Teaching English as a Global Language
for Intercultural Communication in Higher Education

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Abstract

With the development of globalization and internationalization, teaching English language, as lingua franca has been shifted from developing communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence. In this aspect, this research paper aims to study the perceptions of students and teachers concerning using English language as a global language for intercultural communication. It bridges the gap between student's perceptions and teachers' practices to help them design activities that prepare EFL learners to communicate with English as a global language for intercultural communication. 60 high and university students shared in a survey that evaluates students' motives for learning English as a global Language. Moreover, 30 high school and university English teachers shared also in another survey that evaluates their practices in teaching English for Intercultural education. Then a comparative analysis between both views was done. The results of the research paper revealed that students mostly learn English to get better job, and they need to learn the basic words and expressions to communicate. Students also are equipped with intercultural skills as most of them affirm that learning another language is related to learning its culture. On the other hand, the perceptions of English language teachers revealed that their main aim is to help the students communicate effectively. They also asserted the role of intercultural communication is to help learners have good conversation with nonnative speakers. Therefore, this research paper affirmed the differences in attitudes between the students and teachers' perception which creates a problem in real practice of teaching English. Accordingly, the results of this research raise awareness of EFL teachers and curriculum designers to design intercommunicative tasks that help EFL learners achieve appropriate communication in the intercultural context.

Keywords: Intercultural Communicating; EFL Teaching

Introduction

With the development of globalization and internationalization, English language became a lingua franca (Crystal et al., 2016; Tran and Seepho, 2015). The need to learn English in the global world has been shifted from developing communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Deardorff, 2006).

English language nowadays has the highest number of users as the first global languages. Crystal (2008) revealed that there are approximately two billion users of English in the world and only 400 million are native speakers, the remaining 1.6 billion being speakers of English from countries where the language has an official status or in countries where it is the first foreign language taught formally.

This wide spread learning English for different purposes reflects the learners' awareness to the intercultural dimension of using English as a common language to communicate between people from varied cultures and languages (Rocha, 2016). However, from my direct observation, as an English teacher and trainer, most students are motivated to learn English. They usually know that English, as international language, is their key to success. Students are willing to learn English to achieve business purposes and to attain high life skills. Nevertheless, most EFL curriculums aim to achieve academic purposes. This gap makes the students feel disappointed with the practices, methods of teaching English as an academic subject not as a medium for intercultural communication.

In this aspect, this research paper aims to study the perceptions of students and teachers concerning English as a global language for intercultural communication. It aims to compare between the both views in order to prepare programs that aim to create an intercultural citizen who is able to communicate effectively and proficiently in the intercultural context.

Therefore, this research paper proposes the following questions?

RQ1: What are the students' perceptions of learning English as a global lingua franca and of intercultural communication at the Lebanese High School?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of English language teachers on teaching English as a global lingua franca for intercultural communication at Lebanese High Schools?

RQ3: To what extent can teachers' perceptions of English as a global lingua Franca relate to their teaching practices generally and specifically for intercultural communicative competence to meet students' expectations?

Accordingly, this research paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a difference between students and teachers' perceptions towards learning English as a global language for intercultural communication.

In this way, this research is significant as it is going to bridge the gap between student's perceptions and teachers' practices to design activities that prepare EFL learners to communicate with English as a global language for intercultural communication.

Actually, internationalization and globalization are two terms that are often interrelated and associated with business, technology, studying or working abroad, and with the English language in the Education domain (Pauwels, 2011, Borjian, 2015). Hence, communicative competence was developed to intercultural communicative competence which is using appropriate and relevant communication between people from varied cultures in the intercultural context (Byram, 1997).

The communicative approach to language learning emphasizes the ability to proper use of language in a socially appropriate context whereas the intercultural dimension added in Byram's model aims "to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators" (Byram *et al.*, 2002). This term was coined by Byram and Zárate (1994, 1997) to refer to the capacity "to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies perceiving someone through a single identity" (Byram *et al.*, 2002: 9).

