TRANSCULTURAL LEARNING IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Bachelor Thesis

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1. Introduction

Over the last few years we could see that our societies have become more and more multicultural. One main reason for this is global migration. People leave their home countries, either because they may wish to or because they have no other choice in order to survive. As a consequence, our societies have become more and more multicultural and multilingual. There are no clear boundaries anymore between social groups and communities.

This thesis considers the need for transcultural competence in an increasingly globalized and multicultural society which places increasing demands on our communication skills. It will support the notion that foreign language education can serve as a model for citizenship education as their core elements are very similar.

The first chapter analyzes the connection and interdependence of language, identity and culture and provides definitions of each term. Furthermore, it shows the challenge of promoting and including cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom – for both teachers and students. Subsequently it discusses the importance of the concept of transcultural competence for current global development.

The second chapter displays the exclusive relationship of language and culture in a social context and how meaning is transmitted through both. Afterwards, it represents the so-called *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* which claims that the specific structure of a language used by a speaker has an impact on the thinking and behavior of the speaker. In the following is presented another linguistic theory, *Linguistic Relativity*, that also supports the language-thought interdependence, however, not as static.

The following chapter takes a closer look at the role of culture in foreign language acquisition, more specifically at Sociocultural Theory, that expects humans to use already existing cultural schemata to create new schemata regulating their behavior, including its key constructs of mediation and internalization and imitation. The next point of this chapter introduces a concept that may be particularly helpful for language instructors to better understand the developmental processes of language learners: *The Zone of Proximal Development*. The chapter finishes with the phenomenon of language interference and its effects and occurrences.

The last chapter describes the aim of Global Citizenship education as a need to find one's place within multicultural societies. It goes on with the development of democracy and why a democratic concept is crucial for Global Citizenship. Afterwards it argues the ways of perception of citizenship, followed by the key principles of citizenship education. Finally, this paper examines how language education should be to promote citizenship education.

2. Identity and transculturality

Language, culture and identity are essentially connected. In the school context of foreign language learning, however, a student's identity is still not paid enough attention to in the foreign language classroom. The dictionary *Merriam Webster* defines the term *transcultural* as "involving, encompassing, or extending across two or more cultures". Every student has its own culture and identity which he or she brings into the classroom. The identity and culture of one's first language are more often than not different from the foreign language. Therefore, it is important for students to know and learn about the culture and identity of the foreign language they are learning. Nonetheless, this is where the problem arises when culture and identity influence the teaching and learning of foreign languages. If teachers and language instructors are not aware of this, it may lead to a change of students' identity or making them feel isolated and even lonely. "The feeling of uncertainty comes from being part of something and feeling apart from it" (Dumitrašković 2014, 255).

Students are themselves representatives of the identity and culture of their native language and where they come from. In order to learn a foreign language properly the student has to be able to express him- or herself freely in the classroom. The question is which identity is he or she is expressing. Language students become easily confused when they are confronted with the new culture, which they now have to adapt to their sense of identity and their culture. On many occasions, this leads to uncertainty (cf. ibid., 252).

In a skill-based approach of language learning, the common skills are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Nowadays, there is added a fifth skill: *cultural awareness*. Unfortunately, the concept of *cultural awareness* is often insufficiently defined and may not go beyond consciousness-raising exercises which help the students to develop the ability to accept opinions that are different from theirs.

Students tend to focus more on the emotive aspect of cultural learning – in the sense of liking or disliking cultural differences – instead of learning how to look critical at their own and the foreign culture (cf. Seidl 1998, 105).

> "Intercultural learning", a catchphrase […]. The term can be applied to a form of behavioural training that aims at social and emotional personal development. "Try and show tolerance", "eliminate deep-rooted prejudices", "avoid any ethnocentric point of view" are frequently heard pieces of advice given to those grappling with cultural problems (ibid., 105).

The focus of cultural learning should not be on the emotional component of culture, as the advices intend, but on the language component because a major part of what we call *culture* is a social construct and deals with language as a social practice (cf. ibid., 106).

2.1 Language, culture and identity

"Language is as important to human beings as water to a fish. Yet, it often seems that we go through life as unaware of language as we suppose the average fish is of the water it swims in" (van Lier 1995, n.p.). *Language* is what people use in their daily lives to express, create, and interpret meanings, but also to establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships. We need language to communicate with others and to understand the communication of others. Seeing language like this it is more than just being the body of knowledge that has to be learned, but a social practice in which to participate (cf. Kramsch 1993, 94). However, this requires the development of awareness of the nature of language and its impact on the world (cf. Svalberg 2007, 289). The Association of Language Awareness (ALA) defines *language awareness* as "explicit knowledge about language, and conscious perception and sensitivity in language learning, language teaching and language use" (ALA). One of the founders of the ALA, Leo van Lier, specifies it as "an understanding of the human faculty of language and its role in thinking, learning and social life. It includes awareness of power and control through language, and the intricate relationships between language and culture" (van Lier 1995, n.p.). When learning languages, language is the prime resource teachers have and use to help students learn a new language. It serves as a learning medium as teachers and students are working simultaneously with it as an object of study. If the target

language and its culture are learned appropriately, then, they open the door for new concepts and new ways of understanding the world (cf. Dumitrašković 2014, 253). *Culture* is a highly multidimensional, complex, flexible and dynamic term. It is located within discourses of individuals and society, structure, cognition and communication, action and interaction as well as continued and disrupted processes of development (cf. Alter 2015, 32). On a formal level, which most of the approaches and definitions of culture agree on, it is understood as an "organized and self-organizing structure which is complex and relatively autonomous, which is constituted of various elements in which language takes a central position" (ibid.). On a content level, on the other hand, culture is defined as a concept mediating between people and their environment. In this sense, culture is supposed to pre-structure contexts of thought and to create a reality that educates members of a community with rules, schemata and patterns for understanding behavior and interaction – both on an individual and collective base (cf. ibid., 33).

For Gunderson (2000, 694) language and culture are "inextricably linked" and they cannot be separated from each other because isolated they have "little or no meaning". Hofstede and his colleagues offer us another interesting definition of culture as "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 2010, 5) as it is acquired through socialization and observation. Young members of a society imitate and take over roles which contribute to the manifestation of a culture (cf. Alter 2015, 33). Younger generations inherit a cultural frame from the older generations, or in other words, the cultural frame is implicitly transferred to younger generations.

The Austrian professor Monika Seidl defines culture as follows:

> Culture is a global cover term, not a notion of any precision. The term embraces a wide area, ranging from highbrow culture, such as literature, the arts, or the theatre, via lowbrow culture, like popular music, lifestyles and cultural phenomena aimed at specific groups, to issues of customs, norms and values, and beliefs (Seidl 1998, 101).

The term *culture* refers generally to our way of life, including everything that is learned, shared, and passed from one generation to another. Therefore, the beliefs, rules, values, as well as one's language, are part of one's culture. Although one's culture does not change within short time periods, it is not static either because it develops throughout a lifetime influenced by one's environment. Members of a

society can share many aspects of their everyday life, however, there are different conceptions and definitions of culture within this general approach. "The dominant culture of a society refers to the main culture in a society, which is shared, or at least accepted without opposition, by the majority of people" (Dumitrašković 2014, 252).

"Identity is a process of identifying or non-identifying with a particular position in life and continually modifying this position and attitudes toward it" (Crawshaw, Callen & Tusting 2001, 101). It is about how individuals or groups see and define themselves, and how they are seen and defined by other individuals. Both culture and identity are formed through the process of socialization and the influence of social institutions like the family, the educational system, as well as the mass media. The only possibility to learn about identities of other individuals or groups is through establishing one's own identity – only then you realize what makes you similar to certain people or a specific group or different from others. "The identity that an individual wants to assert and which they may wish others to see them having may not be the one that others accept or recognise" (Dumitrašković 2014, 252). There are some aspects or elements of our identity we have a personal choice on, for instance, we can change the color of our hair to look more sophisticated. On the other hand these identity features may be responses to or attitudes of others. We are not free, however, to adopt any identity we want, and factors like our social class, ethnic group or sex may influence the picture of how others see us (cf. ibid.). If we have a closer look at identity in the context of language learning we can observe that the social class, especially financial differences, have an impact on the language learner's identity. It could make him or her feel as an outsider since they are not socially equal to their co-learners. Beside external aspects affecting identity there are internal aspects like the mere personal ability to do something well which can restrict the students' sense of belonging to a community or group and hinder their learning. "Although identity is conditioned by social interaction and social structures, it conditions social interaction and social structures at the same time. It is, in short, constitutive of and constituted by the social environment" (Block 2007, 866).

