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Ecological and intercultural citizenship in the primary English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom: an online project in Argentina

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This article describes an online intercultural citizenship project concerning the environment in the primary English-language classroom carried out in 2013/2014 between Argentina and Denmark. It is part of a network of projects coordinated by Michael Byram that involves teachers and researchers in Europe, the US and East Asia. The project is framed within the theory of intercultural citizenship in the foreign-language classroom and it is the only study set in the primary school context. Furthermore, developments in Latin America in this field are scarce and the study intends to fill an empirical gap. Although the comparative perspective is ingrained in the project, the article describes mainly the Argentinian standpoint.

At the same time, and more generally (beyond language education), it will be argued, and shown, that the project can also be framed within the notion of ecological citizenship, understood as a new form of citizenship that presents new challenges to educators. While the notion of citizenship in formal education usually assumes nationalist and patriotic mindsets, in this project ecological citizenship offers a new framework that introduces an international, transnational or global perspective. Furthermore, citizenship education tends to be reserved to secondary civics and social studies classrooms and in this sense the focus on the primary school context and on the foreign-language classroom is innovative in this project.

Keywords: intercultural citizenship; ecological citizenship; foreign-language education; English as a foreign language (EFL); primary classroom; Argentina

Overview of the project

This online intercultural citizenship education project concerning the environment was carried out in 2013/2014 between 50 fifth- and sixth-form children in Argentina and 20 seventh-form students in Denmark. It is described in detail in Porto, Daryai-Hansen, Arcuri, and Schlifer ([in press](#)). The project aimed at encouraging children to understand environmental issues and how to recognize them in their own surroundings, explore and reflect on environmental issues both locally (in the children's communities) and globally, challenge taken-for-granted representations of the

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environment, engage in trash sorting and recycling practices, contribute to improving the environment in their local communities, and make their family, their network, their community and people in general develop environmental awareness. There were also linguistic and intercultural aims such as acknowledging linguistic diversity, engaging in intercultural dialog with others using English as a foreign language, developing research skills, and analysing critically (audio)visual media images, texts and practices.

In their English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, and without interacting online yet, the children in Argentina and Denmark identified green crimes in their schools and in their communities and they drew or videotaped these crimes. They engaged in a trash analysis mini-project in their schools, which involved them in listing and classifying the trash in the waste bins in their schools. They carried out a survey among family members and friends regarding their environmental habits. They then compared and discussed results using a wiki that worked as a virtual classroom. They also analysed critically (audio)visual media images and texts, produced in Argentina and in Denmark, in order to gain awareness of the power of the media in creating stereotypical images of environmental issues that may influence attitudes and behaviors.

In a dialog phase, the Argentinian and Danish children collaboratively designed posters to raise awareness of environmental issues by engaging in online communication using Skype and the wiki. They communicated in English, Spanish and Danish and used the three languages in their posters.

In a final citizenship phase, the children in each country took action locally by carrying out some civic actions in their communities. For instance, the Argentinian children created videos and songs and shared them on a Facebook page of the project, designed by themselves; they were interviewed by a local journalist and the collaborative posters were published in the local newspaper; and they designed a street banner which they hung across the school street.

Introduction

This article intends to fill three gaps in the *Cambridge Journal of Education*, namely in terms of authorship, regions or contexts described, and topic. Regarding authorship, not much is available in the journal by South American writers. In terms of regions or contexts, the Latin American perspective is underrepresented (both theoretically and empirically) and the particular Argentinian perspective in this article is almost unique. Finally, in terms of topic, there is little focus on intercultural education and intercultural citizenship education in the foreign-language classroom, including intercultural ecological citizenship. Considering that the article presents an empirical study in the EFL classroom, it is also useful to point out that these gaps are observed in the field of TESOL too (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) (Paltridge & Mahboob, 2014) and consequently the article acquires a stronger significance.

At the same time, this article builds on current perspectives as well as older proposals in the *Cambridge Journal of Education* in several ways. To begin with, the research reported here shares an interest in environmental education in primary school (Bonnett & Williams, 1998) and contributes by introducing the citizenship dimension and extending the focus to other contexts (Argentinian and Danish) beyond the UK. In addition, this investigation supports Bonnett and Williams' (1998, p. 159) findings that 'the attitudes of children of this age towards nature and

the environment are generally very positive' as well as the need they point out 'for an enhanced role for pupil discussion and participation in environmental action'. In this project, the Argentinian and Danish children carried out actions in their local communities to raise awareness of the need to protect the environment, and these actions displayed a high level of criticality as described by Barnett (1997).

