role in promoting social equality. Cummins (2000) emphasizes that the use of mother tongues in schooling not only helps children's academic development, but also strengthens their cultural identity. Schools that promote bilingualism offer minority students the opportunity to preserve their language and culture, thereby improving academic and social outcomes.

In this context, the use of language as a tool for empowerment is critical. Norton (2000) suggests that language education should support students to use language skills to raise their voices and influence their social environment.

Technology as a Determinant Factor in the Development of Language Skills

Technology has played a key role in the inclusion of culture and communication in language education. It has transformed the way languages are taught and learned, offering a wide range of tools and resources to improve language and intercultural skills. According to Warschauer (2000), digital platforms and language learning applications enable a more personalized and convenient approach to language learning, giving students the opportunity to learn autonomously and interactively.

Godwin-Jones (2018) argues that digital platforms and social media enable authentic intercultural interactions, helping students build bridges of communication between cultures. He emphasizes that technology not only helps in the acquisition of language skills, but also creates opportunities for direct interaction with native speakers, helping to develop intercultural competences. For example, platforms such as Duolingo and Rosetta Stone offer powerful tools for language learning, while social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp can be used to build bridges of communication between cultures.

The use of authentic programs is another beneficial tool for language learning, one example of which is "eTwinning", a European platform that connects students and teachers from different countries through intercultural projects. These projects help students discover similarities and differences between cultures and practice language skills in real-life contexts.

Although technology has many advantages, it also brings new challenges to language education. According to Thorne (2003), the use of technology can lead to a dependence on digital tools, reducing direct interaction and intercultural sensitivity. Furthermore, the use of technology requires a careful and balanced approach to avoid problems of accessibility and to ensure an inclusive education.

Conclusions

The didactic dimension of communication and culture is fundamental to language education. In a globalized world, where intercultural interaction is inevitable, language learning must go beyond grammatical and lexical skills to include the development of intercultural and interpersonal competences. Such education not only helps to build a more open and respectful society towards diversity, but also to form global citizens.

In an increasingly globalized world, language education must aim at more than technical skills. It should help individuals understand and accept cultural diversity, build bridges of cooperation and contribute to the creation of a more just and equal society.

Through a comprehensive approach, where technology, intercultural competences and support for local languages are intertwined, language education can create a lasting impact on a personal, professional and societal level.

Globalization has fundamentally changed the way we approach language education, making it a more complex process and more interconnected with the development of intercultural competences. This study emphasizes the importance of including intercultural communication and the use of technology in the language education process, proposing a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to preparing individuals to participate in a global society.

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