Dumitrašković (2014, 255) claims that identity is constructed whenever learners are cognitively, emotionally and physically engaged. Through the study of the target language they begin to understand the complexities of their own language.

However, the process of integrating a new language into "one's cognitive and psychological base" requires time as the learner "discovers, deconstructs and analyzes both the first and the foreign language at the same time" (ibid.). Learning a foreign language facilitates the learners to make new sense of who they are and where their place in the world is as the consolidation of identity happens during the process of language acquisition.

2.2 Transcultural Competence

"Multilingualism is at the very heart of European identity, since languages are a fundamental aspect of the cultural identity of every European" (Figel' 2006, 3). The various conflicts and disputes between individuals of different cultural and political groups and nations, we can constantly observe at the European Parliament and other political institutions, show that there is a lack of competence in constructive communication skills.

"[A]ll people are products of their native culture and mother tongue" (Takkula, Kangaslahti & Banks 2008, 88). From the moment of birth, every individual, disregarding his or her cultural or language background, is engaged in the process of learning his or her native cultural and communicative skills. In this multicultural world we are living in, we find ourselves constantly dealing across communicative competences and in order to be an integrated member of this global multicultural family, we are challenged to learn new skills and abilities that might be beyond those we have learned at home. These skills and abilities have different names: you can call them *cross-cultural communicative competence* or *intercultural communicative competence*. However, thinking more globally, we might use the term *transcultural[1] communicative competence* (cf. ibid.) having in mind *Merriam Webster's* definition of transcultural as "involving, encompassing, or extending across two or more cultures". Seidl also promotes the prefix "trans-" instead of "inter-" because "trans-" is "more closely related to words such as translation or transfer which signify moves from L1 [first language] to L2 [second language] and vice versa and is also associated with such notions as 'across', 'beyond' and 'over'" (Seidl 1998, 107). In this regard, the term *transcultural competence* combines both knowledge about culture and the ability to apply this knowledge.

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[1] *Transcultural, cross-cultural* and *intercultural* are used as synonyms in this thesis.

The term *intercultural competence* took a central role in *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* (TEFL) discourses in the 1970s and 1980s when the development of multicultural societies in the United States and Canada increasingly gained political attention (cf. Alter 2015, 31). Tolerance and respect between people from different cultural backgrounds was seen as an essential educational objective of social integration within those societies (cf. Volkmann 2010, 21). The Council of Europe (2001, 11) considers intercultural or transcultural competence as an "existential competence" be it as an element of multilingualism or as a part of sociolinguistics. The Council of Europe created a *Common European Framework* (CEF) in order to find a common base on which languages are taught and to be able to compare stages of education and language improvement among the member states of the European Union, but also to set standards for language education. The CEF encloses the development of skills and competences in an "intercultural approach" (ibid., 1) for teaching languages. One of the central goals of language education is the promotion of "favourable growth of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture" (ibid.). Furthermore, the CEF claims that acquiring the skills and competences is important, but that the complex interaction between these is salient because it supports the development of intercultural communication. These competences revolve around various aspects, for example the "[k]nowledge of the shared values and beliefs held by social groups in other countries and regions, such as religious beliefs, taboos, assumed common history" (ibid., 11). Transcultural awareness means to understand, know and be aware of the relation, including both similarities and differences, between one's own world and the world of the target community. Moreover, it covers a critical awareness of "how each community appears from the perspective of the other, often in form of national stereotypes" (ibid., 103). With a higher focus on language learning in order to understand *otherness*, language learners have to be able to communicate with others that do not share the same language. For a successful dialogue students need to try to understand others from their specific frame of culture which requires to take the others' perspective and at the same time establish a distance to one's own perspective (cf. ibid., 33).

To support the formation of the learner's identity, the CEF suggests different transcultural skills and know-how. Some of them are:

- the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other,
- cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures,
- the capacity to fulfill the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations, and
- the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships (ibid., 104).

Teachers play a salient role in this great challenge of helping especially young people develop transcultural competence and acquire a "wide and complex range of knowledge and skills required as citizens and workers in an ever more globalised world" (Takkula, Kangaslahti & Banks 2008, 89). They function as mediators between a rapidly changing world and the individuals who are expected to cope with these changes. Today's classrooms are full of students contributing an enormous variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds to class which makes it quite difficult for teachers to deliver effective learning. Teachers are also required to be "sensitive to culture and gender issues, promote tolerance and social cohesion, and encourage the use of new technology" (ibid.). It almost seems that the teachers are the (only) solution to achieve transcultural competence and to educate open-minded, globally-oriented individuals. Nevertheless, it has to be clear that teachers indeed play a vital role, however, we cannot expect them to resolve all of the communication problems that arise in our globalizing world[2].

To apply transcultural learning in language learning it is crucial that the students develop an understanding of their own culture and recognize the culture of others. They must know that this recognition influences the process of communication within their own language and culture, and across languages and cultures.

Transcultural language learning enables students to engage with human communication and interaction in increasingly complex ways. They learn how to understand and interpret human communication and interaction by describing,

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[2] Both the European Commission and Parliament want to increase the quality and standard of student learning across the European Union (EU), one of the EU's key goals, including the promotion of the importance of high-quality teacher training (cf. Takkula, Kangaslahti & Banks 2008, 88). Teacher training and teachers in general are a very important issue, unfortunately I cannot expand on it within the scope of this thesis.

analyzing, noticing, and interpreting ideas, experiences, and feelings they share while communicating with others. They are both participants in communication and observers. In doing so, they "engage with interpreting their own and the meanings of others, with each one's experience of participation and reflection leading to a greater awareness of self in relation to others" (Dumitrašković 2014, 254). Therefore, transcultural (language) learning is nothing that should be added to teaching and learning, but be an integral part of learning and teaching in general to achieve transcultural competence.

3. The relationship of language and culture

Culture and language are inseparable. As it was mentioned in the preceding chapter, there is a direct connection between a culture and the language used by its members who experience, understand and interpret culture in language. In recent years, the words *cultural*, *cross-cultural*, or *inter-/transcultural* are used within titles of scientific publications or conferences with more frequency. This shows the importance of cultural learning in foreign language teaching. If we assume that culture is defined in terms of the norms and values shared by the members of a social group we may consider the fact that "language proficiency, be it in L1 or L2, is a matter of familiarity with commonly held norms and values which constitute hidden meaning encoded in discourse structures" (Seidl 1998, 101).

There had been various attempts to relate culture with language education, however, applied linguistics and scholars preferred the study of language in its social or situational context (cf. Selinker & Douglas 1985, 197). With the growing influence of anthropology and linguistic anthropology in particular, the concept of culture was assigned a new meaning in Applied Linguistics. Before it was more about consistent social and national groups, their beliefs and behaviors. Then it switched to flexible representations and identity processes (cf. Kramsch 2014, 31). Hence, the focus shifted from the language itself to its relationship with its speaker and the speaker's identity.

According to Kramsch, language expresses, embodies, and symbolizes cultural reality. Language is the key to our social lives and it is connected to culture in multiple and complex ways (cf. Kramsch 2003, 3). People communicate based on their individual experiences – how they see and perceive the world around them.

The words they express portray their point of view, attitudes, and beliefs, but also those of others surrounding them (cf. ibid.).

