Ricardo Römhild, Anika Marxl,
Frauke Matz & Philipp Siepmann (Eds.)

Rethinking Cultural Learning

Cosmopolitan Perspectives on Language Education

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This book is the result of a process that started in 2018 with the formation of a new team at the chair of English language education at the University of Münster, Germany. It encapsulates our ideas of what English language education could be in the face of global polycrisis. At the same time, it can only be and is meant as a point of departure for more inquiry into how language education may best serve future generations on this planet.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of those who have made this project possible: our authors, the reviewers, who have offered their support, their unique perspectives, as well as our colleagues, team members, and friends, Dr. Daniel Becker, Jens-Folkert Folkerts, Dr. Stephan Gabel, Prof. Dr. Julia Reckermann, Marius Ritter, Dr. Rebecca Schlieckmann, Dr. Karoline Wirbatz, and Naime Zeineddine for their constructive criticism, and their unwavering encouragement over the years and through the pandemic. We are indebted to Stewart Campbell and our wonderful student assistants Martha Gampert, Nicola Schwalvenberg, Letizia Töws, and Lilian Zwanzig for their tireless work on the manuscript.

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We would like to dedicate this volume to Prof. Dr. Christiane Lütge, who established the field of global education in language didactics in Germany, for continuing to pave the way.

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(Re-)Discovering Cosmopolitanism for Language Education: An Introduction

Philipp Siepmann, Ricardo Römhild, Anika Marxl,
Daniel Becker & Frauke Matz

In the multipolar world of the 21st century, two deeply intertwined developments appear to be at play: On one hand, people, societies, and governments are increasingly interconnected globally, with the global transcending the local in what Gaudelli (2016) calls 'everyday transcendence': The global has become part of everyone's everyday life. On the other hand, humanity is in the midst of a polycrisis (see, e.g., UNICEF 2023) and Beck's prediction of a "world risk society" (2007), a "world in metamorphosis" (2016) has become reality. Living in, with, and through this polycrisis means recognising that, as human beings, "we are not the same, but we are in the same boat, and we focus on the risks we all share from the degradation or catastrophic destruction of this environment" (Calhoun 2017: 197). For both children and young adults, this has tangible consequences for their present and future lives, and it has a profound impact on how they learn, how they live their daily lives, and how they have their formative experiences (UNICEF 2021, 2023).

It is in this historical context that the contours of an awareness of global environmental, economic, political, and social interdependencies with potentially existential implications for a growing number of people emerge. Calhoun (2017) introduces the metaphor of a river to underline the need for a planetary consciousness:

> A single river flowing hundreds of miles may feed fishing villages and challenge sports fishermen, irrigate farmland, water grassy lawns, provide drinking water to a city, and drive a turbine. It may entertain kayakers and raise the value of property with scenic views. Both transportation and pollution may connect people at different points. Both equality and community of fate are real issues. But deeper understanding and practical solutions alike depend on grasping the ways in which people are related to each other through their dependencies on the river. (Calhoun 2017: 197)

While Calhoun uses the river metaphor to describe how humans depend on an (intact) environment, it can as well be transferred to other domains such as the globalized economy and supply chains, a functioning health care system to mitigate the impact of pandemics, or to more general questions of equality and justice. Education plays a vital role in this context. Cultivating an awareness for global risks and interconnectedness in learners, as well as a competence to critically reflect on their own positionality, responsibility, and agency, has become a transdisciplinary educational objective (see, e.g., UNESCO's programme for Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship; UNESCO 2014, 2015).

This volume seeks to contribute to this evolving discourse by discussing the specific contribution that English language education can make to this cross-cutting pedagogical agenda. We agree with Delanoy's observation that

> [the] link between responsibility and '**response-ability**' makes communicative competence a major objective for all education. [...] Also, because of an increase in global interconnectedness those languages become particularly important which permit decision-making on transnational levels. Here, English is of particular relevance. Finally, the need to communicate in a dynamic and globally connected world entails forms of language education where the learners are given insight into the complexity of contemporary living conditions, and where language and thought are used creatively to meet situation-specific and changing demands. (Delanoy 2017: 169; authors' emphasis)

Acknowledging this (transnational) responsibility for global justice and acquiring the necessary abilities are core objectives of cosmopolitan citizenship education (CCE; e.g., Gaudelli 2016; Osler & Starkey 2018; Jackson 2019; Delanoy 2022; Lütge, Merse & Rauschert 2022). These aspirational and ambitious ideas form the common thread throughout this book: CCE aims at preparing learners for the realities of this globalised world and supporting them on their way to becoming active participants in cosmopolitan discourses and societies. As such, the perspectives offered in this volume share an interest in discussing ways to do justice to the developments of our times in educational contexts: glocalisation, diversification of citizenships and identities, as well as the communicative competences necessitated by those processes, to support learners to become active participants in communities and societies, from the interpersonal to the local to the regional and global as social beings. Therefore, the discussion led in this volume revolves around questions and implications which a consistent turn towards cosmopolitan perspectives in language education would entail, for instance in terms of

- the relationship between language (learning) and cosmopolitan identities, forms of belonging, and citizenships;
- the dealing with difference in the language classroom and beyond, including related power relations as well as possible shared norms and values;
- what it means to learn a language; its purposes in a globally interconnected world.

In other words, what does a cosmopolitan perspective offer to English language education? To facilitate this discussion, it seems worthwhile addressing some of the requirements posed upon language education, and discussing possible alternative perspectives offered by cosmopolitan approaches or rather raising questions to be discussed.

