

Intercultural Communicative Component (ICC) in the English Second Language (EL2) Curricula: Trends and Challenges of Transformation in South Africa (SA) and the Global World

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Abstract

Globally, universities are tremendously pressurised to improve throughput rates, intercultural proficiency, and academic transformation. However, at some universities, educators often neglect the ICC component in EL2 teaching. This article analyses the feasibility of integrating the ICC component into the EL2 courses, to enhance curricula decolonisation, intellectual and cultural freedom in South African universities. From a socio-cognitive perspective, the article argues that in SA, understanding ecological, ideological, affective and sociolinguistic elements, based on the *Ubuntu* philosophy (a humanness spirit that embodies (South) African culture) is significant for global IC and learning. Innovative integration of plurilingualism perspectives into the Humanities curricula may have implications for academic success, especially in English and ICC, global trade, democracy and social transformation.

Keywords: intercultural communicative competence, Ubuntu, decolonisation, globalisation, plurilingualism

1. Introduction

The demand for efficient use of English as a lingua franca and dominant international language at various levels has given rise to increased interest in intercultural communication (henceforth IC) and communicative EL2 teaching, as well as social transformation. IC entails “interactions between speakers who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and, usually represent different cultures” (Kecskes 2015:175). This implies that language educators have a double challenge to prepare learners with skills for sharing their linguistic knowledge and intercultural resources in multilingual and intercultural contexts, while interacting with others of diverse cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds. The purpose of this article is to encourage language educators to promote the plurilingualism perspectives, as well as to facilitate learners’ acquisition of plurilingual competence. In addition, it examines how language educators can use the metalinguistic inquiry-based curriculum in the development and assessment of students’ critical cultural awareness (henceforth CCA), as well as their construction into competent inter/plurilingual speakers, with the ability to relate to others from other cultures.

Currently, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (henceforth CEFRL) advocates a new plurilingualism stance, where a small minority of people such as the elite speak more than one functional language, and describes the plurilingual competence levels that foster IC (Council of Europe 2001:Xii). The model was established in 1999 to deal with the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity (Piccardo 2017). Despite massive global diversity, a truly plurilingual world is still unattainable.

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However, plurilingualism has evolved to become a more realistic and popular model than the previous IC models. Plurilingual competence is described in the (CEFRL) as the ability to use languages albeit at varying degrees of proficiency, to communicate and take part in intercultural interaction (Council of Europe 2001).

Globally, communication entails a diversity of interactions, which require various discourse practices that need sophisticated intercultural communicative competence (ICC), as opposed to native-like communicative competence (CC). The CC model focusses on language proficiency, with little reference to culture. Therefore, IC researchers consider it inadequate and unrealistic (Council of Europe 2001: Xii). Rather, they recommend the flexible ICC model comprising more realistic social, affective, conative, environmental and cognitive, plurilingual perspectives (Newton and Shearn 2015; Piccardo 2017). Due to increasing global migrations, plurilingualism is quite widespread. To deal with massive communication challenges, the Council of European researchers strongly promotes ICC/plurilingualism as the principle and aim of language education policies; valued at personal level, as well as being accepted collectively by education institutions (CEFRL 2001 cited by Newton and Shearn (2015).

ICC is “the ability to interact effectively using linguistic and non-verbal resources with people from another country in a foreign language and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts” (Byram 1997). The implication is that CC and ICC are inseparable and the IC process is not linear. Within the dynamic construct of the communication process, the notion of ‘inter-culture’ is relevant to IC, as it relates to unique norms of communication, which participants use to co-construct and negotiate cultural meanings based on shared knowledge, built on emergent common ground (Koole and ten Thije 1994:69 cited by Kecskes (2015:178). This definition implies that the notion of ‘inter-culture’ hinges on learners’ diverse cultural and linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the concept of inter-culture is fluid and interconnected with many varieties, which serve as a powerful means for scaffolding bilingual practices used in models of dynamic plurilingual pedagogies.

The intercultural communication language teaching ICLT goal has internationally shifted from that of idealised native speaker competence to plurilingual competence. Central to Bryam’s (1997) ICC dynamic model is the notion of ‘awareness’. Byram (1997) defines critical cultural awareness (henceforth CCA) 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.” This definition is to a degree inconclusive, as it does not include language awareness, which entails awareness of how learners’ attitudes towards culture are realised and their identities constructed.

According to Donmall (1985:7) cited by Newton *et al* 2015), language awareness is “a person’s sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life”. Awareness of individual plurilingualism is important in intercultural interaction. Therefore, language educators need to understand that language and culture are conceptually different, but are interrelated hence the notion of CCA is central to ICC /the plurilingual stance (Newton *et al* 2015, Galante 2017).