Every individual belongs to a social group and each social group shares and creates its own experiences that can be expressed through language. However, language also creates experiences. Depending on the communicative medium people choose, they give meaning to what is communicated. This could be a spoken, written, or visual medium like a telephone call or a direct conversation between two or more persons, as well as a letter or an email, but also interpreting a picture. The created meaning is understandable for the corresponding group which is transmitted by the speaker's tone, accent, gestures and facial expressions, as well as the conversational style (cf. ibid.).

Being a member of a discourse community implies common social space and history, and common imaginings. The culture and experiences within this community influences the spoken language. Even by leaving a respective community one may retain "a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting" (ibid., 10). And these standards refer to what is generally called their "culture".

Language is a symbol of social identity. People identify themselves and others through language. It is a "system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value" (ibid, 3). In this regard, culture can be seen as the product of socially and historically situated discourse communities that are created and shaped by language. Culture is, on the one hand semantically encoded in the language itself and, on the other hand expressed through the actual use of language (cf. ibid., 14).

3.1 The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis

Language is the formative organ of thought. Thought and language are one and inseparable from each other.
Wilhelm von Humboldt, 1836

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims an interdependence of language and thought – that the structure of language a speaker uses has an impact on the thinking and behavior of the speaker (cf. ibid., 11). Furthermore, it states that there are certain thoughts of an individual in one language that cannot be understood by those who live in another language, because their thoughts are strongly affected by their native languages (cf. Kay & Kempton 1984).

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It is a controversial theory advocated by Edward Sapir, a linguist, and his student Benjamin Whorf, who won reputation for his work on the Hopi language – a Shoshonean language related to the Aztecan language (Crystalinks). While working as a fire insurance risk assessor, Whorf noticed that people's behavior towards things often corresponded to what these things were actually called. To illustrate this phenomenon he used to tell an anecdote: When people see the sign 'EMPTY' on empty gasoline drums, they are tempted to throw their cigarettes into these drums, not realizing that there could be gasoline fumes left that could possibly cause a fire or even an explosion. Consequently, the *English* sign 'EMPTY' must produce a feeling of 'free of danger'(cf. Kramsch 2003, 13). Whorf concluded that "the reason why different languages can lead people to different actions is because language filters their perception and the way they categorize experience" (ibid., 14). It is to say that *this* anecdote is an example for the *English* way of thinking or interpreting things. Every language and every culture has their very own so-called 'cultural schemata' which are pre-existing knowledge structures in memory (cf. Yule 2003, 85). These structures function like familiar patterns from previous experiences which we then use to interpret new experiences. They help us to make sense of the world and it is inevitable that they are culturally determined (cf. ibid., 87).

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was first formulated in 1940, although the statement that we were prisoners of our language (cf. Kramsch 2014, 32) was unacceptable for the scientific community. They refused to accept that language determined thought in any possible way or the other way around. A very strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis could easily lead to prejudice and racism – assuming, for example, that the Hopis, a Native American Nation who lived very isolated (Crystalinks), cannot access to modern scientific thoughts because their language is not as modern as the English language. According to this strong version, translating from one language to another is almost impossible due to the fact that their speakers do not share the same cultural schemata and therefore their understanding of the world and their way of thinking differ from one another. Nonetheless, Whorf himself could not have investigated the way of thinking of the Hopis if it was not by some kind of translating. Hence, a general translatability from one language to another exists, however, there will always remain a rest of "untranslatable culture" (Kramsch 2003, 12) related to the linguistic structure of

any given language. "The link between a linguistic structure and a given cultural world view must […] be viewed as arbitrary" (ibid., 13).

Nowadays, it is generally accepted that there are indeed cultural differences in the semantic associations of different languages – which is supposed the weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis – because no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality (cf. Kramsch 2014, 32). Understanding across languages does not depend on structural equivalences but on common concepts. Correspondingly, if speakers of different languages do not understand each other, it is because they see and interpret events differently – for them, the respective words have different meanings and values (cf. Kramsch 2003, 13).

3.2 Linguistic Relativity

The relation of language and culture has been studied from many different disciplinary and methodological perspectives under the concept of language relativity or linguistic relativity, which is the theory that languages or the way of speaking affect the thought processes of their users (cf. Kramsch 2014, 32). Here, the term *linguistic* means the "formal structure of semantic and pragmatic categories available for reference and prediction" (Lucy 1996, 41).

The American linguist and psychologist John A. Lucy advocates the opinion that having language makes humans qualitatively different from all other species of the world "not only in terms of physical characteristics, but also as a function of the availability and use of this qualitatively different *semiotic* form" (ibid., 38). He calls this hypothesis *semiotic relativity*. For him, it is essential to have this hypothesis as basis to understand the theory of linguistic relativity because it "depends greatly on the position one first takes on the implications of having a language at all versus not having one, and then on what features of natural language are regarded as most relevant to thought" (ibid., 39). The idea of linguistic relativity is that different people speak differently because they think differently, and the reason why they think differently is because their language offers them different ways of expressing the world around them.

What makes language different from other semiotic forms is its symbolic nature which permits or leads to linguistic diversity and reflexive capacity of human language. As languages rely on cultural convention for their effectiveness, they are

mainly social rather than personal, and more objective rather than subjective. This fact enables language to be "a medium for the socialization or objectification of individual activities – including thought – to the extent that the activities depend on that medium" (ibid.).

The general role of language in human thought constitutes a necessary component of any research on linguistic relativity.

> Such research must be informed by a semiotic perspective, that is, a perspective which clarifies the distinctive qualities of natural language in contrast to other semiotic forms and the relationship of those qualities to psychological and social life. From such a semiotic point of view, the distinguishing feature of natural language is its central *symbolic* component (ibid.).

This theory "does not claim that linguistic structure constrains what people *can* think or perceive, only that it tends to influence what they routinely *do* think" (Kramsch, 2003, 14).

Another American linguist and psychologist, Dan Isaac Slobin researched the theory of linguistic relativity from a psycholinguistic perspective. His study is based on the story in pictures *Frog where are you?* narrated by different children in their different native languages. He argues that "in order to speak at all, speakers must attend to the syntactic and lexical choices offered by their grammars, and that the cumulative occurrence of these choices can have cognitive and affective effects on the listener" (Kramsch 2014, 34). Furthermore, Slobin suggests to replace the static phrase from the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis "thought-and-language" with the more dynamic phrase "thinking-for-speaking" because he thinks the focus on culture should be moved from being a linguistic sign, as Whorf claims, to the activity of signing by living speakers and writers[3] (cf. Slobin 1996, 71).

As linguistic relativity has recently regained attention, there are a lot of debates about it. McWorther, for instance, claims that the theory of linguistic relativity is simply wrong. According to him, it might be fascinating, but it is language that reflects culture and worldview and not the other way around (cf. McWorther 2014, n.p.). A language might have "only one word for eat, drink and smoke", however, this "doesn't mean its speakers don't process the difference between food and

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[3] Due to the limited number of pages in this thesis, I cannot treat the topic more intensively. For further reading I recommend the following reference: Slobin, Dan I. (1996).

beverage" (Kramsch 2014, 35). "As citizens of our language, we must be aware that words don't change meaning by their own; they can be made to change meaning in order to arouse different emotions […]" (ibid., 36).

4. The role of culture in (foreign) language learning

According to Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist, before children learn how to speak and communicate with others, they learn how to think by internalizing the words and thoughts of others before making them their own. He claims that there is a natural relationship between a community's culture and an individual's mind (cf. Vygotsky 1978, 26). Accordingly, every child acquires first culture and through their native culture they appropriate their native language. Cultural development means socialization into a given social group, which could be the family, the school or a sports team (cf. Kramsch 2014, 33).

As scholars became more and more convinced of the fact that children's speech and cognition were shaped by the culture of their environment, the question arose whether second language learners can appropriate the culture of native speakers.

> As long as culture acquisition only means the ability to momentarily see the world through the eyes of a native speaker or to occasionally behave in ways that conform to native speaker expectations, culture acquisition should be a desirable goal of language learning (cf. ibid.).

