

THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CRITICAL LANGUAGE AWARENESS (CLA) AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (EL)

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Abstract: This paper is a comparative study of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) and Experiential Learning (EL) to sort out which of the two language teaching methods best contributes to learners' global development. The conclusions of the study revealed three main reasons that make EL stands as the most relevant approach than CLA in getting learners develop globally. First, contrary to CLA whose pedagogical and didactics practices basically involve learners in analyzing or exploiting discourses, EL in addition to discourses engages EFL students in projects or real life tasks involving the analysis or exploitation of other resources that are not necessarily English language related. Second, while CLA takes society to learners in classroom, EL takes learners from classroom to society. The barrier between the classroom and real life is then broken. Finally, EL contrary to CLA is most likely to help learners develop professional-based competences since the learning tasks or projects sometime lead them to experiencing these domains. To get to such conclusions, the study begins with the theoretical framework which respectively accounts for the theoretical underpinnings of Global Education (GE), CLA and EL. It then compares CLA and EL in the light of the principles of GE and ends with concluding remarks on the contribution of language teaching methods to learners' global development.

Keywords: Global education, Global development, Critical Language awareness, Experiential Learning

LES PERSPECTIVES GÉNÉRALES DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT DES LANGUES : UNE ÉTUDE COMPARATIVE DE LA CONSCIENCE CRITIQUE DES LANGUES (CLA) ET DE L'APPRENTISSAGE EXPÉRIENTIEL (AL)

Résumé : Cet article est une étude comparative de la conscience critique des langues (CLA) et de l'apprentissage par expériences (EL) afin de déterminer laquelle de ces deux méthodes d'enseignement des langues contribue le mieux au développement global des apprenants. Les conclusions de l'étude ont révélé trois raisons principales qui font que l'EL est l'approche la plus pertinente par rapport à la CLA permettant aux apprenants de se développer globalement. Premièrement, contrairement au CLA dont les pratiques pédagogiques et didactiques impliquent essentiellement les apprenants dans l'analyse ou l'exploitation de discours, l'EL en plus des discours, implique les apprenants dans des projets ou des tâches de la vie réelle qui impliquent en sus, l'analyse ou l'exploitation d'autres ressources qui ne sont pas nécessairement liées à la langue anglaise. Deuxièmement, alors que la CLA amène la société aux apprenants en classe, l'EL amène les apprenants à la société. La barrière entre la classe et la vie réelle est alors brisée. Enfin, contrairement à la CLA, l'EL est plus susceptible d'aider les apprenants à

développer des compétences professionnelles puisque les tâches ou les projets d'apprentissage les amènent parfois à expérimenter ces domaines. Pour arriver à ces conclusions, l'étude commence par le cadre théorique qui rend compte des fondements théoriques de l'éducation globale (GE), de la CLA et de la EL. Elle compare ensuite l'CLA et l'EL à la lumière des principes de l'éducation globale et se termine par des remarques finales sur la contribution des méthodes d'enseignement des langues au développement global des apprenants.

Mots-clés : Éducation Globale, Développement Global, Apprentissage par expérience, La conscience critique des langues

Introduction

Globalization has brought about a rapid socio-cultural intermingling and development that appear to be so demanding for the social language learner and user today. Along with this reality is the necessity for people who have no other language in common to not only communicate but also live together. Hence, the need for English the *Lingua Franca* of that globalized world as it “carries too much baggage both from its colonial history as well as through its current global dominance” (Wallace 2005, p.46). Additionally, developments in the fields of sociology, psychology, linguistics, pedagogy and didactics among others, have led to a paradigmatic shift in second language (L2) education towards the learner-centered approach which encourages active participation of the learner in his training. One of the straightforward consequences of that shift is a concern with the learner’s global development. Such development involves physical, cognitive, affective, conative, social and normative factors.

Authors such as Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) and Kouassi (2011) recognize the importance of training language learners for their global development. For Yamazaki and Kayes, developmental learning also encompasses “stable changes that occur as individuals learn to adapt to changing circumstances over time by learning to manage competing demands, and to deal with environmental complexity” (p.11). Kouassi explains that global education allows learners to integrate society equipped with the aptitudes and attitudes required to become active members of the community that they have the responsibility to construct, improve and change. This paper addresses the issue through a comparative study of the relevance of Critical Language Awareness (CLA) and Experiential Learning (EL) in the light of the principles of global education. The main question this paper intends to answer is as follows: which of the two language teaching methods best contributes to learners’ global development? This question calls for two subsidiary questions: How do CLA and EL allow language learners’ global development? Which of them is more advantageous in terms of learners’ global development?

The paper begins with the theoretical framework that respectively exposes the theoretical underpinnings of Global Education (GE), CLA and EL. It then carries out a comparative study of CLA and EL in the light of the principles of

GE. The paper ends with concluding remarks on the contribution of language teaching methods to learners' global development.