A significant dimension of CCA in Byram’s (1997) model particularly entails equipping EL2 learners with language and critical thinking skills that facilitate the development of intercultural awareness. Furthermore, Byram (2006:27) cited by Newton, Shaern & Nowitzki (2015) clarifies that the desirable attitudes educators should encourage are respect for otherness, tolerance for ambiguity and empathy. The framework suggested here emphasises the need for the reorientation of more traditional language teaching approaches to a more intercultural and exploratory perspective, that links language learning to education for citizenship and democracy learning (Byram 2006 cited by Newton *et al.* 2015).

Whereas CCA was originally the key component in Byram's (1997) model of ICC, it is scarcely discussed in the literature pertaining to the framework for intercultural teaching (Nugent and Catalano 2015). While certain scholars analyse the dimension of CCA, they only focus on how to direct students in managing stereotypes and ignore how to integrate the CCA aspect in the EL2 curriculum (Byram 1997, Kramsch 2004, Houghton 2013 cited by Nugent and Catalano (2015).

The current article aims to analyse the feasibility of integrating the CCA dimension into the university EL2 curricula and encourage educators to be innovative in facilitating learners' acquisition of Plurilingual competence. Next, the article examines how language educators can use the broad metalinguistic inquiry-based paradigm as a tool to incorporate CCA into the current EL2 within the SA context, as well as to assess learners' cultural purposes and their construction into plurilingual speakers. Finally, it discusses recommendations and implications, for the integration of a plurilingualism stance into EL2 education context in SA.

First, this article outlines a brief overview of the pertinent literature, associated with the culture construct and how it has been approached in language teaching in relation to other traditional concepts and the new plurilingual perspectives in the globalised world. Next, it highlights the need for educators to understand the inter-link between language and culture, as well as how to address the pedagogical challenges and classroom affordances, associated with integrating the plurilingualism stance. It concludes with suggestions and implications for EL2 learners' creative use of multiple languages and social, as well as the psychological intercultural norms within the South African Ubuntu-based context.

The following questions will guide the analysis:

Question 1. How can language educators use the social cultural aspects of CCA and pedagogical perspectives of the EL2 university curricula as tools, to facilitate students' acquisition of the ICC/plurilingual competence?

Question 1b. What are the challenges of implementation of the ICC component?

Question 1c. How can language educators bridge the gap between theory and practices?

Question 2a. How can language educators, use the tenets of the metalinguistic inquiry-based curriculum to develop learners' CCA and assess their development into inter/plurilingual speakers? Question 2b. What psychological and cultural elements can be used in the curriculum to facilitate students' identity construction?

1.1 Conceptual Background: Culture: global and local trends

Global trends in EL2 learning underscore the teaching of culture as a fifth skill, and scholars in intercultural language teaching (henceforth ICLT) emphasise the significant benefit of culture incorporation in the EL2 curriculum (Byram 1997). Educators need to understand the recent approaches to teaching the culture construct, and how to use them in the development of learners' ICC. Liddicoat (2001) cited by Newton (*et al.* 2015) delineates two cultural conceptions, namely the static and dynamic views. Whereas these views have contributed to a deeper understanding of culture in L2 teaching, the static view has particularly treated it as peripheral.

Specifically, culture is defined in relation to nation states and fixed 'expanses of space' represented on a map (Streeck 2002:301 cited by Newton *et al.* 2015:16) as symbolising: self-contained factual knowledge, folk dances, festivals, fairs and food (Phillips 2001:48 cited by Newton *et al.* 2015). Using multilingualism as a lens, the static view focusses on the dynamic process of language acquisition that keeps languages separate. Unlike plurilingualism, which focusses on the interrelationship and interconnectedness of languages, but not exclusively at the individual level, the static view marginalises and trivialises culture by focussing on cultural generalisations and stereotypes (Council of Europe 2001 cited by Newton *et al.* 2015).

In the 1970's, the goal of EL2 was to develop learners' CC and that notion underpinned communicative language teaching approaches (Hymes 1972 cited by Uso-Juan and Martinez-Flor 2008). CC comprises grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences (Canale and Swain 1980). According to Byram (1997), the goal of EL2/FL learning is no more the acquisition of CC in English, but the acquisition of ICC, that promotes the notion of plurilingualism, although in more subtle ways. He maintains that culture is inter-linked dynamically to language and IC, so its themes of plurality and hybridity regarding ICC should be integrated in EL2 teaching. Therefore, to address the question of how language educators can facilitate the acquisition of ICC, they need to understand that the notion of culture is important in IC.

This stance to language teaching embodies the dynamic view of culture, which is central to Byram's (1997) model of ICC. Educators need to understand that culture requires tutorials for effective development, as it is concerned with understanding differences in sociocultural norms, values, attitudes, behaviours, self-concept, emotions, beliefs, products, traditions and creating a frame of mutually understood meanings across boundaries.