Even if language learners have different perceptions of time or privacy, for instance, they are still able to learn how to say in English "Thanks for your time", and "I want to respect your privacy" by adopting the conceptual metaphors of native speakers (cf. ibid.). According to Lantolf, culture is "an historically transmitted semiotic network constructed by humans and which allows them to develop, communicate and perpetuate their knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about the world" (Lantolf 1999, 30). Based on this statement, Kramsch (2014, 33) claims that "then non-native speakers by definition cannot have this semiotic network transmitted to them historically since it is a system of inherited conceptions". Nevertheless, it is possible to acquire another culture and make it one's own – although it will always be different from that of native speakers (cf. ibid.).

Until the 1960s, there were two distinct aspects of culture: literature in textbooks, the fine arts, history, and politics were considered to represent the aspect of *Culture* – with a capitalized "c" – in Second Language Acquisition (SLA); while lifestyle

or daily life patterns and habits symbolized *culture* with a minuscule "c". Hence, there was a differentiation between higher and lower culture (cf. Dubreil 2006, 237). As we already know, culture becomes expressed, embodied, and symbolized in communicative interactions through which meaning is negotiated (cf. Kramsch 2003, 3), which is why nowadays SLA focuses increasingly on communicative and meaningful contexts. Therefore students need to develop transcultural competence which enables them to establish relationships between different cultures mediating or interpreting each culture in terms of the other, for themselves and for other people.

> Culture learning is the process of acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective communication and interaction with individuals and other cultures. It is a dynamic, developmental, and ongoing process which engages the learner cognitively, behaviourally, and affectively (Paige et al. 2000, 50).

Culture-specific means the learning about a particular culture whereas *culture-general* refers to any culture that is not the learner's native culture.

4.1   Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Acquisition

Sociocultural Theory (SCT) has its origins in the research of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky and his colleagues. SCT argues that "human mental functioning is fundamentally a *mediated* process that is organized by cultural artifacts, activities and concepts" (Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 197). Within this framework, humans are meant to use already existing cultural schemata or artifacts to create new ones that enable them to regulate their biological and behavioral activity. Developmental processes, like speaking, are conducted through participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings as family life and peer group interaction, as well as in institutional contexts like schooling and work places. SCT sees the interaction within these social environments as the most important form to develop human cognitive activity. However, it also admits that human neurobiology, which is congenital, plays a significant role and is necessary for high order thinking (cf. ibid.).

In the early 20th century, there was a crisis in psychology due to the many different perspectives in its study. The approaches to the study of psychological processes were mainly divided in two groups: the ones who followed the natural science

approach to research, like behaviorism, and the other group who focused its research on the humanistic tradition by emphasizing the description and understanding of mental activity, like psychoanalysis (cf. ibid., 198). Vygotsky's goal was to overcome this crisis. He developed a unified theory of human mental functioning and he was convinced that this required a new way of thinking about human mental development[4]. He admitted that "the human mind was comprised of a lower-level neurobiological base, but the distinctive dimension of human consciousness was its capacity for voluntary control over biology through the use of higher-level cultural tools" (ibid.). These higher-level cultural tools – language, literacy, logic, rationality, for instance – function, on the one hand, as a buffer between the person and the environment, and on the other hand, as a mediation instrument between the individual and the social-material world (cf. ibid., 199).

4.1.1 Mediation

The central construct of the Sociocultural Theory is mediation and the main means of mediation are the use, organization, and structure of language (cf. ibid., 197). Lantolf and Thorne illustrate psychological mediation via conceptual and semiotic tools on the basis of the more obvious relationship between humans and the physical world mediated by concrete material tools. As an example they describe the following situation: If we want to dig a hole because we want to plant a tree, we could simply use our hands – like other species do. However, most of us would use a shovel – hence, the shovel serves as a mediation tool in the digging process that for one thing, allows us to make more efficient use of our physical energy and for another, to dig a more precise hole. By using a mechanical digging device like a backhoe, we could even increase our efficiency (cf. ibid., 199). It is to state that the object of our activity remains the same regardless of whether we use our hands or a tool to dig the hole. Nonetheless, the action of digging itself changes its appearance by switching from using the hands to use a shovel or a backhoe. Returning to the discussion of mental activity, when we use a tool to dig a hole, "we have to first inhibit any automatic digging response as we decide what kind of tool to use" (ibid.). As a consequence, there is running a mental activity before the real action – hence, we think before acting. In contrast to animals, a dog, for

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[4] For further information see: Kozulin, Alex (1990).

example, immediately starts an automatic digging response as soon as it senses a buried bone. Although humans are more or less free to choose the appropriate tool, they are not free in their use because physical tools come along with a particular material form implying specific habitual patterns of how to employ it (cf. Thorne 2003, 55).

> Physical tools, which are culturally constructed objects, imbue humans with a great deal more ability than natural endowments alone. Physical tools allow us to change the world in ways that simple use of our bodies does not. Moreover, by transforming our social and material environment, we also change ourselves and the way we live in the world (Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 199)[5].

4.1.2   Internalization and imitation

Internalization is apart from mediation one of the core concepts of SCT. The process of internalization is "the essential element in the formation of higher mental functions" (Kozulin 1990, 116). It is the process through which cultural artifacts, such as language, take on a psychological function. According to Winegar, internalization is considered to be a process of person-environment negotiation and it explains the natural connection between social communication and mental activity, as well as the mechanism through which we control or biological organ of thinking – our brains (cf. Winegar 1997, 31). Vygotsky claims that every psychological function appears twice. First between people on the "interpsychological plane", in contact with other people, and then within the individual in the "intrapsychological plane", with oneself (cf. Vygotsky 1987, 209). In his opinion, imitation is the key to internalization as a uniquely human capacity. However, when he speaks of imitating the intentional activities of other humans he does not refer to it as mindless mimicking which is often associated with behaviorism in psychology or the audiolingual method in language pedagogy, but as "involv[ing] goal directed cognitive activity that can result in transformations of the original model" (Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 203). As Vygotsky states, "development based on collaboration and imitation is the source of all the specifically human characteristics of consciousness that develop in the child"

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[5] For further information on psychological mediation see: Lantolf & Thorne (2000).

(Vygotsky 1987, 210), and that such imitation[6] is "the source of instruction's influence on development" (ibid., 211).

If we now have a look at the impact these features have on Second Language Acquisition (SLA), we have to particularly stress the importance of imitation. As already mentioned before, imitation is a not just copying what someone else says but an intentional and self-selective behavior on the learner's part (cf. Tomasello 2003, 11). It is to state that imitation, especially in child development, does not necessarily have to be an immediate learning process, it can occur with a delay of some days. You could compare this with an "offline-learning-mode" (ibid.). Sometimes you are not able to imitate a new linguistic input at once which does not mean that you simply did not understand it. In this regard, language learners seem to have their own *agendas* for which aspects of the language they decide to focus on at any given time (cf. Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 205). The delayed imitation points to "a continuum between imitation and spontaneous language production, with deferred imitation serving as essential building blocks for spontaneous speech" (Speidel 1989, 163). Delayed or deferred imitation is often related to private speech. The linguist Muriel Saville-Troike carried out a study where she investigated the so-called *silent period* of children in the course of second language development. The silent period is when the children mostly stop the verbal communication with speakers of the second language – their teachers, for instance – and when they mainly speak to themselves. The children used the private speech for a variety of intrapersonal learning strategies, including "(1) repetition of other's utterances, (2) recall and practice, (3) creation of new linguistic forms, (4) paradigmatic substitution and syntagmatic expansion, and (5) rehearsal for overt social performance[7]" (Saville-Troike 1988, 567). The participants of her study were Chinese and Japanese children (mother tongue, L1) learning English as their second language (L2). She was able to document examples of both delayed and immediate imitation. She recorded a five-year-old L1 Japanese girl talking to herself in English without being an instructor around: "I finished, I am finished, I have finished, I'm finished" (Saville-Troike 1988, 584). This was an example for a delayed imitation.

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[6] For further information on imitation see: Winegar (1997) & Vygotsky (1987).
[7] For further information see: Saville-Troike (1988).

To internalize linguistic patterns it is essential to repeat these and this might happen considerably often when we are alone in private speech.