1. Theoretical framework of the study

1.1 *Global Education (GE)*

Global education rests on the view that contemporary people living and interacting in a global and interconnected world need to develop the competences that are crucial for their social integration. They are also expected to understand and discuss complex relationships of common social, ecological, political and economic issues (Tye & Kniep 1991, The Global Education Guidelines Working Group 2008, Omidvar & Sukumar 2013). The idea of global education is however not new as it is reportedly admitted that it "... actually has roots dating back to the 1920s, when comparative studies crossing cultural boundaries started to take off" (Global Education: Definition, Purpose & History, 2018, p.2). Global education therefore operates on the underlying premise that "world problems are interconnected and global citizens are intrinsically dependent on each other". Thus living together in such a backdrop requires "a perfect understanding and a sense of responsibility to deal with the issues that affect those citizens' lives" (Omidvar & Sukumar 2013, p.3). "Global education [...] opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalized world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all" (Maastricht Global Education Declaration, 2002). In so doing, it advocates transformative learning offering "a way to make changes at local levels to influence the global in the sense of building citizenship through participatory strategies and methods, so that people learn by taking responsibilities that cannot be left only to governments and other decision makers" (The Global Education Guidelines Working Group 2008, p.14). Applied to language teaching and learning in general, and to English as a foreign language in particular, global education implies preparing learners for their active and responsible participation in global society by making appropriate pedagogical and didactics choices that set the conditions for learners to develop their thinking skills as well as their communicative skills. This does not call for a mere selection of teaching materials that deal with global issues. Neither does it consist in a mere deductive teaching of a set of values or skills. "We cannot call our English teaching successful if our students, however fluent, are ignorant of world problems, have no social conscience by using their communication skills for international crime, exploitation, oppression or environmental destruction" (Cates, 1997, cited in Omidvar & Sukumar, 2013, p.2). Global education in EFL therefore admits a critical holistic or integrative approach to English language which envisions global awareness as well as cognitive and communicative outcomes.

1.2 *Critical Language Awareness (CLA)*

CLA sprung out of the "language awareness" movement developed in England as a response to government reports bearing out a pervasive sense of dissatisfaction with English and foreign language education in public schools (Shamim 2011 and Farias 2004). Donmall (1985), cited in Farias (2004: 2), describes

language awareness as involving "a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life". Language awareness, he explains, operates on three distinctive levels: cognitive, affective and social. "The cognitive level refers to awareness of language patterns, the affective level accounts for attitude formation and the social level references the improvement of learners' effectiveness as communicators" (idem, p.2). According to Shamim (2011: 2), language awareness refers to the mental and internal capacity which the learner gradually develops by giving motivated and conscious attention to language in use to discover its patterns. Drawing on that initial movement, Fairclough (1992) presents CLA as the "conscious attention to properties of language and language use as an element of language education" which is substantially influenced by the representations (experience and perception) of the individual. It equally focuses on discovering the relationship between language and social perspective. Fairclough, Clark and Ivanić (1997) specify the aim and scope of CLA in the following terms:

empowering learners by providing them with a critical analytical framework to help them reflect on their own language experiences and practices, the language practices of others in the institutions of which they are a part and in the wider society within which they live.

Clark and Ivanić (1997, p.217)

They go further as to explain that the implementation of CLA involves "a change in the beliefs and attitudes to language learning from a decontextualized, explicit grammar oriented approach to an inclusion of the political and social dimension in which the language is used" (idem). Shamim (2011) provides a list of three major principles of CLA: teaching is emancipatory, teaching is oriented towards the recognition of difference, an engagement with teaching as an oppositional practice in which all participants are continuously thinking towards the prospects for empowerment. It can therefore be inferred from the above that CLA anchors in a critical pedagogical approach whose underlying rationale admits that language cannot be separated from the social contexts which shape it. Hence, the teaching and learning of EFL should engage and assist learners in English discourse analysis while strengthening the awareness of its essential principles. CLA does not entail a deductive instruction of English in which a teacher or a book instructs explicitly a given content. It's rather an inductive pedagogy that sets context for learners to develop the critical awareness of English language forms, functions as well as their critical mind.