One of the limitations of Byram's 1997 model is that it describes the sociocultural component of language competence and fails to link it to other competences (such as sociolinguistic, linguistic and discourse competence). In addition, ICC is concerned with intercultural aspects, which are often politically, religiously, and socially influenced. This may sometimes hinder the process of communicative language teaching (CLT); however, language educators need to understand that Byram (1997) delineated four dimensions of sociocultural competence involving five components: attitudes, knowledge, skills (of two types) and awareness. He also transformed them into teaching objectives, such as:

- Attitudes of values/beliefs; curiosity and openness; relativising others;
- Knowledge of self, and others in communication; of other cultures, processes of interaction-individual and societal skills for interpreting and relating;
- Skills for discovering and interacting;
- Awareness: critical cultural awareness (Byram1997 cited by Newton and Shearn 2015: 23).

The EL2 educators may use these objectives to tailor eclectically, classroom tasks and activities; ideal for intercultural/plurilingual language teaching (ICLT), learning, as well as assessment hence the model is very influential in ICLT.

Above all, for Kramersch (1993, cited by Newton et al. 2015), the themes of cultural hybridity and plurality, of the significance of shaping and reshaping culture and of the contested nature of cultural identity underpin the proposals for intercultural approaches to language learning. The main challenge in teaching culture from the dynamic perspective is that the speaker's knowledge of culture is implicit, since the cultural beliefs, values, norms, myths and practices are hidden. Moreover, while one of the teaching goals has been to promote multilingualism in SA and ensure that all the 11 official languages are perceived as assets, as opposed to being problems, in practice the state bureaucracy and political leadership seem to be "trapped in a language-is-a problem paradigm" (Alexander 2003:16).

1.2 Background: Challenges/ trends and practices

In South Africa, since the first democratic elections in 1994, which coincided with the rapid global transformation, some higher institutions are, specifically faced with the problem of escalating student numbers from disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, previous research indicates that even undergraduate students, who are linguistically competent in English, still lack socio-pragmatic knowledge, as the teaching EL2 syllabi often focus on isolated and decontextualized activities. Some educators even at university level, train learners often to

focus on grammatical (text-book) English and academic literacy skills, while neglecting learners' development of ICC (cf. Luanga-Kasanga (2006); Lwanga-Lumu 2002, 2005; Luanga-Kasanga and Lwanga-Lumu 2007). There is hence a worrying trend of uncertainty, misunderstandings, frustration, racism, xenophobia and poor academic performance even at university level.

2. Literature Review: ICC, CCA and EL2 curriculum

The first question pertains to how language educators can use the social cultural aspects of CCA and pedagogical perspectives of the EL2 university curricula as tools, to facilitate students' acquisition of the ICC/plurilingual competence. To address this issue further, educators need to understand basically, the nature of the pedagogical challenges in the contemporary global era. Specifically, although plurilingualism is a complex notion, it is flexible and caters for the dynamic process of language acquisition and use, in a more mutual style and subtle way than the narrow multilingualism. Secondly, it represents the Council of European Union's CEFR holistic vision of language education in intercultural, as well as plurilingual settings hence the need to promote it. Significantly, SA is a multilingual nation and English is predominantly used as a lingua franca, and medium of instruction from grade three to university level. Due to globalisation, legacies of apartheid and colonialism, learners come from diverse ethnic, linguistic, economic and education backgrounds. Specifically, some of the EL2 students come from rural disadvantaged economic and education backgrounds. Therefore, some L2 classes have learners with heterogeneous competence levels, who require improved throughput rates and language remediation practices (Layton 2015).

Some educators in SA are facing an enormous challenge to teach locally for multicultural diversity and equality, as well as the global world. To address this double challenge, educators may adopt a socio-cognitive plurilingual perspective, to develop a meta-linguist inquiry-based curriculum to assist students from marginalised backgrounds in using their diverse inter-cultural resources and critical awareness skills to co-construct and negotiate cultural meanings to address the challenges of local and global immigrations (Kecskes 2015). Plurilingualism is characterised by plurilingual pedagogy, which is flexible and entails new ways of developing adult language acquisition by integrating mother-tongue based bilingual education into the current EL2, as well as promoting multilingualism in academic settings. The plurality and flexibility underlying the learners' diverse cultural/linguistic repertoire can be used as a basis to create learning activities that enhance learners' metacognitive skills and interpretative abilities to develop their plurilingual competence (Galante 2017).

Despite the need to meet the EL2 objectives, educators may first examine the obstacles of EL2 as a dominant language of multilingualism affordances and be creative to transform these obstacles into valuable assets to improve the SLA context. This article hence encourages language educators to act as academic entrepreneurs to bridge the gap between theory, practice, and government policy by observing the following guidelines:

- Transformation of a pluralistic repertoire into plurilingual competence requires conscious, reflective learning to promote awareness of language diversity.
- Functional uses of a variety of linguistic means, recognition of similarities between languages and cultures, as well as culture-specific features of the speakers' L1 and each language involved (Beacco and Byram 2007 cited by Piccardo (2013).
- Actively facilitating learners' development of plurilingual competence by shifting their attitude from the behaviourist paradigm to a plurilingual stance.
- Reflecting on their cultural practices and being willing to align with environmental challenges within the plurilingual pedagogy.