The children in Saville-Troike's study also produced immediate imitative responses to what their teachers and English-speaking classmates said, as you can see in the following example below:

> Teacher: You guys go and brush your teeth. And Wipe your
>   hands on the towel.
> Child: Wipe your handy. Wipe your teeth.
>
> (ibid.)

The child's response is interesting regarding that it was not directed at the teacher but a self-directed imitative pattern that shows the transformative possibilities of this process. Instead of repeating the teacher's utterances, the child shortened the statement and overgeneralized it by using the verb *wipe* for both instructions (cf. Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 205). As stated before, the *agendas* of the L2 learners do not necessarily coincide with the intended input of the instructor.

4.1.3   The Zone of Proximal Development

This is very important for teachers to know when deciding on appropriate pedagogical interventions to enable a maximal development and learning. The concept of the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) may help the instructors to better understand the developmental processes of language learners. The most popular definition of the ZPD was given by Vygotsky:

> The zone of proximal development is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky 1978, 86).

The most prominent difference between traditional tests which only show the level of development already attained, is that the ZPD not only focuses on what one can do today with assistance but also what one will be able to do independently in the future. Consequently, the ZPD is forward-looking providing an overview of development achieved and potential development (cf. Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 206). Vygotsky is convinced that "human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them"

(Vygotsky 1978, 88). Thus, cognitive development arises from social and interpersonal activity which serves as a basis for intrapersonal activity. As a consequence, it is indeed possible to learn another language by just internalizing vocabulary and studying grammar without the assistance of a teacher or native speakers, however, the level of development will never be as high as with learning collaboratively with others, particularly in instructional settings which precedes and shapes development (cf. ibid.). In this sense, the ZPD is not only a model of the developmental process but also a conceptual tool that enables teachers to understand the students' emerging capacities (cf. Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 207).

Since the ZPD does not focus on determining the level of development at a precise point in time, in contrast to traditional tests, it is fairly difficult to count on appropriate evidence. In the ZPD evidence of development can be observed at two different levels: at the level of overt independent performance, hence, what the learner is able to do by himself, and at the level where performance is mediated by someone else, thus, what he or she is able to do with the assistance of a teacher, for instance (ibid., 208). Possibly, the learner's assisted performance may not change or improve much from one time to another, however, what might change is the frequency and quality of assistance needed in order to perform appropriately in the new language. For the same reason, two learners who seem to be at the same developmental level based on their overt independent performance, may be at very different level referring to the quality of assistant they need for a satisfying performance.

The ZPD is often put on the same level as *scaffolding* or assisted performance and compared with Krashen's *Input Hypothesis* (i + 1) – common misconceptions. The term *scaffolding* became popular by Jerome Bruner and his colleagues in the 1970s and refers to any *expert–novice* (adult–child) assisted performance[8] whose goal it is to rather complete the task than to help the child to develop. While the ZPD focuses on the dialogical relationship between expert and novice, Krashen's *i + 1* hypothesis concentrates on language and the language acquisition device, which is the same for all learners and leaves very little room for individual development (cf. ibid., 209). It claims that language develops as a result of "learners' comprehending input" containing features of the new language and that the input should always be

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[8] For further information see: Wood, David; Bruner, Jerome S.; Ross, Gail (1976).

"slightly beyond" their current developmental level (Krashen 1985, 12). Although you cannot exactly define the *i + 1* in advance. Therefore, it is easier to look at what an individual is able to do with assistance at one specific point in time, because in a future point in time he or she will be able to do it independently.

"[…] [D]evelopment is not merely a function of shifts in linguistic performance, as in the case of Krashen's model, but is also determined by the type of, and changes in, mediation negotiated between expert and novice" (Lantolf & Thorne 2000, 210).

4.2 Cultural and native language interference in Second Language Acquisition

Every person carries within him- or herself patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting which were mostly learned during childhood because this is when individuals are most susceptible to learning and assimilating. Once we have learned these patterns, we have to unlearn them again in order to be able to learn something different or new – and unlearning is more difficult than learning something for the first time (cf. Hofstede, Hofstede, Minkov 2010, 4).

When students learn a new language, especially in the beginning, they tend to make mistakes by transferring knowledge from their native language (L1) or another language they have recently learned to the foreign language (L2) – a phenomenon that is called *interference.* It is very important to promote awareness of interference issues before they turn into habits that run contrary to expectations of the target language and possibly cause mutual misunderstanding between the speakers (cf. Allard, Bourdeau & Mizoguchi 2011, 677).

Although the preceding chapters claimed repeatedly that culture is inextricably linked to language competence, there is still a rest of uncertainty how to teach or learn a foreign language in conjunction with culture (cf. ibid., 679). According to Lomicka (2006, 212), both "the ability to communicate by the appropriate use of language and by the awareness of the specific meanings, along with the values and connotations of language are involved in this act". She further explains that this is a cyclical process in terms of *input, noticing, reflection,* and *output;* in which noticing, along with reflection and discussion, is especially important in transcultural learning. Language *awareness* is thus the key point.

Interference is also called *language transfer* or *cross-linguistic influence.* However, these terms refer to a broader phenomenon and are often interchangeably. The term

transfer "suggests a practice in which some kind of influence is essential for it to happen" (Allard, Bourdeau & Mizoguchi 2011, 679). In other words, the student thinks that the system of L2 is more or less the same as his or her L1. As a conclusion, the L1 functions as a transfer language for the language that is studied. If the two languages are indeed similar, it could have a positive effect and make the learning of new skills easier. Nevertheless, if the skill transferred from L1 is different from target language expectations – this is what is called *interference* (cf. ibid.). Thus, the term *interference* is used to describe a negative transfer.

Language interference initially appeared in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of comparing and contrasting language learners' grammars of their L1 and of the target language. Linguists claimed that the more differences between the languages, the more errors were likely. This notion was rooted in a behaviorist theory of language learning that held the opinion that the habits of one's L1 were transferred to the L2 and that these habits interfered with the newly-acquired L2 habits. In the 1970s there was a reaction against this theory considering L1 and L2 as two independent learning processes. Researchers stated that the errors made were not explicitly the result of L1 transfer but rather due to *developmental terms* because learners followed their own *internal syllabus*. There were great similarities to children learning their mother tongue. (cf. Benson 2002, 68).

If these language interferences are not addressed properly they may lead to the fossilization of language patterns which refers to the process of internalizing incorrect language. Correcting language errors take time in general, however, fossilized errors may never be corrected at all. English learners whose L1 is Spanish, for instance, tend to the fossilization of not distinguishing between *he* and *she* as their verb conjugation does not require any gender distinction (cf. TeachingEnglish). Another example is the German word *Handy* which language students often use for the English word *mobile phone* since the German word seems to have and in fact has English roots – although both the meaning of the words and the part of speech are not equivalent.

4.2.1   Effects of language interference

Cultural and language interference or cross-cultural interference is generally accepted nowadays, yet it is a far more complex phenomenon than initially believed. It is being examined under various aspects including phonetics and

phonology, speech perceptions, syntactic structures, morphology, reading, pragmatics, universal grammar, and orthography, as well as the sociology and history of language (cf. Allard, Bourdeau & Mizoguchi 2011, 680). It is not the only reason for errors, not does it always lead to errors. As already mentioned before there can be a so-called *positive transfer* if the two languages are identical or at least very similar which facilitates the learning process. Nonetheless, it can also result in *avoidance* in case a specific structure does not exist in L1. For example, in Japanese and Chinese relative clauses do not exist which is why Japanese and Chinese learners of English hardly use them compared to other learners whose languages do have relative clauses. Language transfer may cause different levels L2 development. It can provoke both a *delay* or an *acceleration*. For instance, Spanish native speakers often struggle with the English negation 'auxiliary + not + verb' as their L1 does not need an auxiliary verb for negation but only a 'no' in front of the verb – a L1 structure they transfer to L2. Various studies showed that learners whose native languages contain articles and reflexive pronouns help them to learn these forms (cf. Benson 2002, 68).