In the field of English language teaching, the notion of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) developed by Byram (1997, 2009) is considered the most influential model as it links between learning language and culture." (Young *et al.*, 2009). Byram's model encompasses the three domains of a competence: Cognitive (intercultural knowledge about own culture and others cultures), Affective (intercultural attitudes towards empathize, tolerate, respect, and cooperate with people from other cultures), and skills (proper oral and written communication that raise EFL learners' cultural awareness).

The integration of intercultural dimension in education is approved by international agencies such as UNESCO (2009), and the Council of Europe (Europarat, 2000). They agreed on mutual understanding and collaboration among different nations, and recognition of minority languages has led to the development of diverse strategies to make nations intercultural. Given the importance of viewing culture as a crucial component in language learning, this research paper aims to explore the knowledge, skills, attributes, behaviors and attitudes that may be considered relevant for learners in higher education contexts.

Hence, teaching English in the intercultural dimension is essential element to internationalization (Knight, 2009). Hence, raising learners' awareness to the cultural of own and others can help them to act as mediator between the two cultures. Raising learners' cultural awareness helps to achieve successful dialogue as communicators focus on humanistic aspects rather than overgeneralization and stereotyped ideas. The approach

to languages and cultures should be "less normative and more open to variation" including an interest in language and cultural encounters (Andersen et al., 2006: 8) so that it allows us to evaluate what intercultural communication entails in terms of competences, awareness, and proficiency for the language classroom. Saleh (2020) also asserted the efficiency of integrating ICC in EFL teaching and recommended a holistic approach for intercultural teaching to help learners communicate effectively in the intercultural context.

The importance of integrating intercultural competence into the teaching and learning of languages has become fundamental as a result of globalization and mobility of academics, learners and workers, migration, and technological developments that entail flows of people (Canagarajah, 2013; Liddicoat and Scarino, 2013). These flows of people have generated complex spaces where interactions between diverse people have made all languages and cultures more visible. Canagarajah (2013) refers to those spaces as "contact zones" which have promoted the relevance of integrating the intercultural dimension with educational fields to equip learners with a set of competences at the personal and professional level to explore the opportunities of "a world that has become wide open to them" (Guillermo, 2012: 361). Although this reality may not be pervasive to all of them, intercultural awareness is needed for effective communication as any daily life context of any society is composed of a wide array of social and cultural groups.

Therefore, globalization and internationalization contributed in transforming teaching English in the 21st century from developing the communicative competence to intercultural communicative competence. This development is so wide so that it necessitates new teaching practices that meet new era of teaching English as a lingua franca.

2- Method and tools

This research paper analyzes the current perceptions of EFL teachers and students towards learning and teaching English in the 21st century.   The target sample of this research is secondary and university teachers and students. This research paper has a large population, so the sample size will be determined until we reach saturation.

It uses mixed method as it uses qualitative and quantitative analysis. For quantitative analysis, it will use a survey that evaluates both students' motives for learning English as a global Language for intercultural education. It has three sections: the first section has questions regarding the student's age and education. The second one has MCQ form where the examiners choose the appropriate answer regarding the English language they learn, their most and least target for learning English, and the most and least important variable during intercultural conversation. The second section is evaluating the attitudes towards intercultural skills by using Likert scale agrees, neutral, disagree. Moreover, this research uses also another survey for the teachers'. it contains 4 sections. The first section contains personal information about the teachers. The second part is qualitative analysis to their teaching philosophy regarding intercultural teaching. The third

and fourth parts are similar to the student's survey. According to procedure, the two surveys were distributed using google form. The researcher is going to compare the views to confirm or refute the hypothesis.

3- Results and their discussion

This research paper aims to show that there is difference between EFL teachers and students' perceptions of teaching English as a global language for intercultural communication.