- Collaborating with the students/community to analyse their cultural values, norms and practices from their respective cultural backgrounds.
- Understanding that languages and varieties within the same language make up the linguistic repertoire, therefore in multilingual classrooms, mother tongues are part of the acquisition process, as every new language acquired modifies the global competence of the students and shapes their existing linguistic repertoires.
- The goals for plurilingual competence should be: translanguaging, code-switching and awareness of cross-cultural differences (Galante 2017).
- Errors should be creatively treated as teaching points for task preparation and indicating development in the learning process (Piccardo 2013).

Specifically, to address the question of how educators can facilitate learners' acquisition of the ICC, educators need to understand the purpose of the key principles of plurilingualism pedagogy and examine the ecological classroom context. They can consider the notion of inter-culture, which is related to the concept of translanguaging. This is described (as day-to-day practices that involve multiple opportunities for students to have ongoing access to each other's linguistic, cultural and cognitive resources...) (Garcia 2012 cited in Garcia, Johnson and Seltzer (2017). Educators may use this as a powerful tool to support linguistic development and as a pathway for promoting multiple languages with different varieties together to embrace linguistic repertoire (Piccardo 2013).

Moreover, according to Piccardo (2013:603), three theoretical domains support the new and potentially revolutionary aspects of the plurilingual vision, namely:

- a. The psycho-cognitive perspective, which studies language acquisition mechanisms, would encourage a SLA plurilingual approach.
- b. The sociolinguistic perspective, which validates linguistic diversity and a cultural perspective, (Lantof 2011 cited by Piccardo (2013).
- c. The pedagogical perspective, which is a new complex vision of language teaching methodology (linguistic and cognitive dimension), would encourage better understanding of the mechanics of the classroom and other languages (Moore 2013; Garcia 2009 cited by Piccardo (2013).

These domains represent the lenses through which language educators can innovatively explore the development of language acquisition cognitively, socially and pedagogically. As the development of learners' ICC awareness is the main goal of FL/EL2 learning curricula, global communication and rapid technological advancement have significantly made cross-cultural and intercultural communication popular.

Alternatively, since lecturers have insufficient time and resources to re-visit the basic grammatical structures and pragmatic patterns such as Byram's (1997) knowledge/savoirs, computer-assisted language learning CALL could be used for support (Lwanga-Lumu 1998). Lecturers could use CALL to facilitate learning basic grammatical aspects, such as parts of speech, spellings, vocabulary, speech acts, reading comprehension, letter writing and basic structuring of e-mails to support current EL2 courses. Furthermore, educators need to know the components in each domain of teaching and to make the lecture hall context authentic, as well as ideal for cognitive and social interaction. Instructors may hence have to link creatively the study of culture to that of discourse, the sociocultural context and scaffold EL2 learning by integrating it with the ICC, as proposed by the Modern language Association (Kramsch 2013).

Specifically, educators need deeper understanding of the SLA theories, which facilitate the link between the linguistic and cultural elements that exist in the language context. According to Wagner (1998) cited by Maftoon and Shakouri (2013), the EL2 as global a lingua franca is acquired, and learned through social encounters. The EL2 acquisition process

entails a web of interlinked socio-political and historical factors that shape the students' identities, and facilitate the development of learners' cognitive awareness and EL2 proficiency. Therefore, students' cognitive awareness and EL2 proficiency need integration, as they transform each other. Understanding the role of social power is also significant in the social world (Kumaravadivelu: 2006 cited by Maftoon and Shakouri (2013)). Furthermore, as facilitators, in addition to developing the acquisition of linguistic competence, lecturers have to focus on pragmatic competence, which is also significant to the EL2 acquisition process.

In addition, Gardner (2002) cited by Stefansson (2013) claims that the cultural context may have a significant effect on the individual's ultimate success in language learning. This is motivated by various elements and attitudes such as values, meaningfulness, awareness, of the learners' learning potential, expectations, ideals and differences in personality. The assumption is that in the cultural, educational context, attitude plays a significant role in determining the individual level of motivation (Gardner 2000 cited by Stefansson (2013)). Language educators need to understand that language learning occurs when a new reflective active process takes place hence new information can be linked to prior knowledge. Educators need to consider learners not as failures, but as competent active plurilingual speakers constructing their own proficiency; instrumentally motivated by integrative and autonomous attitude of using metalinguistic and metacognitive skills (Piccardo 2013).