4.2.2   Occurrence of language interference

It may be interesting to what extent interference issues occur. It depends on various factors: Due to the lack of opportunities for input and interaction with native speakers of L2, it probably happens more in classrooms than in naturalistic *settings*. Besides the setting, the learner's language *proficiency* may be a reason for a high or low rate of interference. It is usually considered that language transfer declines with increasing proficiency – although some linguists disagree saying that interference just shows differently at higher levels. The *learner-type* plays also a salient role. Students who are more focused on the grammar and form of a language tend to transfer more than meaning-oriented learners. It is beyond all doubt that language learners with a positive attitude towards their L2 are less prone to errors. A positive attitude generally supports effective learning.

Cross-linguistic interference happens both consciously and unconsciously. Where there is a gap in one's knowledge it may be a conscious and deliberate communication strategy to transfer a L1 component to the L2. Unconscious transfer may be due to the fact that the correct form is unknown or although it was learned due to missing or insufficient automatization of it.

Benson (2002, 69) points out some possible reasons for language transfer: In all learning situations, the previous knowledge one has represents a starting point for acquiring new knowledge. Obviously, in the case of language learning, the starting point are the previously-learned languages. If the *interlanguage* (the learner's interim grammar of the L2) is not fixed yet like the L1, it is *permeable* – this means that things can get through. She also takes *affection* into consideration, such as the fear to lose one's original identity by reaching high proficiency of the L2, but also the feeling that the L2 lacks of sufficient prestige.

Language transfer may occur at all levels, whether on a syntactical, phonological, lexical, pragmatic, or morphological level. A language student possibly assumes that a similar word of the L1 has the same meaning as the L2 word (lexis); for instance, a Spanish speaker may use 'embarrassed' to mean 'pregnant' because the Spanish word 'embarazada' is very much alike. It may be though just a foreign accent that it transferred (phonology). The word-for-word translation (syntax) is a very common example especially at lower proficiency levels and where the attitude towards the L2 is rather negative (cf. ibid.).

Generally it is to say that the closer and more related L1 and L2, the easier and faster for students to acquire L2 proficiency[9]. In the same way, it seems that cultural similarities between L1 and L2 decreases the potential of *cultural interference* which likewise takes place at all levels of language production (cf. Allard, Bourdeau & Mizoguchi 2011, 680).

5. Global Citizenship

World languages[10] enable its speakers to cross barriers and find their place in the wider regional, national and global community (cf. Green 2005, ix).

The language classrooms have been changing along the last few decades. Initially, language was seen as a benefit itself and as a "vehicle to carry the best values" (ibid., vii) of the respective country. In times of globalization and the interdependence of the countries in the world, however, languages have become more closely linked to other values and areas; the fact of culture, for instance, as we know from preceding chapters. After all, language is used for communication.

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[9] For further details see: Benson (2002).
[10] English, for example, with about 510 million speakers (L1 and L2) (cf. Statista)

Today's language classrooms focus on interaction and exchange and provide a "non-threatening context in which to discuss topics of concern to children and adolescents" (ibid.).

The British Council has specifically encouraged the implementation of language curricula which include topics like human rights and citizenship education. Besides improving their language skills, students now also learn about issues that are part of their lives and of crucial importance for mankind. The reform of teacher training, textbooks and curricula has been accompanied by initiatives like student projects, creative writing and the use of drama, which naturally include the use of language itself but also the development of teamwork, leadership, negotiating and presentation skills. These are useful skills for responsible citizenship (ibid.).

Throughout the world there is a growing interest in how language teachers might encourage their students in developing the competences to become effective citizens (cf. Osler & Starkey 2005, xiii). Apart from the international discussion about *how* they should educate the students, teachers are instructed to see their students as complete human beings and the teaching itself as an enabling process. Consequently, the help them to learn the language and support them in their personal development. Dialogue, interaction, understanding, and the ability to adopt complex approaches to difficult issues go along with reading, listening, writing, and speaking (cf. Green 2005, viii). This does not only have advantages for students, but also for teachers due to the fact that they develop their own skills as team members and leaders making them realize that they are themselves an important part of society.

> They have a sense of being members of a national, regional and global network. Essentially, they have moved from being passive recipients of the instructions of those above them in the social hierarchy to being active citizens with influence on the future of their societies (ibid.).

Citizenship is nothing that can be achieved by an individual in isolation – it is all about how we relate to other individuals, to social groups and to other societies. Knowing this, it is not surprising that there is a growing importance in integrating the practical application of human rights and citizenship to language teaching.

5.1 Democracy and citizenship

Along the twentieth century there were various people who were willing to go to prison or to be exiled or banned from their countries and consequently from their families to fight for democracy and human rights – some of them paid even with their lives. Persons such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela became a symbol of the struggles of millions of others. Although history shows that there have been many wars and independence struggles with the goal to secure democracy and human rights, the ones who make policies and plan education have not always been aware of the need of educating young people in democratic practices. Education for democratic citizenship has tended to not be of priority in national education (cf. Osler 2005, 3).

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century it seems that things are changing. International organizations like UNESCO and the Council of Europe have introduced various initiatives in human rights and citizenship education which led established democracies to emphasize on these. It is generally acknowledged that education for democracy "has a vital contribution in helping secure peace and human rights in the world" (ibid.). There is also a common agreement on the fact that *national* citizenship education might not be enough anymore considering the rapidly changing world and the globalization that imply an increasing global interdependence and higher diversity within local communities. These developments have various effects on teachers and the institutions where they work in – not only because nowadays a typical classroom does not hold only national citizenship (cf. ibid.).

Knowing to belong somewhere, to feel secure and to be able exercise one's rights and responsibilities are key elements of citizenship. Therefore it is important to focus on the learners' identity and to equip them with communication and participation competence. If one reads the curricula of language teaching one might come across similar aspects of education which is why language teachers, in particular, are well-placed to make a meaningful contribution for democratic citizenship. In this globalized world we are living in, both language learning and learning and learning for democratic citizenship "imply openness to the other, respect for diversity and the development of a range of critical skills, including skills of intercultural evaluation" (ibid., 4).

"Economically, politically and technologically, the world has never seemed more free – or more injust" (UNPD 2002, 1). Democracy, on the one hand, has become more and more popular. Between 1980 and 1990 the world made a big step in opening political systems and expanding political freedoms. 81 countries took significant steps towards democracy. In 2002, 125 countries – 62% of the world population had free or partly free press, and 140 of the almost 200 countries of the world hold multiparty elections. (cf. ibid. 10). Merriam Webster defines democracy as the "government by the people" which implies "the absence of hereditary or arbitrary class distinctions or privileges". The beginning of the twenty-first century was very contradictory to this positive democratic development when countries with long traditions of democratic governance were credited with historically low voter turnouts (cf. Osler 2005, 5). The citizens did not take their chance to shape their countries according to their necessities and wishes. You cannot know whether the results would have been different if those who did not go to vote had voted.

Unfortunately, the electoral developments are not the only threat to democracy. Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, there had been various other terroristic attacks across the globe frightening the people who feel attacked on their fundamental principles of freedom, democracy and the rule of law and justice. There is a big discrepancy between the increasing sense of togetherness we reached thanks to trends in world trade, traveling and communication, and the feeling of powerlessness about the 'crisis' in democracy. People sit at home watching global events, feeling helpless because they cannot influence them (cf. ibid.).

A very current example of people who are tired of feeling powerless are the pupils and students of the movement *FridaysForFuture* who play truant and demonstrate every Friday against climate change. What started with a speech of the Swedish 16-year old student Greta Thunberg at the *United Nations Climate Change Conference* became an enormous global climate strike. *FridaysForFuture* called upon all pupils and students across the globe (and everyone else who wanted to support them) to strike against climate change on March 15 this year. A press release of *FridaysForFuture* on March 21, 2019 claims that there were 1.6 million people on the streets striking – 1.6 million people spread over all seven continents, in more than 125 countries and in over 200 different places (cf. FridaysForFuture).

These protests reflect a desire to influence the things that are going on in the world and they, furthermore, represent a demand that political leaders give consideration

to the views of ordinary citizens. Although individuals may feel powerless, they are able to express their views, hopes, wishes, and fears through collective action (cf. Osler 2005, 6).