13 Experiential Learning (EL)

Experiential Learning is a philosophy of education that advocates active and reflective learning process that builds on previous learning experiences and requires the personal involvement of the learner. According to Kolb (1984), cited in Kouassi (2011, P.35), that philosophy draws on "Dewey's philosophical pragmatism, Lewin's social psychology, and Piaget's cognitive developmental genetic epistemology" which all form a unique perspective on learning and

development: making use of student's knowledge and experience in the educational process. Kolb views EL as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb 1984, cited in Kouassi, 2011). In fact,

The assumption is that we seldom learn from experience unless we assess the experience, assigning our own meaning in terms of our own goals, aims, ambitions and expectations. From these processes come the insights, the discoveries, and understanding. The pieces fall into place, and the experience takes on added meaning in relation to other experiences

Saddington (2001, p.1)

EL accounts for a holistic process of adaptation to the world which advocates that to be an effective learner, an individual must engage in four fundamental learning abilities or phases: Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE) (Yamazaki and Kayes, 2004, p.31). CE involves experiences and immediate human situations in a subjective manner. RO concerns learners' engagement in understanding the meaning of thoughts and situations by carefully watching and listening. AC appears to be the dialectic opposite of CE. It involves thinking, analyzing, and building general theories by means of logic, ideas, and concepts. AE is the practical applications and pragmatic focus on what works. The learner plans to translate this new knowledge into actions, testing the veracity of the concepts or rules developed during abstract conceptualization (Kouassi, 2011, p. 63). Experiential learning encourages personal input, initiative, and self-direction in the learning process. Activities begin with accessing the specific past experiences of learners, and then building on these experiences to construct a framework for learning. Practically, experience-based, project-based, and task-based learning become experiential when elements of reflection, support, and transfer are added to the basic experience, transforming a simple activity into an opportunity for learning.

2. The contribution of CLA and el to learners' global development

2.1 CLA and learners' global development

Taking into consideration the aim, scope and pedagogical principles of CLA, some researchers have been figuring out its developmental perspective for students. Donmall (Op.cit) implicitly concludes that CLA contributes to learners' global development at three levels: cognitive, affective and social. At the cognitive level, CLA allows the development of student's awareness of the English language in terms of its patterns, functions and their contextual usage in social interactions. The affective level accounts for students' ability to perceive and accommodate the differences and the similarities between their L1 and English. Perceiving and accommodating the differences between English language and their L1 frees students from all their cultural background and helps them to draw inferential relationships between languages, which is one of the first steps in developing intercultural communication skills. The social level implies students' ability to use language as a "valid tool to face the communicative challenges of the contemporary knowledge-based world because

language has the capability of winning people's hearts and mastering their thoughts" Shamim (2011, p.4).

Fairclough (1995, p.222) strongly believes that CLA is a tremendous requirement for personal success and social change in our contemporary society in which it perfectly stands as a prerequisite for "effective citizenship and a democratic way of life". CLA not only "highlights non-transparent aspects of the social function of language but it pays attention to linguistic dimensions of educational failure or inadequacies in foreign language learning" Shamim (2011, p.3) does not take a different view when he explains that the nature of contemporary society renders CLA more necessary than ever in order to create citizens for an effective democracy, which moves toward greater freedom and respect for all people. CLA, he adds, increases learners' awareness of social, cultural and political situations of the society which is the source of the language.

2.2 EL and learners' global development

According to Rogers, EL :

[...] has a quality of personal involvement-the whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects being in the learning event. It is self-initiated. Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from the outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within".

Rogers (1969.p.5)

EL has the merit of challenging all learner domains holistically, rather than fragmenting the learning process into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skill acquisition. In the same vein, Wallerstein (1983) explains that experiential philosophy has the potential to give public voice to those who have been marginalized, to empower those who are fearful or shy, and to increase learners' ownership and responsibility for their own learning.

Experiential learning not only provides students with plenty of communicative opportunities in the target language, but also allows students a forum to access a wide variety of new skills unrelated to the actual language-learning. These include the practical skills needed for the completion of the project (e.g., videotaping, making a poster, conducting an interview, using PowerPoint.), to cognitive and employability skills (critical reflection, self-evaluation, teamwork, and leadership).

Wallerstein (1983, p.60)

The contribution of EL to learners' global development is transparent in Kolb's EL cycle. CE helps learners excel at relating to people with an open mind, value interpersonal relations, and perform well in unstructured and ambiguous situations. RO allows them to develop competences in imagining the meaning of situations and ideas, seeing things from different perspectives, and appreciating different opinions. AC helps them develop abilities related to being good at making systematic plans, manipulating abstract symbols, and using quantitative

analysis. AE sets the field for learners to develop competences in terms of ability to take risks, getting things done, and taking responsibility for achieving objectives. EL implies the whole person of the learner; his/her intellectual, physical and mental dimensions correlate while he/she is involved in language learning experiencing.

3. The contribution of CLA and el to learners' global development: similarities and particularities

3.1. The contribution of CLA and EL to learners' global development: similarities

In terms of their contribution to learners' global development CLA and EL share three main features. First, they view EFL teaching not as of mastery of language forms but rather as development of learners' sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language including the political and social context in which it is used. The focus is on the social perspective of language teaching. CLA and EL advocate whole language teaching-learning which involves the whole person of the learner. Additionally, they help the learner develop higher order cognitive levels.