As the acquisition of plurilingual competence is not automatic, language educators need to be innovative to make the plurilingual trajectory less chaotic. For effective development of learners' plurilingual competence, educators need to realise that the plurilingual world is characterised by fragmentariness, irregularities and fuzziness, therefore adopting a new complexity-thinking stance such as plurilingualism (Gibson 1979/1986, cited by Aronin and Singleton (2012) is necessary to transform these plurilingual obstacles into intercultural lessons (Piccardo 2017; Galante 2017). Significantly, educators need to understand the social functional process of the plurilingual perspective. The following key principles for ICLT from classrooms level are recommended:

- Using the inter-link between language, culture and communication as a basis, the language educator adopts the dynamic view of culture right from the beginning of the language acquisition process.
- The goal is to develop learners' intercultural/plurilingual competence (and linguistic diversity), rather than focussing only on native speaker competence. The former is more holistic and entails shifting learners from passive to active mediators, by integrating intercultural awareness in EL2 teaching, to facilitate learners' development of language proficiency and intercultural skills necessary for identity formulation and global communication. The two competences are paradoxically inter-related, but the latter is inadequate for the development of learners' ICC and less popular, as it entails cloning learners to be passive imitators of native speakers by focussing on grammatical patterns and the acquisition of native-like language proficiency with little reference to culture (Byram et al 2002).
- With a view to promote functional multilingualism, learners' bilingual and multilingual practices are supported to motivate students and creatively improve the SLA context.
- Language policy in SA often reflects a compartmentalised view of language, due to the failure to acknowledge multilingual /plurilingual goals practices in higher institutions. Language educators may grab the opportunity to empower themselves with more knowledge to facilitate learners development into active critical thinkers.
- The knowledge, skills and the ability to learn should be transversal and transferable across languages to create synergies, as well as aim to reach a higher common goal.

- The educator creatively prepares pragmatic tasks and materials that are functional from a wider range of cultural contexts that encourage students to develop an exploratory and reflective perspective of culture and culture in language (Carr 2007 cited by Newton and Shaern 2015).
- Through communication, and genuine social interaction, students may learn to directly explore linguistic and cultural input, such as values based on Ubuntu and thought patterns, deal with cross-cultural misunderstandings and communication breakdowns, as well as construct own knowledge through their interpretation and interrogation of cultural input.
- Students may be encouraged to empathise by acknowledging and relating appropriately with others, learning about own culture and identify, understand, debate and resolve intercultural conflict, as well as deconstruct biases, myths and stereotypes.
- Through explicit and reflective comparisons, learners negotiate cultural differences and become active intercultural speakers (Byram 1997).
- The transfer of skills should play a pivotal role and be seen as a cost-efficiency perspective to avoid useless repetition (Piccardo 2013).

In short, to address the question of how language educators can use the social cultural aspects of CCA and pedagogical perspectives of the EL2 university curricula as tools, to facilitate students' acquisition of the ICC/plurilingual competence, language instructors may have to understand first the plurilingualism paradigm, to overcome the linguistic, political, socio-economic and pedagogical challenges. To facilitate learners' acquisition of ICC, language educators need to adopt a socio-cognitive stance that blends current views with intention and attention, motivated by socio-cultural factors (Kecskes & Zhang 2009).

3. Language and identity perspectives

To address question 2a about the development of learners' CCA, despite some challenges in adopting the plurilingualism principles, educators should not see them as problems, but as assets for better empowerment. Students may develop greater critical awareness of their own culture and cultural identity. Moreover, this may empower them with self-esteem to potentially, optimise learning (Piccardo 2013).

Significantly, in South Africa, Ubuntu has been defined in controversial ways, so language educators find it problematic to incorporate the philosophy in the curricula. For instance in Bantu languages of East, Central and Southern Africa, it is described as “a cultural world view”, “a deeply rooted value system in the African society” or “a positive ethical/moral way of going/being in relation with others”(Venter 2004:152 cited by Nzimakwe (2014). According to Metz (2014), Ubuntu (the realisation of human excellence in African philosophical thinking) is one's basic goal in life. It represents humanity values aimed at reinforcing one's relationship of identity and solidarity, by promoting oneself as part of a group, who feels close to human/family sympathy and morality of others. Educators may use this definition to re-vitalise the philosophy of Ubuntu in the EL2 curricula. It was also included in the South African national school curricula to create a learner, who, inspired by the Ubuntuist values, would behave according to society's interests based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice.

While the aim of promoting Ubuntu was to affirm the human dignity of all South Africans that was eroded during the colonial and apartheid eras, a significant criticism of the philosophy is that some of its practices are biased and outdated in terms of age and gender. From the social perspective, there has been a breakdown of kinship relationships and associated cultural ethos of Ubuntu within the local community. Consequently, despite the

constitutional principles, South African indigenous languages and cultural values are often marginalised; bilingual education is sometimes considered harmful, a source of reduced language proficiency; and is associated with linguistic insecurity, psychological problems, as well as exclusion from a language specific community (Baker 1988 cited by Piccardo (2013). Considering that the teachers' self-confidence and awareness of the new trends in the field may determine successful language (Baranova & Skorupa (2011:123) it is maintained that educators need to be willing to learn what and how to teach to confront some of these challenges.