5.2   Global education

"Global education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalised world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all" (Council of Europe).

Education policy makers are searching for appropriate responses to the challenges of globalization. There are some definitions of *global education*, however there is not *the* one working definition – although they are largely similar. The main aim of global education is to build a global culture of peace by promoting values and attitudes which enable the realization of democracy, development and human rights. Osler and Vincent (2002, 2) defined global education as follows taking into consideration the definitions of well-known organization such as United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe:

> Global education encompasses the strategies, policies and plans that prepare young people and adults for living together in an interdependent world. It is based on the principles of co-operation, non-violence, respect for human rights and cultural diversity, democracy and tolerance. It is characterised by pedagogical approaches based on human rights and a concern for social justice which encourage critical thinking and responsible participation. Learners are encouraged to make links between local, regional and world-wide issues and to address inequality.

Young people are supposed to be prepared for real life of today and not just tomorrow – living together with lots of different nationalities, respecting and fighting for the needs and rights of disadvantaged people but also for their own. Global education is about *principles* such as cooperation, respect for human rights and cultural diversity, and democracy. It is about *pedagogical approaches* including critical thinking skills and learner participation. It is, moreover, about specific *knowledge* providing the learner an understanding of the current world (cf. Osler 2005, 6). The term *global education* may still not be fully applied as the definition by Osler and Vincent demand, however, international educational

developments encompass, as a general rule, aspects of education such as multicultural or intercultural education, human rights education, global aspects of environmental education and education for sustainable development (cf. ibid., 7).

European and international Governments have committed themselves to education for *international understanding* – for instance, at UNESCO's International Conference on Education in 1994 in Geneva where they promised to transform educational institutions into "ideal places for the exercise of tolerance, respect for human rights, the practice of democracy and learning about the diversity and wealth of cultural identities" (UNESCO 1995, 2.2). The term *international understanding* used by UNESCO refers more to understanding between *nations*, hence, the members of UNESCO. Nonetheless, global education rather means the understanding between *people* and is therefore much broader.

In 1995 the General Conference of UNESCO approved an *Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy* which identified policies and actions to be taken at institutional, national and international levels to realize such education. It states:

> There must be education for peace, human rights and democracy. It cannot, however, be restricted to specialised subjects and knowledge. The whole of education must transmit this message and the atmosphere of the institution must be in harmony with the application of democratic standards (ibid., IV., 17).

This is the education that is meant by global education. It should be a mainstream concern and a right for every learner (cf. Osler 2005, 7).

Education authorities and schools are integrating and will have to keep integrating these issues into their curricula matched by processes of democratization. Of course, it is possible to promote cooperation, democratic approaches and responsible participation without necessarily encouraging learners to make links between local, regional and global issues. The ministries of education recognize the importance of some form of global education, whether or not the terms *global education* or *citizenship education* are used. All of them acknowledge the need to educate their citizens to live together in an interdependent world providing some form of social and political education, particularly in the compulsory years of schooling (cf. ibid., 9).

5.3 Citizenship as status, feeling and practice

Citizenship involves solidarity with others. It is also about engaging with others and the intend to influence others by being a role model. Furthermore, it is about beliefs and attitudes and about making a difference (cf. ibid., 12).

Citizenship is often understood as a *status* – a legal status that determines an individual to belong to a particular nation state. In this political view the emphasis lies on who is and who is not a citizen with particular rights and obligations. It is something exclusive since there is a clear distinction between those who have this status and those who do not. The general rights of a citizen are to live and work in a particular country and to vote. The State is committed to protect its citizens through laws and policing. Citizens have to contribute taxes for which, in return, the State provides collective benefits such as education, health care and transport infrastructure (cf. ibid., 13).

In terms of status, citizenship is sometimes a rather an excluding term than a unifying one associated with freedom, equality and solidarity. British citizenship is a good example for exclusion. In Britain people feel far less confident about their legal status as citizens (cf. ibid.). The term *British citizen* was first introduced under the *Immigration Act 1981* as a means to exclude Commonwealth citizens from freely entering the UK. Consequently, it is not surprising that, here, British citizenship does not only have positive connotation nor it is clearly understood due to the fact that it is not clearly defined – since Commonwealth and Irish citizens who reside in the United Kingdom are allowed to participate in local and national elections, for instance (cf. Smith 1997, xi). Indeed, many political groups use nationalism and the link between citizenship and nationality to exclude others. Therefore, it is inevitably that citizenship within a school subject is viewed controversially. If we understand citizenship as based on universal human rights we may be able to live it in a more inclusive way (cf. Osler 2005, 13).

Nevertheless, citizenship is more than status, it also involves *feeling*. Citizenship as a feeling is often considered to be a question of identity. Apart from the fact whether an individual has the official status of citizen or not, the degree to which they identify with a particular State my vary. Governments and communities put a lot of effort in promoting feelings of national identity, for example, through national holidays, jubilees, parades and public service broadcasting. Even so, the extent of feeling part of the nation alters significantly. This might be, for instance, due to

unequal access to national services – although democratic states aim to treat all citizens equally (cf. ibid., 14). Parents who have children with special educational needs, for example, often have difficulties to ensure their children's right to education. Unfortunately, in many societies gender, class and ethnicity still represent formal and informal barriers to full citizenship – especially in the USA. "Becoming citizens of the [American] commonwealth has been much more difficult for ethnic groups of color and for women from all racial, ethnic and cultural groups than for mainstream males" (Banks 1997, xi). If individuals are not accessing services on the basis of equality, or if they are perceiving it as inequality, it is very likely that they feel excluded which is caused by a missing sense of belonging – a prerequisite of participative citizenship (cf. Osler 2005, 14).

'I feel at home in London' or 'I am proud to be Bavarian' – for many citizens it may be easier to identify with a particular place or region instead of a whole country or state. Osler and Starkey conducted a study in 2003 where they wanted to establish ways how young people aged ten to eighteen in the multicultural city of Leicester understood and identified with various communities. The study showed that most of them commonly identified with their city or neighborhood, but also with public places such as parks, shopping centers and libraries – places where they could easily meet their friends. As there were various places, the young people had multiple identities all located in their local communities. Therefore, the research supports the opinion that identity and citizenship as feeling are often situated in local communities and to a greater or lesser extent in one or more nation states (cf. ibid., 15). Some individuals who really try to achieve full responsible citizenship may nevertheless be excluded – be it by law or discrimination (cf. ibid., 16.).

If there is a feeling of belonging and a will for citizen participation and engagement, it can be called the *practice* of citizenship. People get rather engaged in campaigning activities or fund-raising activities than formal politics. These people decide to take part in those activities because they feel a strong sense of solidarity with their neighborhood or with people in other parts of the world. It could be local issues, such as a threatened school closure; an international emergency, such as the recent flood in Mozambique; or international issues like the Palestine-Israel cause that make people join these activities because they feel able to make a difference. As a consequence, participative citizenship necessarily requires a sense of

belonging. (cf. ibid.). An international example for global citizen engagement is again *FridaysForFuture*.

5.4   Educational principles for Global Citizenship

Although governments have sought to respond to globalization through policy development, global education has not yet been mainstreamed within schools. Effective mainstreaming is likely "to *both* a specific curriculum space and permeation of the whole school curriculum and ethos" (cf. ibid., 18). Various political theorists claim that we have to rethink the concept of democracy in terms of our increasingly interdependent world. Education for global or cosmopolitan citizenship, where individuals are required a transcultural perspective not only to concern themselves with the quality of life within their own boundaries, but also with human rights concerns elsewhere in the world, could possibly be a way to achieve global education.

Young people will have to get involved in experiencing the status, feelings and practice of global citizenship and their teachers need to connect explicitly local, national and global concerns. It is essential to prepare young people to become global citizens that are able and willing to shape the future of their own communities and engage in democratic processes at all levels – now that growing globalization and global interdependence mean that organizations, people and events over which we possible have little influence affect our everyday lives (cf. ibid., 19). Future global citizens need skills and attitudes which allow them to make connections between different contexts and situations that underlie a constant change. Furthermore, they need the ability to apply these skills not only in school but also in their local community. If this was not enough, they have to understand national, regional and international contexts and be able to make connections between these contexts. The biggest challenge of global citizenship is "being able to make connections, to critique and to evaluate within contexts of cultural diversity" (ibid.).