Second, there is a current interest in information and communication technologies (ICTs), not only in the obvious online communication, which was paramount in this project, but also toward new multimodal literacy practices as described in Wolfe and Flewitt (2010). This interest is also observed in the specific scholarly literature in TESOL, for instance on digital reading and writing (Warschauer, Zheng, & Park, 2013) and digital literacies (Hafner, Chik, & Jones, 2013), which also had a central role here. More specifically, with Wolfe and Flewitt (2010) the project reported here shares the focus on technologies and multimodality, a conception of literacy as social practice (to which I will return) and a key role attributed to critical thinking skills. I will point out that criticality is an essential element in an intercultural citizenship education project in the language classroom. Unlike the study conducted by Wolfe and Flewitt (2010), this investigation brings a perspective on older primary schoolchildren aged 10–11. The authors also point out a gap in this field in bilingual education, and this study can be seen as a contribution in particular in the area of foreign-language education. This project can also be seen to respond to the need to 'understand more fully the nature of the relationship between media types, modes of interaction and the affordances for learning offered' (Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010, p. 397). In this project, multimodal digital literacies were combined with an online intercultural communication exchange between Argentinian and Danish children to develop intercultural and ecological citizenship in the EFL classroom.

Third, this article builds on a view of the discourses of education on hope (Andrews, 2010; Webb, 2010) that acknowledges a political dimension of education in the sense that a group of primary schoolchildren in two countries worked together collaboratively to act upon the world on the assumption that they were contributing to an improved way of life not only for themselves but also for future generations. I will show how this discourse of hope was realized in the EFL classroom in this project. Involved here is also a deep view of education that encompasses a dimension of justice as Budd (2013, p. 18) explains:

The aim is not simply the ability of people to learn, the utility of obtaining an education, but locating learning and its outcomes in a structure of justice that extends to life within complex societies. If this aim can be achieved, the integration of the multifaceted experiences of learning, using information resources effectively, and completing a contextual task is realized.

The children's struggles for a greener world described in this article are located within this dimension of justice. This notion of justice, as I will show, is also central in ecological citizenship.

Fourth, this project highlights the importance of attitudes, emotion and affect in intercultural understanding (Sharifian, Rochecouste, & Malcolm, 2004) and language learning (Dewaele, 2013). Kuby's (2013) theoretical developments are appropriate here too as she extends work on emotions to social justice issues with young children in school contexts and claims that:

... emotions are something we do and enact [rather than just feel] ... I see emotions as something we perform and embody in our daily interactions.... Thinking of emotions

as something we do and situated in socio-political contexts helps in understanding the situatedness of each person's emotions. (Kuby, 2013, p. 33)

She proposes a 'critical-performative analysis of emotion' (Kuby, 2013, p. 34) that builds on and integrates three theoretical perspectives, the three relevant to this project, namely narrative and biographical theories and research (discussed later), critical socio-cultural perspectives (as already mentioned) and rhizomatic theories. This third notion is new in foreign-language learning and refers, according to the author, to the idea that emotions occur in the midst of movements and collisions among people and in this sense they emphasize the performative nature of the self. In this project, the Argentinian and Danish children communicated online using Skype and the chat option in a wiki and, as they did, their conversations embodied the emotions of the different perspectives they held with regard to the environmental dangers they were discussing. Through interactions with their peers, they thought of possible solutions and ways of responding to these environmental hazards.

Fifth, this investigation echoes a view of learning as socioculturally constructed and aimed at development (Eun, 2010) and a view of literacy as social practice (Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010). This project follows, and integrates, the eight interrelated principles for instruction based on the main tenets of sociocultural theory presented by Eun (2010, p. 401), 'namely, that it should be: mediated; discursive; collaborative; responsive; contextualized; activity-oriented; developmental; and integrated'. The fact that they are integrated is important as Eun (2010) points out that research on each principle in isolation is available. More specifically, mediation refers to the interactions learners hold with the environment and with other individuals, with different tools and signs, and through language (in this case, the online communication between Argentinian and Danish children). Collaboration emphasizes the intercultural dimension of interaction among human beings through discursive and culturally responsive practices (again during the dialog phase of the project). Contextualized and activity-oriented instruction is echoed in language education in task-based learning where problem-solving and experiential learning is central. These developments are not new in language education (Brewster, 1991; Brewster et al., 1992; Genesee, 1994; Holderness, 1991; Skehan, 1996) and in this project they were evidenced in the proposed activities (e.g. survey on environmental habits, trash analysis task, creation of collaborative posters, etc.) and in the actions in the community that the children carried out. Finally, developmental and integrated instructional principles refer to the development of intercultural competence and learning integrated into several school subjects – known as CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) in language learning. Both intercultural competence and CLIL are areas in which foreign-language education has made significant theoretical and pedagogical advances (Byram, 1997, 2009; Coyle, 2007). In this project, ecological citizenship became the content of English-language teaching.