Second, CLA and EL admit that the developmental perspective of language learners envisions social values transferable to other contexts or domains. They set the field for a correlation of learners' intellectual, physical and mental dimensions.

Third, CLA and EL recognize and grant the same roles to teachers and learners in the language learning process. The teacher is a facilitator, negotiator, project planner and coordinator. The learner holds the center place of the learning process by actively carrying out and evaluating tasks or projects.

3.2. The contribution of CLA and EL to learners' global development: particularities

Three main distinctive features of CLA in its attempt to ensure language learners' global development could be sorted out. First, CLA is primarily concerned with the ways in which language represents the world and reflects social constructions. Second, it advocates critical pedagogy and critical discourse analysis (CDA). The deconstruction and reconstruction of socially and contextually constructed texts, conversations or other inputs constitutes the main teaching resources. Third, CLA seems to be fundamentally classroom based or confined. That is, the global development of learners takes place by means of approximating society or real-life into classroom setting only. In clear terms, the classroom interactions are the only ways for developing learners globally. Social discourses or other inputs are therefore taken into class where learners, under the monitoring of a teacher, have to analyze them and develop the English language proficiency, citizenship or democratic values and professional competences needed to actively and appropriately function in real life.

As for EL, three outstanding traits equally make it particular. First, the pedagogical and didactic practices are not restricted to the manipulation or analysis of language. The learning tasks or projects involve the analysis, usage and exploitation of resources that are not necessarily related to language. For

example, a project might involve learners in visiting a supply chain of a factory to account for its strengths, weaknesses and make suggestions to improve it. Second, the projects are planned in a classroom but experienced and realized in a real life setting. EL offers some kind of ethnographic learning which involves learners in negotiating the social meaning of language on the ground or based on their experience on the ground. The projects serve as powerful means for learners to link classroom learning to the outside world and to take actions related to their chosen topic. Third, EL is more likely to help learners develop professional transferable competences since the learning tasks or projects not only lead them to explore these domains but also involve them in making systematic plans, manipulating abstract symbols, using quantitative analysis, taking risks and responsibility for achieving objectives.

Regarding the above mentioned particularities of CLA and EL, it appears that subject to its proper implementation of course, EL is more advantageous for learners' global development for three main reasons. First, contrary to CLA whose pedagogical and didactics practices basically involve learners in analyzing or exploiting discourses (taken here as socially and contextually constructed texts, conversations or other inputs), EL engages them in the analysis or exploitation of other resources that are not necessarily language related. Second, while CLA takes society to learners in the classroom, EL takes learners in the classroom to society. Third, EL is most likely to help learners develop professionally based competences since the learning tasks or projects sometimes lead them to explore these domains.

4. Discussion

Education in this present era aims at achieving the global development of the individual. As already stated above, that implies training learners to integrate society equipped with the aptitudes and attitudes required to become active members of the community. Language teaching and learning is therefore endowed with such aims given that no human endeavor can be envisioned without language. More importantly, it is obvious that language use is social, requiring learners to not only be able to adapt to constantly changing expressing codes, but also to become aware of new and different cultural expectations, social norms, and practices. Language teaching methods have become amongst other things the privileged means *per excellence* for achieving the global development of learners due to their enlightening nature of classroom practices. In fact, the aptitudes and attitudes involved in the global development of learners never emerge automatically or accidentally. They rather get develop as a result of attentive application of language teaching methods and strategies as well as appropriate inputs in the classroom. Language teaching methods are therefore on perpetual moves for improvement so as to better cope with their assigned mission. CLA and EL are illustrations of approaches that target such an aim. There is a need to encourage their implementation since they both correlate learners' intellectual, physical and mental dimensions. It is true that from the results of my comparative study, EL is proven to be more likely to achieve the global development of learners. However, I strongly believe that the empirical

handling of such a comparative study might reveal that our conclusion holds much to their appropriate implementation.

In the endeavor to figure out the most relevant method between CLA and EL in training learners for their global development, the conclusions of this study could have carried more weight if they were based on an empirical implementation. Consequently, the study fails to enlighten on the worries and pitfalls that might occur during the implementation of CLA and EL.

Conclusion

My concern in this comparative study was to figure out the most relevant teaching method between CLA and EL in training learners for their global development. The conclusions reveal that EL stands as the most relevant approach than CLA in that concern for three main reasons. First, contrary to CLA whose pedagogical and didactics practices basically involve learners in analyzing or exploiting discourses, EL engages them in the analysis or exploitation of other resources that are not necessarily language related. Second, while CLA takes society to learners in the classroom, EL takes learners in the classroom to society. Third, EL is most likely to help learners develop professionally based competences since the learning tasks or projects sometimes lead them to explore these domains. However, these conclusions were not based on an empirical implementation. They therefore fail to enlighten on the worries and pitfalls that might occur during the implementation of CLA and EL. Further studies are then needed to explore that path.

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