Regarding the second question of how language educators can use the plurilingualism component to improve the development and assessment of students as plurilingual speakers, lecturers can draw inspiration from psycho-cognitive studies. As Brown (1987:33) states, "...L2 learning somehow entails the acquisition of a second identity and because of the extremely social language context, L2 learning is associated with affective features" of language learning, such as attitude and motivation. It suffices to note, however that there are different types of L2 learners and not all of them acquire a second identity. This view is supported in Byram's (1997) ICC framework. It is suggested that positive attitudes towards cultural diversity are more likely to improve intellectual understanding, if students are allowed to explore and evaluate local and global issues. Given the diverse cultural context, the assumption is that English as a dominant language and other languages play a vital role in the harmonisation process of global multilingualism and facilitation of cultural diversity.

The main challenge is that the social economic process entails moving from solid to modernity and is characterised by institutionalised pluralism, variety, contingency and ambivalence (Bauman 1992:187 cited by Piccardo (2013). In understanding adult SLA, the tension lies between the two traditional theories of SLA (the Naturalistic approach and communicative language teaching approach (CLTA), as well as the newer cognitive approach. While the three theories are important for understanding the SLA process, the newer approach is less popular. According to Altenaichinger (2003) cited by Steffasson (2013), the traditional teaching approaches, particularly the CLTA focusses on language competence (knowledge and ability to use the target language) and communicative proficiency, acquired through motivation and awareness.

The cognitive approach focusses on helping the learner to construct a system of knowledge unconsciously, that can be used automatically. The controversies between the two traditional theories and the newer one centre around how language is acquired and learned through social context and studied in interactive encounters (Wagner 1998: 287 cited by Steffasson (2013).

Educators can make the SLA a more interactive and collaborative process, by increasing exposure and motivating the students to assess their CCA by:

- Shifting their paradigm from the traditional additive to integrative and collaborative global perspectives,
- Being eclectic by acknowledging the learners' wealth of metalinguistic ethnographic processes and cultural knowledge that students manage to draw on through unbalanced linguistic and various strategic repertoires.
- Shifting their practices and understanding the linguistic, political, economic and pedagogical challenges,
- Being innovative to design tasks that motivate learners' active participation in debates on radical and controversial issues; to deepen engagement and produce positive effects in language acquisition (Morgan 1993:69 cited by Newton and Shearn 2015).

Liddicoat et al (2003:20) cited by Newton *et al*, 2015:43) suggests that noticing input (exposure) is the starting point to appreciate a wide range of authentic texts and sources including oral performatives, visual and written texts/sources, agency exercised through opportunities for interaction, such as drama presentations in role-plays, scenarios and representations. Furthermore, language educators need to know that the pathway for developing intercultural competence starts with a four key learning and teaching process including (Noticing, reflection, noticing and reflection):

1. Awareness raising: Students are exposed to new possibilities, encouraged to notice differences between the input/ affordances and own practices, and to reflect on their culture-general knowledge and noticing what is unfamiliar, as well as making comparisons between the observed communication and their own competences.
2. Experimentation: Students make use of techniques such as code mixing and translanguaging. This involves using short metalinguistic and meta-cultural tasks linked to linguistic structures and vocabulary, often based on the students' needs; it helps to increase the students' self-esteem, agency and self-efficacy.
3. Production: Students enter a third place where they experience a paradoxical confrontation that is unique and personal; integrate the information they have acquired in language use through role-plays and communication. The educators focus on teaching the whole person as opposed to merely teaching the language.
4. Feedback: The students actively evaluate their own work; build on their prior knowledge and cultural perspectives; negotiate meaning as they discuss how they felt about speaking and acting in a particular way.

The feedback from the educator allows the learners to undergo plurilanguaging. This is a cyclic process involving exploring and identity construction, experiencing an agentic process of selecting and self-organisation. It also deals with the imbalances of communication, through awareness of chaos, adaptability, as well as negotiation through tolerating ambiguity, interpreting metaphors and nuances creatively (Piccardo 2017). By promoting plurilanguaging, language educators may encourage students to use language as a living tool that is dynamically structured and is emergent to help them shape their cultural world to decolonise their minds.

Significantly, Broadbent (2017) regards decolonisation, as a controversial process involving intellectual liberation or achievement of intellectual freedom from the toxic mental oppression and colonial subjugation by transforming students' mind-sets. Similarly, this article considers effective curricula decolonisation as an intricate intercultural and intellectual plan language educators have to realise through interdisciplinary innovative and collaborative effort of all university stakeholders. Educators may design specific tasks creatively to facilitate learners' critical awareness (e.g. of the Ubuntu values), by dismissing myths, and deconstructing stereotypes.

In short, educators may have to cope with the increase in designing tasks involving the use of plurilingual activities such as trying to learn other words through translanguaging, and the use of idioms across languages and cultures. They may develop students' awareness that languages are similar. This third place shifts the learners from passive learners to active plurilinguals, and increases their motivation to learn about their colleagues' languages and cultural backgrounds.