Education for Global Citizenship implies besides a broader understanding of national identity, as well, recognition of our common humanity and a sense of solidarity with others.

> It is insufficient, however, to feel and express a sense of solidarity with others elsewhere, if we cannot establish a sense of solidarity with others in our own communities, especially those others whom we perceive to be different from ourselves (ibid.).

The challenge is to accept that we share the responsibility for our common future and for solving our common problems because we all live in and share the same world.

Human rights provide a set of internationally agreed principles which may serve as a framework for schools and other learning communities who can build up their own set of explicit shared democratic values. These sets allow people to reflect critically on their own culture, values, beliefs and behaviors and compare them with those of their fellow citizens.

> Citizenship in a plural society implies a security in one's own culture – nut not an unquestioning security. It also implies a critical respect for the culture, beliefs and values of the other even in their difference, a critical respect for difference. Rational dialogue (that is, meaningful exchange of views, not monologue, nor command, nor willful, blind or spiteful discourse) between the different parties is essential, so that all may equitably contribute to the decisions taken and the judgements made (Figueroa 2000, 57).

As already mentioned in the chapter of transcultural competence, teachers play a highly important role – especially language teachers as they are already encouraging their students to reflect on their own culture, their values and their belief and at the same time they are providing them knowledge about the culture, values and beliefs of the language the students are learning. As a consequence, good language teachers must be global citizens (cf. Osler 2005, 20).

5.5   Language teaching for Global Citizenship

Education for citizenship and the promotion of language learning for transcultural communication are both responses to the political and social realities of globalization (cf. Starkey 2005, 23). Global migration is one reason for the growing number of multicultural societies in the world – people leaving their home countries in search of a better life or due to forced displacements by war, for instance.

The language classroom is a key place in which the necessary skills and attitudes for Global Citizenship can be developed and practiced – one reason why it may serve as a model of democratic practice. Good language teaching and learning is

characterized by participative learning styles which are the same that support the education for Global Citizenship (cf. Osler 2005, 21). Democratic education is a key element of Global Citizenship education. However, democracy is a potentially fragile system (cf. Starkey 2005, 23), even where it is long established. Citizens of democratic governments enjoy the openness and freedoms they are living their lives with. Nonetheless, what is the essence of democracy also provides possibilities for non-democratic groups, including those with terrorist intentions, which want to destabilize and discredit elected authorities. Democracy needs, by definition, the commitment of ordinary people and this can only be achieved if these people understand the advantages of their democratic way of life and the consequences of its potential loss (cf. ibid., 24).

In former times, language teaching and learning was merely instrumental. Today it is increasingly recognized that language learning, even for business purposes, represents a part of humanistic education that encourages transcultural communication on the basis of equality and thus, goes far beyond instrumental language learning. The acquisition of *plurilingual competence* is promoted by language education policy, at a European level, as it is one of the conditions and elements of democratic citizenship in Europe (cf. Beacco & Byram 2003, 18). Therefore language education policy is developed in the context of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) which the Council of Europe explicitly points out in its guide to language education policy.

> The teaching of languages has aims which are convergent with those of education for democratic citizenship: both are concerned with intercultural interaction and communication, the promotion of mutual understanding and the development of individual responsibility (ibid.).

Taking this into consideration, this understanding of language education contributes remarkably to citizenship education. The learning of a foreign language makes learners understand and also appreciate different countries, cultures, people and communities. By doing so, they begin to think of themselves as citizens of the world, as well as citizens of their own country. Language learning changes people's thinking and perceiving of the world – it widens their view and develops respect, appreciation for and a broader knowledge about the world surrounding them.

Despite the acknowledgement that language teaching promotes democracy, the reality of the implementation of EDC into the language classroom is yet to be fully

mainstreamed. One of the challenges is that both teachers and students have to be convinced of the practical advantages of adopting an intercultural approach rather than a purely instrumental approach. This may be even more difficult by looking into textbooks and course materials that lack of a general cultural dimension or represent cultures by stereotyping them – hence, instead of helping the students to broaden their view it has the effect of mind closing. Course writers still tend to keep the emphasis on grammar and linguistic forms rather than on social, political and cultural understanding. Since the available working material is not satisfactory language teachers often have to provide their own materials(cf. Starkey 2005, 29). If the language teachers or their material fail to acknowledge that there is a cultural dimension to language teaching, they also miss the opportunity to engage with their students and to challenge them to overcome stereotypes (cf. ibid., 30).

Cultural awareness is surely an important element of language learning, however, it should be *critical* cultural awareness which has been defined as an "ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey 2002, 13). It is indispensable for language teachers to adopt a position within the language classroom that shows respect for human dignity and equality for human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction. The knowledge and understanding of human rights equips both teachers and students to engage with other cultures on the basis of equality and dignity (cf. Starkey 2005, 31).

Language learning pedagogy enables the development of skills for global citizenship and familiarizes the learner with key concepts associated with democracy. The communicative methodology of the language classroom is, in many respects, democratic itself (cf. ibid., 32). The emphasis in the language classroom is on the speech acts. Teachers should guide the students in their use of the new communicative tool – the foreign language. Communicative competence involves skills such as the ability to listen, to reformulate the words of somebody else, to point out or put a different point of view or to produce a valid argument. The language classroom is a place that enables the education for dialogue (cf. Tardieu 1999, 24) – an essential tool to cope with issues of treating with other individuals and the ordinary living together. In the communicative language classroom students are frequently required to work in groups or pairs where they can express freely their opinion and discuss them with their partners. Since

discussion and debate require working with others, taking part in public discourse and resolving conflicts, language teaching promotes social competence and competence for action (cf. Starkey 2005, 32.)

6. Conclusion

Language is as important for humans as water to a fish. We use language in our daily lives to express and interpret meanings, as well as to establish and maintain social and interpersonal relationships. Culture is a social construct that deals with language as social practice. People identify through culture and language through which they feel belonging to a specific social group or nation that shares the culture and language. Therefore, language, culture and identity are closely linked.

We live in a world that is characterized by globalization, growing global interdependence and multicultural societies whose number keeps on rising. Cultural awareness, transcultural competence and constructive communication skills need to be promoted in order to cope with the changes in society.

Regarding the foreign language classroom, language learners need to be aware of the fact that every individual carries its own culture and identity shaped by its environment and which it brings into classroom. Culture and identity of one's mother tongue are mostly different from those of the target language. Students first need to establish and secure their own identity and culture before they are able to successfully adapt the new culture and identity to their own. If cultural differences are not addressed in the foreign language classroom, they may lead to miscommunication, uncertainty and even to isolation.

Multiculturalism is a great opportunity for individual development. Through learning about others we learn to respect and even appreciate differences. The purpose of studying other cultures – for example by learning a foreign language – is to encourage the students to reflect on themselves and to reconsider their attitudes to what was previously considered foreign. Stereotyping and prejudices involve the labelling groups of people, usually in a negative way, based on preconceived ideas. What is often racist and certainly undemocratic, may be challenged in the language classroom. If someone, on the one hand, is truly motivated to learn a foreign language, the possibility to develop skills and attitudes that are necessary for Global Citizenship are fairly high. On the other hand, EDC may be a motivation to engage with a new language. Education in general should emphasize the acquisition of

citizenship skills, and far more important the ability of interaction between them, as well as the ability to make connections between their contexts.

Transcultural communicative competence, a core component in language learning classrooms, enables learners abilities such as settling conflicts in a non-violent way (dialogue); recognize, respect and accept differences; or making choices and considering alternatives (cf. Council of Europe 2001, 3). Language learning to promote transcultural competence is a key element of Global Citizenship education that helps us overcome stereotypes and prejudices and become responsible and participative citizens.

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