Regarding the demography analysis of this questionnaire, it meets the research sample. The sample size of this questionnaire is 90 responses that were randomly chosen. 66.7% were students and 33.3% were teachers. Nearly 58% of the students were at the university level and 27 % were from the secondary level with age that ranges from 18-22 years old. 72.9 % of them were interested in learning American English. As for teachers, it reveals that they are experienced teachers with more than 10 years in teaching and most of them are at university and secondary level. (see fig. 1)
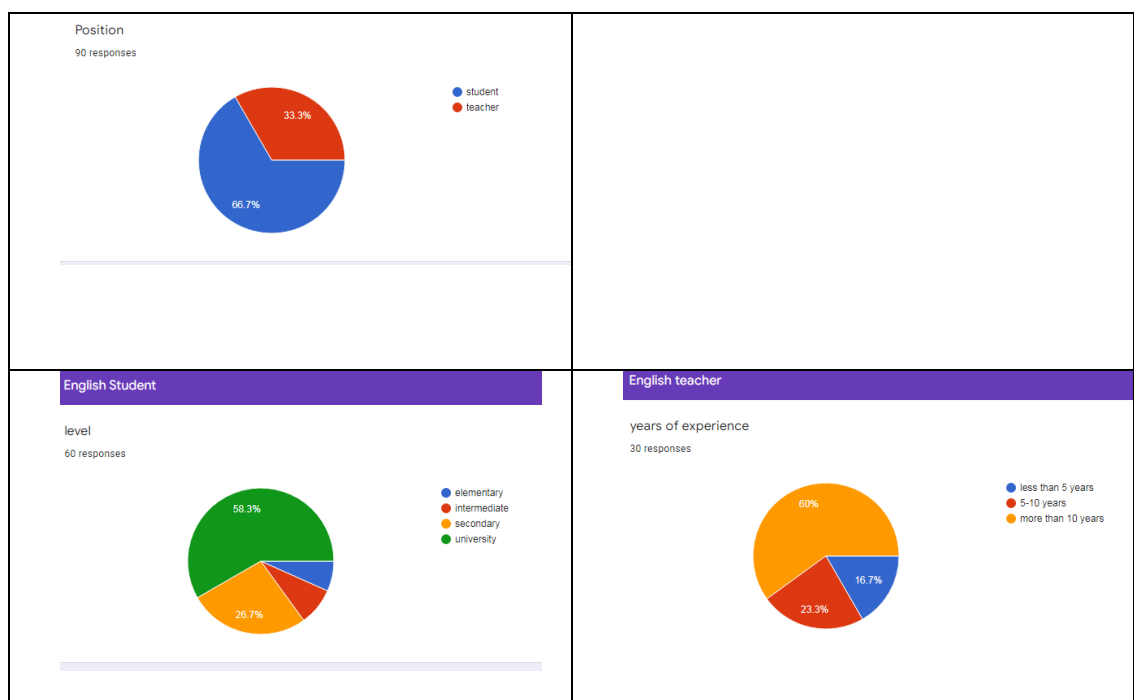

Figure 1: demography analysis

The quantitative analysis of the survey revealed that there is a difference between students' perspective regarding learning English as a global language and teachers' perspectives regarding teaching English as a global language. Table 1 reveals that students learn English to get a better job, while teachers teach English to help them interact with people from other countries. On the contrary, the teachers' motive is the least considered one for most of the students, and most teachers don't care about the student's GPA which is

very important motive for students. Furthermore, students consider that vocabulary is the most important element to speak with nonnative speakers in English and phonics is the least important one. Never the less, teachers consider that intercultural communication is the most important, and they agreed with the students that pronunciation may not affect the interaction. Furthermore, the second part revealed that both teachers and students' attitudes towards intercultural skills are nearly the same as the agree variable was dominant in all the variables. Nevertheless, most students believe that we can't judge people from other culture and consider learning language is related to culture and values, whereas teachers were highly interested in language is not translation word by word, and on avoiding stereotyping.