Lecturers need to understand that a major goal of ICLT is to facilitate and shift the learner's position from being rooted only in experiences from their existing cultures and identities to an intercultural position between cultures, where the student can negotiate differences and interact across cultures comfortably. The assumption is that due to colonialism and the past apartheid regime, the people's identities, cultures, languages and religions may

have been devalued for generations and the ‘self’ may have suffered spiritually, as a result of colonisation of the mind. There is hence a need for its decolonisation, in order to achieve freedom from mental oppression.

Moreover, educators may have to know the following goals for assessing learners as plurilingual competent speakers:

- By demonstrating learning through metacognition/self-monitoring of learning and thinking,
- By performing the language they use, speak and write through cultural awareness, language awareness validating identity, agency and inclusiveness (Galante: 2017; Liddicoat 2002 b cited by Newton and Shearn (2015)).

Educators may need to ensure that learners follow the steps outlined in this pathway that reflect the process of exploring culture based on the notion of mutuality. This corresponds with the developmental pathways students may take to become proficient plurilingual speakers of EL2, as they reflect on exploration and collaboration which parallel the cultural values, competences and principles, based on the philosophy of Ubuntu in multilingual SA.

The new social cultural identity gained from exposure to others’ cultural views and practices facilitates learners’ openness to diversity and empathy. They may move away from ethnocentrism and positively contribute to the development of identity construction in relation to the other. The language educator achieves the ultimate goal of raising the learners’ sensitivity to cultural differences for a deeper understanding of boundaries and producing intercultural speakers (Newton and Shearn (2015)). Language educators thus can use the lecture hall as a sociocultural context to learn along with the students, encourage the latter to use their cultural heritage by code switching, translanguaging and plurilinguaging to influence creativity, attitude change and motivation, as well as contribute to the development of students’ ICC.

4. Recommendations and implications

Despite some obstacles pertaining to vested economic interests, and possible lack of political will, promoting the multilingualism policy for and respect for plurilingualism in SA and African Union is recommended. Language educators may need to examine the feasibility of SA’s policy of promoting multilingualism and individual plurilingualism, based on the strategy, “making multilingualism work” (DoE 2002: 18). This may be a catalyst for:

- Advancing democratic citizenship employment, mutual respect, tolerance of learners’ linguistic and cultural diversity.
- Educators to facilitate understanding of the relationship between language and identity.
- Giving students a wider perspective of the world, they live in.
- Increasing self-dignity.
- Obtaining students’ autonomy and giving them a wider perspective of the world, they live in.
- Developing learners’ awareness of the basic values of the South African rainbow nation such as multilingualism, and Ubuntuist values (such as respect, consideration, solidarity and co-operation).
- Developing the ability to deconstruct stereotypes, reducing racism and xenophobia.

To understand what second culture teaching entails, language educators may particularly, need to first analyse their own cultures by displaying attitudes of openness and curiosity, as presented in the ICC framework. That way, they may know how to facilitate awareness of the complex nature of adaptation, which according to Brown (1987), includes assimilation, the

stages of adaptation, such as culture shock, social distance, as well as the deep-seated affective factors like motivation and attitude.

As Liddicoat et al. (2003) cited by Newton (*et al* 2015) suggest, language teaching is culture teaching, therefore culture teaching should be central to language learning. The implication from a socio-cognitive perspective is that educators need to know that culture motivates and enables learners to take control of their learning. Educators have to act more as entrepreneurs and facilitators than as authorities, to transform the communication challenges into a font of foundations by tailoring authentic activities focussing on: cooperation, motivation and humanism. To improve the SLA context, educators including tutors should be willing to attend life-long in-service training programmes/ workshops to understand new policies and theories of SLA before promoting student autonomy.

One of the limitations with the intercultural approach is that, to be a proficient intercultural speaker entails acquisition of numerous interrelated skills. To date, however, no curriculum can cover exhaustively, all these aspects such as self /individual learners' identity, needs, knowledge and circumstances. This article hence intends to make language educators realise that in the 21st century, where the learner uses EL2 with others of different cultural backgrounds, linguistic competence is inadequate to improve academic success; a more sophisticated ICC and different competence than native speaker competence is required.

Researchers in adult language acquisition similarly, contend that the process of language acquisition does not follow a universal sequence, but varies across cultures. Therefore, educators should try to understand the complex interplay of SLA theories and government policy, before implementing the proposed models (Maftoon and Shakouri 2013).

In Europe, available evidence significantly indicates that Esperanto is an “egalitarian” and a more suitable tool for raising learners' metalinguistic awareness, as well as positive attitude to language learning (Tellier & Roehr-Brackin 2017:9). Despite certain limitations, language educators need to understand that the teaching of Esperanto may produce improved cognitive benefits, and some studies have begun to address the issue. Specifically, Bishop's (1997), EKPAROLI *project report* (1994-1997) outlines some Esperanto benefits. More research is needed to investigate whether the language educators may use the Esperanto model for promoting the identity of the Organisation of the African Union, or even for promoting a functional multilingual democratic, ecological language policy for an Esperanto union for SA's rainbow nation to ensure equal and democratic citizen participation (Christiansen 2009).