Finally, not restricted to *Cambridge Journal of Education* now, the value of narrative research and biographical methods has been particularly highlighted in the scholarly literature when the focus is on descriptions of the 'domains of folk experience' (Widdowson, 2006, p. 96) as is the case in this project. I was interested in discovering how this specific group of Argentinian children experienced ecological and intercultural citizenship in their EFL primary classroom. There is a renewed interest in participatory research that gives social actors a voice (Norton, 2000;

Norton & Toohey, 2011; Tsui, 2007), which is also important in TESOL (de Groot, Goodson, & Veugelers, 2014; Giroir, 2014; *TESOL Quarterly* Special Issue on Narrative Research 2011). Research that takes account of a biographical standpoint collects and uses life documents such as autobiographies, biographies, diaries, letters, obituaries, life stories, personal experience stories, and personal records. The rationale is that the study of relevant experiences can provide the foundation for a deeper understanding of any given situation. A reflexive element is present and can be embedded in different descriptive, narrative and/or interpretive forms of research. In the investigation reported here, one research instrument, the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE) (Byram, Barrett, Iprave, Jackson, & Méndez García, 2009), a resource designed to encourage people to think about and learn from intercultural encounters, is an instance of narrative (autobiographical) research.

Intercultural citizenship in the foreign-language classroom

The investigation described in this article is based on the characteristics of intercultural citizenship education described in Alred, Byram, and Fleming (2003, 2006) and Byram (2008, 2010, 2012, 2014). Within this framework, Alred et al. (2006), Byram (2008) and Zajda, Daun, and Saha (2008) report empirical studies in different countries worldwide with few cases in Latin America. For instance, Alred et al. (2006) report cases and experiences in Mexico, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Japan, Poland, Spain, Portugal, and a comparative investigation in Germany, Britain and the USA. Byram (2008) addresses mainly the European context. Osler and Starkey (2005) present cases in Britain, Japan, Romania, Cuba, Argentina, and Brazil but the focus is on global citizenship rather than intercultural citizenship. Finally, Zajda et al. (2008) describe experiences in Australia, Japan, Canada, Europe, United Arab Emirates, Nepal and South Africa. As for Central and Latin America, López (2008, 2009) and López and Sichra (2008) focus mainly on intercultural bilingual education, with a special interest in the situation of indigenous languages. It is possible to say, then, that this investigation fills an empirical gap in the Argentinian context.

The concept of *education for intercultural citizenship in the foreign-language classroom* (Byram, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014; Byram, Golubeva, Han, & Wagner, *in press*) brings together foreign-language education and citizenship education. It integrates the pillar of intercultural communicative competence from foreign-language education with the emphasis on civic action in the community from citizenship education. Regarding the former, Byram (1997, 2009) presents five *savoirs* or dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes involved in foreign-language education, which are captured in his *Model of Intercultural Competence: savoir être* (attitudes of curiosity and inquisitiveness), *savoirs* (knowledge of different aspects of life in a certain society, such as work, education, traditions, history and others), *savoir comprendre* (involving the skills of interpreting and relating those *savoirs*), *savoir apprendre/savoir faire* (involving the skills of discovery and interaction) and *savoir s'engager* (involving critical cultural awareness). The online intercultural exchange that took place in this project between the Argentinian and Danish children emphasized certain skills in intercultural communication (for instance observing, describing, analysing, relating, interpreting) as well as a recognition of the importance of empathy, perspective-taking, adaptability, flexibility, sensitivity and criticality when communicating with 'Others' in a foreign language

(Byram, 1997, 2009, 2012). The relational aspect, i.e. getting involved with ‘Others’, is important as learners become intercultural speakers or intercultural mediators (Alred & Byram, 2002; Byram, 2009). At the same time, this focus on ‘Others’ highlights a comparative perspective, in this case in communication among students with different languages (Spanish and Danish as mother tongues) and also a comparative perspective in ideas, values and beliefs among the children involved. Finally, criticality is important too (Barnett, 1997; Johnston, Mitchell, Miles, & Ford, 2011). Criticality involves students in examining their own thoughts and actions, as well as those of their peers, reflexively and analytically.

