

## GLOBALIZATION IN THE LIGHT OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS

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### ABSTRACT

In the globalized world and the growing importance of the English language not only in educational field but in different scientific and technical specialism people have to face challenging situations in their daily life. Accordingly, a great emphasize has been placed on the way languages are learnt. The aim is to provide learners with the necessary tools, skills and competencies which would enable them to be world citizens and long life learners. Moreover, the spread and connectivity of economic and cultural life all over the world have made an impact in every field; this global phenomenon has changed tremendously the way people think study and learn. The effect of globalization on education is seen through the changing role of the teachers and the students. Students have a vast potential to learn from various affordable means of technology and communication. In fact, all these means have paved the way for alternative learning systems in education which has to respond to different demands of a rapidly globalizing world.

**KEYWORDS:** Globalization, Education & English as a Global Language

### INTRODUCTION

Providing quality education is of a great importance for the economic growth and social stability of any country. With the advent of globalization, all the countries of the whole world are facing great challenges.

As the globalized world becomes more complex and integrated across national boundaries, individuals' needs change and so do learners. Undoubtedly, the 21st century learners' needs are different from those before the globalization phenomenon: creating, researching, sharing opinions, and becoming globalized citizens. In other words, learners are crossing international borders and jumping language barriers to collaborate with others from around the world through interactive technologies. More importantly, there is a necessity for the educational system to adapt itself to these evolving requirements

Education is changing in the new millennium; it aims at preparing learners to deal with rapid changes in employment and learning style. Learners need to leave school and universities being prepared for the professional careers and to cope with the rapid changes in every field. Teaching has to undertake a change too. Teachers must keep pace and stay relevant in order to keep students engaged. Teachers need to prepare students for careers and jobs that have not yet been created to cope with new technologies and strongly enter this new workforce and successfully work and live in the new digital world. **"In the future there will be technologies that have not yet been invented; there will be ways of living and thinking and learning that have not yet emerged."** (Griffin and Care 2015, p vii)

### GLOBALIZATION DEFINED

In today's world, economic, environmental, social, political issues and problems are no longer limited to the national level, as the world becomes so interdependent and more interconnected. Never before in human history has

there existed such interrelationship between international trade, communication and politics. This world issue of transforming local phenomenon into global ones is called globalization. The term globalization is around us as an opportunity and challenge. It is an opportunity for the use of different means of technology and mass media as they are global standards, information can be transmitted worldwide in real time than before.

Globalization is an influencing force everywhere in the world; hence Algeria could not escape the phenomenon. It presents new opportunities and challenges for the country to compete with the rising economic powers over the world because nowadays, language, knowledge, and innovation are inevitable steps to national prosperity and stability. Globalization is a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional process; cynically, it is an octopus-like process whose tentacles denote the different levels of integration that comes into play in imposing or implementing its one-world- order perspective.

Accordingly, the influence of globalization can be observed through seven integration levels namely: political, economic, financial, cultural, educational, linguistic and religious as shown in the diagram below.



#### Levels of Integration of Globalization

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND GLOBALIZATION

In a world where globalization has imposed itself, it is important to have an official language so as to have an efficient way to communicate. In other words, it is the growing of international commerce, financial and technological spread that urge the use of English as the main language in all areas and spheres.

The status of the English language has changed over the few past decades. It is no more restricted to the English speaking countries but to the whole world. It has become the chief language of world knowledge, technologies and computing.

English has become an international language rather than any other language because of its historical, geographical, political and economic influence on the world. These four aspects are well explained by Hui:

- **Historically:** The English language, as well as the English culture, spread to Asia, Africa, North America and Australia with the establishment of the British colonies in those four continents.
- **Geographically:** In this world, there are six continents inhabited by human beings, of which Europe is greatly influenced by the English language, while North America and Australia are completely occupied by the English language. Besides, in many countries in Asia and Africa, English is an official language. No other language has

such a power.

- **Politically:** After the Second World War, both the United States and Britain, the two major English speaking countries, were amongst the most politically influential countries.
- **Economically:** Since the end of the World War II, the United States has been the most powerful country economically with the most advanced science and technology. As a result, it has also become the most powerful country militarily. Britain has been amongst the most developed countries in the world. The economic position of both USA and Britain leads to the rapid development of media that have wide influence in the world.

-(Hui 2001, p 130-131)

Consequently, English plays the role of official language in many African and Asian countries. It has become the language of world knowledge and skill transfer, many countries have given English a special place within their communities and in their schools and institutions. Broadly speaking, English as a global language has succeeded to get special privilege in people's lives and politics in every country in the world.