According to macro-acquisition research on Black South African English (BSAE), current evidence indicates that the new EL2 variety is becoming more institutionalised and widely used among the black elite in SA. Specifically, the radio corpus on BSAE provides more evidence on the new sociolinguistic reality (Kachru 2006:455 cited by Makalela (2013). However, more research is needed on the propagation of EL2 as a lingua franca through macro-acquisition to formulate artificial languages such as BSAE. Such varieties may be used in multilingual SA, to function as a catalyst for the development of both metalinguistic awareness and language competence in the institutions of higher learning (Piccardo 2017); to reduce the challenges associated with the global EL2 as a *lingua franca*.

Significantly, instead of seeing language diversity as an obstacle to interaction with indigenous groups, language educators are encouraged to be more perceptive, tolerant and innovative. Lecturers could help students by investing in EL2 and plurilingualism to offer the best opportunity for people who do not have EL1 to learn it well for use in tertiary institutions and mainstream economy (Heugh 2002). This may reduce repeated dropout rates and improve:

- The students' standard performance in other subjects,
- SA economy and global transformation,

- The development of SA English varieties such as BSAE,
- The learning of other languages including South African official languages, which are still marginalised (Makalela 2013; Kasanga 2006).

The new stance may offer a newer cognitive dimension on communication by focusing on how speakers, who have different mother tongues and usually different cultures, interact in a common language. While such a stance may have several disadvantages, it may provide a metalinguistic inquiry-based paradigm for assisting students from marginalised backgrounds in meeting the challenges of the current local and global immigrations, as well as the need for education transformation at undergraduate level to enhance critical cultural awareness.

To elicit awareness of plurilingual realisation, a biographical method is recommended, as it is widely used in Sociology, Anthropology and Education (Ferreira-Meyer & Horne 2017). Similarly, the Autobiography tool and language portfolio can help educators integrate other methods of language teaching such as (questionnaires, video-role plays/scenarios/interviews) and facilitate setting authentic tasks for contrastive analysis of conversation principles/discourse; linguistic universals/cultural scripts/specifics, exploration, cooperation, negotiation and analysis (Piccardo 2013).

Specifically, for assessment, the lecturer could adopt a plurilingual/ intercultural tool recommended by the Council of Europe based on the ABC model of cultural understanding and communication (Finkbeiner 2006 and Schmidt (1998 cited by Newton and Shaern (2015)). The comparative autobiography tool comprises key intercultural experiences intended to help learners analyse and record their intercultural experiences using several prompt questions and sentence starters which have the potential to assess learners' attitudinal capacity of empathy and behavioural aspects of communicative awareness such as address forms, etiquette, politeness forms and conversation routines (Byram 2006b cited by Newton *et al* 2015).

One limitation of this plurilingual tool is that assessment is sometimes difficult, but it could be through group work or individual assignments, conference papers, long essays, dissertations, or theses. This is, therefore an effective teaching strategy, whereby small groups work on local and international projects, set professional networks to construct their professional, cultural and national identities. Learners of diverse linguistic levels of ability may use different learning activities; based on specific topics/themes (e.g., cultural scripts, address terms, etiquette, social norms/values, taboos).

Finally, more research is needed to validate the numerous methods for pragmatic assessment and how to use CALL programmes, as well as modern technology. This may include using participatory digital culture to shift educators' focus from grammar and academic literacy, to community involvement of social-cultural skills acquired through negotiation, and networking. The implication is that for an equitable and effective transformation of the faculty of the humanities EL2 curricula, educators need to create an appropriate social and psychological context, in which learners are made critically aware of their individual identities, beliefs and global perspectives.

5. Conclusion

In sum, this article is of a conceptual nature therefore, no firmer conclusions can be made. The main argument, however is that effective implementation of the plurilingualism stance, may only take place, if language educators are critically aware of the complex language policies and practices of plurilingualism. Through collaboration with all stakeholders, educators may need to embrace the diverse challenges identified, and creatively use language and cultural norms as a vehicle to integrate it with emergent technology. By using the failures related to multilingualism affordances, educators may shift their additive perspectives and perhaps transform the learning obstacles into building blocks for holistic integrated EL2 curricula. The integration of a plurilingual stance within the ICLT processes may thus require

patience, sacrifice, and dedication to empower the students with CCA skills and attitudes, as well as nurture the plurilingualism vision with the Ubuntu spirit of humanism and entrepreneurship for a better global world. The article may hence have implications for promotion of SA's rich cultural heritage, the multilingualism policy for equal access to education, academic and economic success, cultural diversity, as well as political stability in SA and the contemporary global world.

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