From the notion of citizenship, the concept of *education for intercultural citizenship in the foreign-language classroom* borrows an emphasis on involvement with the community, i.e. the public domain. As already mentioned, activity-oriented instruction, known as task-based learning in language education (accompanied by problem-solving and experiential learning) is not new. The difference resides in the fact that activity in this citizenship dimension transcends the boundaries of the classroom, and the school, or, in other words, it reaches the public sphere. In addition, citizenship becomes the content of foreign-language instruction and gives it a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Instruction) focus. When the criticality mentioned before involves critical action in the world, i.e. different forms of civic and political engagement, it becomes critical cultural awareness or *savoir s’engager* in Byram’s Model of Intercultural Competence (Byram, 1997, 2009). The questioning and challenging of one’s national perspectives is essential here and it occurs when students work cooperatively in international/transnational partnerships as was the case in this study. This criticality corresponds to the highest of three domains as described by Barnett (1997), called ‘the external world’: this refers to critical thought demonstrated in civic or political actions in the community. It involves a radical change in thought that is evidenced in critical action. The actions in the community that the Argentinian and Danish children carried out illustrate this dimension.

The next level is ‘the internal world’ and involves analysis and self-reflection with regard to one’s values, views and presuppositions. Students distance themselves from their own positions (this is called de-centring) and become aware of different perspectives (perspective-taking). An evaluative stance is present too. I will illustrate this level later with a poster produced by the children involved in this project. Finally, the lowest domain of criticality is ‘propositions, ideas and theories’: this refers to what students learn as the content of foreign-language instruction, or, in other words, the CLIL focus mentioned before. In this project, it involved information on the environment and how to take care of it in daily life.

Following Byram et al. (in press), a project in the foreign-language classroom becomes an intercultural citizenship education project when:

- students from two or more countries work together in an international/transnational project and develop a sense of international/transnational identification among themselves;
- students challenge their own assumptions and naturalized views and ways;
- students develop a new way of thinking and acting – called ‘international/transnational’; and
- students engage their critical thinking skills at levels involving not only thought but also action, in particular actions that go beyond within-school activities and out into the community.

Ecological citizenship

At the same time, this investigation can be framed within current views of global education defined as ‘the study of the interface of political, ecological, cultural, and economic systems in the world’ (Abdullahi, 2010, p. 27). Theorizing about the changes that globalization has brought about in connection with the notion of citizenship, Myers (2006) refers to the concept of ‘global citizenship education’. In both cases, global education and global citizenship education, the aim is to develop civic (and other) knowledge, skills and attitudes but with the ultimate idea that this development will lead to deep changes in students’ positioning and world-views, which in turn will contribute to building long-lasting world-friendly perspectives and behaviors. Myers and Zaman (2009) define global citizenship as ‘an ethical construct that is premised on the normative value of contributing to the creation of a better world, especially the responsibility to solve world problems’. They argue that there are three dimensions involved, namely moral (learners belong to a global community, with which they identify and to which they feel ethical responsibilities), institutional (as learning takes place within universal legal frameworks such as human rights education) and political (learners act together to bring about change in the world). In all cases, these developments are proposed to take place within formal education, in particular the civics or social studies secondary school classrooms, through active experiential learning (also Hoskins, d’Hombres, & Campbell, 2008). In this article I will argue, and show, that the foreign-language classroom can also contribute in this direction. Furthermore, I will show that this can happen in the primary school context too.

It is also useful at this point to draw on Dobson’s (2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2007; Dobson & Bell, 2006) and Valencia Sáiz’ (2005) notion of ecological citizenship, which they propose as a new form of citizenship – a type of ‘post-cosmopolitan’ citizenship. This theoretical perspective is framed within current views in environmental politics, in particular within green political theory. Specifically, Valencia Sáiz (2005, p. 164) proposes that ‘although the idea of ecological citizenship may be regarded as a kind of cosmopolitan or global citizenship, its features go further, towards a new kind of citizenship’. The relationships between globalization, environmental issues and cosmopolitanism are emphasized. Following Dobson in particular, ecological citizenship breaks with traditional conceptions of citizenship in several ways: first, it is not only related to rights but fundamentally to obligations and collective responsibilities; second, it is not only related to the public domain (i.e. action in the community or beyond) but crucially to the private sphere (change begins in the home); third, it is not restricted to the nation but rather is de-territorialized. Dobson argues that three ‘virtues’ are necessary for ecological citizenship to be developed and these are justice (fairness), care and compassion. They are explained by highlighting the significant role of the obligations that the ecological citizen (Vives Rego, 2013) feels toward fellow human beings he/she does not know and will not ever know, who are distant not only in space but also in time; there is commitment to future generations, which is an important moral and ethical dimension of ecological citizenship.