The English language has been adopted by many countries to be taught as the second language due to the status attributed to it, whereas others use it as the official language or as a foreign language to gain advantageous for its status. It becomes the language of politic, science, technology, medicine, tourism and business. Giving English a prominent place in a country in general and in the educational system in particular helps societies to get integrated into modernity in total harmony.

In fact, English gives access to modern sciences and technology. Moreover, one of the conspicuous aspect of globalization is the rush of education and research through the English language; scientific papers and published articles are written in English. It is a shared language and an indispensable tool in the age of the emergence of technology and global network.

## COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS REQUIRED IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

As the globalized world becomes more complex and integrated across national boundaries, individuals' need change and so do learners'. Undoubtedly, the 21st century learners' needs are different from those before the globalization phenomenon: creating, researching, sharing opinions, and becoming globalized citizens. In other words, learners are crossing international borders and jumping language barriers to collaborate with others from around the world through interactive technologies.

Education is changing in the new millennium; it aims at preparing learners to deal with rapid changes in employment and learning style. In fact, learners need to leave school and universities being prepared for the professional careers and to cope with the rapid changes in every field. Teaching has to undertake a change too. Teachers must keep pace and stay relevant in order to keep students engaged. Teachers need to prepare students for careers and jobs that have not yet been created to cope with new technologies and strongly enter this new workforce and successfully work and live in the new digital world. **"In the future there will be technologies that have not yet been invented; there will be ways of living and thinking and learning that have not yet emerged."** (Griffin and Care 2015, p vii)

Education is about adapting to a changing world. Different sets of skills have been at the core of educational reforms in many developed countries in the last few decades because students must be prepared for postsecondary experiences to respond to social and economic fields in public and private sectors, it is said that “...**21<sup>st</sup> century skills are those that must be brought to bear in today’s worlds of education and employment in order for individuals to function effectively as students, workers and citizens.**” (Griffin and Care 2015, p vii).

The implementation of those skills is to push learning behind the school walls. The intention is to provide learners with opportunities to connect knowledge acquired at school with real world application; there should be less time spent on delivering content and more on application of the content to reach a large number of learners’ affordability.

The term 21st century skills and competencies are becoming more and more part of the teaching learning process. It is the skills and competencies that learners will need to prepare them to their future studies, careers and a world citizen. Embrace 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking, English language classroom is the perfect environment to build those skills: **“In essence, the English language classroom exists to prepare students to communicate across cultures, across borders, across perspectives. As the world evolves toward greater inter connectedness, it is our students to whom we entrust the responsibility of building a better global society”** (Oxford university press ELT 2013). The National Research Council organizes the skills into three clusters: cognitive skills which go beyond mastery of academic contents, and interpersonal and intrapersonal which include competencies as shown in the diagram below:

However, ATC21S (Assessment and Teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century) classified 21<sup>st</sup> century skills into four categories, grouped under the acronym of KSAVE:

Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, Values and Ethics

- **Ways of thinking:** Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision- making, and learning.
- **Ways of working:** Communication and collaboration
- **Tools for working:** Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and information literacy.
- **Skills for living in the world:** Citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility.

Developing the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in the classroom helps learners to be creative and be critical thinkers. It also helps them, to communicate and collaborate effectively. Broadly speaking, the new millennium requires resilient and independent learners, who have flexible skills and competencies. Some of these skills are new, others traditional and need adaptation before their implementation. According to Oxford University Press the 21st century skills are called 4C’s: Critical Thinking, Communication, Creativity and Collaboration.

- **Critical Thinking:** It is an extremely important skill. It requires asking questions, analyzing, making evaluation and judgment based on the information provided. The process of critical thinking involves acquiring information and evaluating it to each a well-justified conclusion or answer. It takes learners beyond memorizing and simple comprehension of information “A critical thinker uses logic and evidence to prioritize and classify information, find relationships, make judgments, and solve problems.” (Oxford University Press ELT 2013). It allows the development of autonomy, and the promotion lifelong learning.

- **Communication:** Learners have to be given chances to practice the communication skill in the classroom through role play, group working and available teaching technologies, and also when the class is over the teacher has to teach the students how to handle and use all outside sources such as the internet and social media to continue communicating.
- **Creativity:** Creativity is the ability to build new things or think about original ideas. It is not a selected talent held only by a few learners, it is a method of ability that everyone has. It is the teachers' role to encourage learners to be creative throughout each lesson by giving challenging activities. It powerfully engages them both emotionally and intellectually.
- **Collaboration:** Learn how to work in pairs and collaborative teams that employ and develop the listening and the speaking skills of all the group members. Through this collaboration they are taught how to effectively achieve goals together.