1. Three pillars, one vision for education: cosmopolitanism, global citizenship, children's/human rights

Cosmopolitan ideas have shaped discourses throughout human history, and recently they have resurfaced once again, with scholars in the fields of philosophy (see, e.g.,

Appiah 2006; Nussbaum 1994, 1997), anthropology (see, e.g., Appadurai 1996), sociology (see, e.g., Giddens 1999; Tomlinson 1999; Hannerz 2000; and Beck 2007, 2016), political science (see, e.g., Hayden 2010) as well as literary criticism (see, e.g., Mignolo 2011; Robbins 2017; and Bhabha 2018) turning to cosmopolitanism to describe and conceptualise the realities of the 21st century (for overviews see Jackson in this volume, and, e.g., Heise 2008: 57; Rizvi 2009: 254; Oxley & Morris 2013: 306; Jackson 2016: 3). Rizvi (2009: 253) observes that "new interest in cosmopolitanism is based upon a recognition that our world is increasingly interconnected and interdependent globally, and that most of our problems are global in nature requiring global solutions."

Cosmopolitanism revolves around the transcendence of boundaries, both politically and with regards to identities, forms of belonging, and citizenships. It is the result of a process of cosmopolitanisation (Beck & Sznaider 2006: 6), which, as Weenink (2008: 1091) explains, relies on "a relatively autonomous social force, which emerges from global interdependencies in which millions of people are linked by worldwide risks of production and consumption." At the same time, cosmopolitanism can be regarded as a result of a heightened awareness for the global interconnectedness and shared responsibility of humankind, which, in turn, is based on technological developments, increasing mobility, and migration, among other things (Appadurai 1996). However, the global perspective underlying cosmopolitan thought and the everyday lived experience of individuals and social groups might also create a field of tension (Tomlinson 1999; Weenink 2008) between the global and the local spheres. Hall (2002: 30) suggests that what is needed is a form of cosmopolitanism that balances the global and the local in the sense of a dialogical relationship. This is represented in such notions as 'rooted cosmopolitanism' (Appiah 2006; Kymlicka & Walker 2012; Gaudelli 2016) or 'cosmopolitanism of connections' (Calhoun 2017, see quote above).

In this edited volume, we adopt such a notion of a rooted or embedded cosmopolitanism to explore cosmopolitan perspectives on language education. This opens avenues for recognising that there are different levels of identity, of citizenships, and of belonging. It hinges on concepts of cultural diversity, hybridity, and plurality – all of which are central to language learning – but, crucially, whether one is aware of one's own place within the net of global connections makes all the difference.

Associated with Nussbaum's (e.g., 1997) political theories, the idea of living in, through, and across concentric circles has been central to cosmopolitan thought, with Jackson (2019: 3, see also in this volume) defining the following concentric circles, though other spatial-social levels are conceivable and, perhaps, necessary: self, interpersonal, local, national, regional, global. For Nussbaum, these affiliations entail very specific responsibilities and, consequently, educational objectives:

> Our task as citizens of the world will be to "draw the circles somehow toward the center" (Stoic philosopher Hierocles, 1st-2nd CE), making all human beings more like our fellow city dwellers, and so on. In other words, we need not give up our special affections and identifications, whether ethnic or gender-based or religious. We need not think of them as superficial, and we may think of our identity as in part constituted by them.

> We may and should devote special attention to them in education. But we should work to make all human beings part of our community of dialogue and concern, base our political deliberations on that interlocking commonality, and give the circle that defines our humanity a special attention and respect. (Nussbaum 1994: n.p.)

What becomes apparent in the concept of concentric circles stretching as far as the global, the repeated emphasis of an interplay between local and global, and the ideas of embedded cosmopolitanism seeking to recognise the power of both centripetal (inward-oriented; towards the local and the self) and centrifugal (outward-oriented; towards the global) forces is that cosmopolitan citizenship and its education go hand in hand with global citizenship and its education. More precisely, it may be appropriate to speak of a cosmopolitan orientation of global citizenship education. Offering a heuristic of existing visions of global citizenship education (GCE), Pashby et al. (2020: 145) characterise this type of GCE as liberal, which includes the recognition of "erudition as rigour", an emphasis on the role of individual development, the idea of research and education as working towards the public good, and a generally rather strong orientation towards universal values and morality.

One framework of universal values, which has been discussed in this context, is the notion of children's and human rights-informed cosmopolitanism and its education. For instance, Osler and Starkey (2018: 31) examine "challenges confronting teachers who seek to educate young people for living together in democratic communities in which [children's and] human rights, justice and peace prevail." Both children's and human rights-informed, cosmopolitan citizenship education are thus of vital importance in the context of an orientation towards social justice (ibid.; Jerome & Starkey 2021). Authors in other, yet related fields of research, particularly environmental studies and education, have joined the canon of voices calling for this type of education in the face of increasing socio-environmental injustice in the world (e.g., Dobson 2000; Valencia Sáiz 2005; Heise 2008).

However, education following such a notion of cosmopolitanism runs the risk of reproducing and perpetuating 'soft' versions of GCE (Andreotti 2006), which describe "approaches based in the notion of a common humanity and single view of progress where global justice issues are framed and responded to from within a Western, Global North status quo" (Pashby et al. 2020: 151). Critiquing soft GCE, Andreotti (2006) discusses critical GCE as emphasising justice, while recognising each individual's responsibility – even complicity – in the upholding of the status quo and its current power structures. Critical GCE opens the possibility of multiple ideas of progress. The adjective 'critical', Andreotti elaborates, does not imply that "something is right or wrong, biased or unbiased, true or false. It is an attempt to understand origins of one's own and others' assumptions and implications" (Andreotti 2014: 49).

This type of education is geared towards the development of a sense of global interconnectedness and shared responsibility in learners, while at the same time recognising both the importance of the local-global interplay and the significance of a critical stance towards one's own positionality in the context of social justice issues and human rights. In this sense, cosmopolitanism, human rights, and global citizenship all