Table 1: Qualitative analysis

Question	Student's Response	Teacher's Response
A. Learning/teaching to speak English is most important for me because…	It will allow me to find a better job	It will allow learners to converse with people from other countries
Learning/teaching to speak English is least important for me because…	It will allow me to converse with native speakers	It is a mandatory course and learners' GPA could be affected
When you have a conversation with a non-native speaker in English which of these items help you two understand each other	Knowing the exact words and expressions in English	Knowing about intercultural communication
When you have a conversation with a non-native speaker in English which of these items doesn't help you two understand each other	Having a native like pronunciation	Knowing about other culture Having native like pronunciation
B. Intercultural skills	• It is important not to judge others' culture from my own culture • Learning	• Language can't be translated word by word • It is important not to judge others' culture from my own

	new language means learning new beliefs and values	culture • Cultures may be defined and understood differently by different groups and individuals

Regarding qualitative analysis to teacher' philosophy of teaching. It revealed that Arabic is the common mother language for the teachers. Most of them haven't traveled abroad, and others have lived abroad in Italy, Panama and America. Most of the teachers communicate with people from different cultures using English Language. For instance, they have either friends or relatives from other Arabic and European and American countries. All of them have recently training courses, but only 2 them have courses related to intercultural communication. They believe that learners learn English as an international language mainly to pass the exam and to use it in communication. The most salient characteristics of the global world according to the teachers were economy, technology and communication and they believe that learners in the global world need good language to communicate appropriately in the discourse.

To sum up, although the quantitative analysis revealed the disperancy between teachers and students' attitudes regarding learning/teaching English, the qualitative analysis revealed the teachers' awareness to the importance of intercultural communication in the global world.

4- Conclusion

This research paper investigates a significant issue related to students and teachers' perceptions I teaching/learning English as a global language in intercultural context.

The first research question deals with the students' perceptions of learning English as a global lingua franca and of intercultural communication at the Lebanese High School. This research paper revealed that students mostly learn English to get better job, and they need to learn the basic words and expressions to communicate. Students also are equipped with intercultural skills as they affirm that learning another language is related to learning its culture.

As for the second research question which emphasizes the perceptions of English language teachers on teaching English as a global lingua franca for intercultural communication at Lebanese High School. It revealed that teachers' main aim is to help the students communicate effectively. They also asserted the role of intercultural communication to help learners have good conversation with nonnative speakers.

Regarding the third research question that deals with teachers' perceptions of English as a global lingua Franca relate to their teaching practices generally and specifically for intercultural communicative competence to meet students' expectations. This research paper affirmed the differences in attitudes between the students and teachers' perception which creates a problem in real practice of teaching English.   This accommodates with the research hypothesis:

H1: There is difference between students and teachers' perceptions towards learning English as a global language for intercultural communication.

In this way, this research paper goes along with other researches the affirmed the importance of integrating ICC in education.   It agrees with other researches that experimented the efficacy of intercultural teaching to develop EFL teaching . It goes along with UNESCO (2009), and the Council of Europe (Europarat, 2000) who called with the integration of ICC in education. Furthermore, it agrees with Byram et al. (2002) on the importance of engaging complexity in EFL teaching to avoid stereotyping and   single identity. It also goes along with Knight (2009) who asserted that teaching English in the intercultural dimension is essential element to internationalization. It also completes what Saleh (2019) have concluded on my dissertation on the efficacy of applying the holistic approach of ICC in EFL teaching in terms of competences, awareness and proficiency in classroom practices.

Accordingly, the results of this research raise awareness of EFL teachers and curriculum designers to design   intercommunicative tasks that help EFL learners achieve appropriate communication in the intercultural context.

Therefore, it is recommended to fill in the gap between teachers and students by adopting the intercultural communicative approach for teaching English as a global language.

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