### STATUS OF ENGLISH IN ALGERIA

Algeria was the most known African country deeply rooted by the use of French language as a result of 132 years of French colonization. When it achieved independence in 1962, the Arabic language was regained its pre-eminent place it had lost under colonization and gave the language greater values and significant roles in the society.

Introducing the Arabic language was unavoidable, **“A society whose true identity had been denied for a hundred and thirty years could not begin to reconstruct itself without restoring the bedrock of that identity: The Arabic language closely associated with Islamic culture.”** Grandguillaume (1997, p 2).

This language policy, known by Arabization failed due to the fact that, Algeria is the least prepared country to a language planning, after the French colonialism.

**Among all Arabic-speaking countries, Algeria was certainly the Least prepared national community for this kind of language Planning. The significant lack of means was simply an enormous Handicap because French colonialism had eradicated almost all Traditional structures that had existed before 1830.**

Benrabah (2002, qtd, in. E. Ben-Rafael & Y. Stenberg 2002, p 39)

However, as the English language is becoming the world language the Algerian authorities are becoming more aware about the status this language has gained in the world. Consequently, English has been introduced as the second foreign language; its status within the educational system is preceded by the French language. In fact, the adoption of English as a foreign language; is also considered as an attempt to diminish French interference in Algerian daily life in every domain.

Since 2003, significant consideration has been given to the English language in the educational reform. The main perspective has been the ability to use language to communicate effectively with the world in a variety of situations. Its use is not restricted to a set of sentences used in isolation in the classroom or only part of the school subject; the

objective behind giving importance to English is to have access to modern sciences and technological knowledge stored in English. Ourghi (2002) argues:

**It is primary language of computer software of the cutting edge in scientific research of business and management, and of politics and international networks...It is also the medium of interaction in countless activities-air traffic control, world organizations, prestigious higher studies such as MBA, academic conferences, research and publications. Even the international pop music relies on English for boosting its sales and spread just as space sciences and computing games.**

(Ourghi 2002, p 55)

Hence, the Algerian educational policy tries to cope with the new world requirements by giving much more importance to the teaching of EFL by setting new approaches centered on the learners and the development of their capacities in order for them to acquire competency in English, in the most effective possible way. By framing the aim of the curriculum in terms of competency, the focus is on what learners can actively do in and with the language rather on a discrete list of terms they are expected to remember.

Broadly speaking teaching English in Algeria is not restricted to educational and scientific purposes but also to economic and cultural objectives also. The teaching of the English language contributes to the promotion of intercultural understanding. It is an open window on the other cultures and civilizations. Moreover, it is a clue to communicate with other people around the world which helps Algeria diversify its economic and business relations in the world of competition and tight negotiation.

Another central aim behind giving such importance to the English language in secondary education and implementing new approaches to language teaching mainly the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the CBA is to bridge the gap between the knowledge acquired at school with real life and empower the learners to get access to world knowledge. It empowers the position of the country and provides learners with new skills needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, to catch up with the advance which is taking place in all fields all over the world. Thus, it offers citizens more job opportunities thanks to the capacities, skills, and knowledge they have acquired during the learning process. People who have high competence in English have better chance for employment if they were to work in foreign countries or with foreign companies.

The situation of English in Algeria is that learners learn and use English only in the classroom. However; the information provided in the classroom should not be the only source of knowledge; there are other available sources to be in regular contact with the English language. Though it is not a language that the Algerian people are in touch with in their daily life, pupils can make use of the endless authentic materials accessible as self-reference tools: dictionaries and grammar books in school libraries, electronic magazines and newspapers, as well as various information on every

accessible field accessible via internet since English is the main language in the world wide web (McCarthy 1998).

In fact, there is no contact with the outside environment: newspapers and magazines are either in Arabic or French, there is not English news broadcast. The only contact with the language is through English songs and films which are rather means of entertainment than of learning the language. Having no contact with the language in the daily life makes it difficult to cope with acquiring the language.

Though significant considerations have been given to English language in the Algerian educational reform context which targets to provide more opportunities to cope with a more challenging globalized world, there is still a gap between what is taught and what actually ought to be taught in the classroom.

## CONCLUSIONS

Many students are not getting the education that they need to succeed; they are only trained to use what they learn at school to pass exams or to get certification. Accordingly, in order to better prepare students for citizenship and the global age; their education has to respond to additional demands of a rapidly globalizing world.

However, to produce global citizens is to provide global education that prepares them for their future life; jobs that are emerging require more non-routine and interpersonal skills. Education in the new millennium includes autonomy and independence of learning to be more successful in both professional and personal lives.

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