

Language Teaching for Young Learners Journal

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Special issue - call for contributions

‘Filling the void: Teaching and assessing children’s intercultural communicative competence’

This special issue of the *Language Teaching for Young Learners Journal* calls for articles which report on empirical research into teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in foreign language classrooms with children under the age of 12 years old. Foreign languages include English as a foreign language (EFL) and modern foreign languages (MFL) or world languages (WL) e.g. Spanish, Mandarin or French.

The development of intercultural communicative competence or variations thereof is now established as a main objective of language teaching. Whilst this is a welcome situation and due, to a large extent, to Michael Byram’s (1997/2021) hugely influential model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), both theoretical discussions and empirical research in the field seem to focus on the secondary and higher education levels, with efforts geared towards the pre-primary and primary classroom being much rarer.

Publications charter ways of implementing and promoting ICC in the classroom generally and for specific addressees across the school curriculum (e.g. Byram & Fleming 1998, Dypedahl & Lund, 2020; Kessler 2008; Jäger, 2011). In MFL / WL contexts ICC is also discussed and presented in practical teacher handbooks and edited volumes targeting teacher education (cf. Byram & Doyé, 1999; Hu & Byram, 2009; Curtain & Dahlberg, 2010; Driscoll, 2017; Driscoll & Simpson, 2015; Doyé, 1999; Kirsch, 2008; Jones & Coffey 2009; Kessler & Küppers 2008). However, practical support is absent in seminal publications around teaching EFL to children from major publishers in the English-speaking world. Where there may be mention of culture, clearly as a foundation for IC, explicit reference to the concept is absent (e.g. Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 2002; Dunn, 2017). The omission of a chapter on ICC in the long-awaited *Routledge Handbook of Teaching English to Young Learners* (Garton & Copland 2019) suggests there is no ‘state of the art’ to report.

Over 20 years ago, Byram and Doyé warned of the risks of early language education becoming ‘too narrow in its aims and scope if the cultural dimension is not taken seriously’ emphasizing a cultural dimension which ‘lays the foundations for intercultural competence’ (1999, p. 9). Empirical research into laying these foundations has been undertaken: Byram et al., (2013) and Wagner, et al., (2018) report on the systematic integration of ICC in elementary WL classrooms in a school in the US and Porto (2016) describes an intercultural citizenship project with 12-year-olds in an EFL context in Argentina and Denmark. Within the German context, Brunsmeier (2016) employs and adapts Byram’s model to a ‘pre-stage’ of ICC befitting the primary level. What furthermore appears to prevail is research reporting the challenges encountered for an intercultural education, where teachers are seen as confident in their knowledge of the target culture, but

reticent about the affective and the pragmatic dimensions of ICC (Brunsmeier, 2017; Breka & Petravić 2015; Pinho & Moreira, 2012; Sowa, 2014; Woodgate-Jones, 2009).

In order to redress this balance and to direct research in the direction of best-practice examples rather than towards the delineation of challenges, this call encourages researchers and practitioners carrying out empirical projects focusing on ICC in language teaching with children to showcase their activities, be these laying the foundations for competence development or actively promoting intercultural communicative competence. In bringing together accounts of research projects, we will be able to describe and analyse the different theories used and the different contexts in which they have been implemented.

We therefore welcome accounts of projects which have a practical implementation at their core, and which have, preferably, been subject to evaluation. Projects may be based on Intercultural (Communicative) Competence and Democracy and Citizenship Education, with a focus on foreign language education. These frameworks could include, but are not limited to:

- Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence
- The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture: Descriptors for Younger Learners
- A Portfolio of Competences for Democratic Culture: Younger Learners Version
- The Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters for Young Learners
- Intercultural Citizenship Education

A proposed timeline for the publication follows:

- **30 July 2022:** Extended abstracts to Special Issue editors
- **30 September 2022:** Selected articles announced and feedback to authors
- **15 January 2023:** Draft 1 of full article to Special Issue editors
- **28 February 2023 - 1 November 2023:** feedback and revision of article drafts
- **15 November 2023:** Final articles to Special Issue editors
- **30 November 2023:** Special Issue to publisher
- **April 2024:** Special Issue published.

Guidelines for extended abstracts can be found on page 4 of this call. Please send your extended abstract by **30 July 2022** to: sandiemourao@fcs.unl.pt and raphaelle.beecroft@ph-karlsruhe.de

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Guidelines for the extended abstract

Title: Times New Roman, 14 font size, bold (centred)

Author(s') Name and Surname (font size 11)

Affiliations (Font size 10)

Email(s)

Abstract: The extended abstract should contain the following sections: introduction, theoretical background, methodology, findings and conclusion with recommendations for practice. Sections can be named differently, and sub-sections may be included. The extended abstract should be written in a word document, using Times New Roman, 1.5 line spacing and font size 11. Expected length is between 750 and 1000 words (max. 2 pages). Page size should be A4.

The extended abstract can contain figures, tables and /or images. These are not included in the word count, nor are the references. Please avoid using footnotes or endnotes.

References: A maximum of 10 references should be listed in alphabetical order using the APA Reference Style, 7th edition: <https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition>.

Keywords: a maximum of 4 keywords separated by commas and alphabetically arranged.