Dobson (2007, p. 285) advances the argument further to claim that:

... key internationalist themes in ecological citizenship provide an ideal opportunity to broach other curriculum issues such as ‘the world as a global community’ and ‘global interdependence and responsibility’ ... the *general* topics in the citizenship curriculum

could be taught in a lively, engaging and relevant way through the *particular* case of environmental issues – through environmental citizenship. (Emphasis in the original)

This framework allows teachers to encourage understanding of life in different societies and awareness of cultural difference, consciousness of specific problems and the need to work cooperatively with ‘Others’ to bring about change through specific community actions; it allows students to think of creative and contextualized responses to issues they observe in their immediate surroundings as a first step to act in larger spheres. ‘The idea of environmental citizenship can be made real by getting pupils involved in a project that involves part of the school, or even all of it’ (Dobson, 2007, p. 284). The project described in this article involved Argentinian and Danish children in their schools, their communities and beyond.

Green Kidz: An intercultural ecological citizenship project in the primary EFL classroom in Argentina and Denmark

The project was planned and designed as a case study (Gomm, Hammersley, & Foster, 2000; Yin, 2009) with elements of action research (Burns, 2010; Stringer, 2007) with the aim to implement, and describe, an intercultural and ecological citizenship experience in the primary English classroom in Argentina and Denmark. Participants were 50 fifth- and sixth-form Argentinian children (aged 10–11) at *Escuela Graduada Joaquín V. González, Universidad Nacional de La Plata* and 20 seventh-form Danish children (aged 12–13) at *Randersgades Skole, International Profile School of Copenhagen*. I was the researcher in charge in Argentina and Petra Daryai-Hansen was the researcher in charge in Denmark. A wiki that we called *Worldgreenweb* became a shared virtual classroom for the Argentinian and Danish children and they used it to document the different stages and activities of the project and also to communicate among themselves asynchronously. *Green Kidz* (spelt with a ‘z’) refers to an environmental movement created by a group of students at *Randersgades Skole* after the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in 2009 and represents the Danish antecedent of this project. The Argentinian antecedent is the project *Separación de Basuras* (Trash sorting) implemented at *Escuela Graduada* since 2005. The comparative perspective in languages as well as in ideas was present in all phases of the project, but this article focuses mainly on the Argentinian viewpoint.

In terms of ecological citizenship, this project aimed to encourage children to explore and reflect on environmental issues both locally (in children’s homes, schools and communities) and globally (i.e. internationally), challenge taken-for-granted representations of the environment, engage in trash sorting and recycling practices, contribute to improving the environment in their local communities, and make their family, their network, their community and people in general develop environmental awareness. There were also linguistic and intercultural aims such as acknowledging linguistic diversity (in English, Spanish and Danish), developing research skills, analysing critically (audio)visual media images, texts and practices, engaging in intercultural dialog with others, and developing values such as respect, mutual understanding, social awareness and openness.

In its different phases, the project encouraged children to engage in new multi-modal literacy practices as described in Wolfe and Flewitt (2010), including digital reading and writing (Warschauer et al., 2013) and digital literacies (Hafner et al.,

2013). For instance, in their EFL classrooms, the children in Argentina and Denmark identified green crimes in their schools and in their communities; they drew or videotaped these crimes and uploaded their drawings and videos to the wiki. They engaged in a trash analysis mini-project in their schools, which involved them in listing and classifying the trash in the waste bins in their schools, and then they compared and discussed results using the wiki. They carried out a survey among family members and friends regarding their environmental habits, uploaded results to the wiki and discussed them too. Aiming at the first domain of criticality in Barnett (1997), i.e. 'propositions, ideas and theories', they also analysed critically (audio)visual media images and texts, produced in Argentina and in Denmark, in order to gain awareness of the power of the media in each country in creating stereotypical images of environmental issues that may influence attitudes and behaviors.

In a dialog phase, the Argentinian and Danish children collaboratively designed posters to raise awareness of environmental issues by engaging in online communication using Skype and the chat option in the wiki. Working in groups of mixed nationalities, they decided on the purpose, content and language(s) of the poster. This communication stage rests on a view of learning as socioculturally constructed and aimed at development (Eun, 2010) and a view of literacy as social practice (Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010). As a result of this phase, an international/transnational identification emerged. This stage emphasized the tenets involved in intercultural communication using a foreign language, described before by reference to the Model of Intercultural Competence (Byram, 1997, 2009). It also emphasized the importance of attitudes, emotion and affect in intercultural understanding (Sharifian et al., 2004), language learning (Dewaele, 2013) and learning more generally (Kuby, 2013).

As a final step, the children in each country took action locally by carrying out some civic actions in their communities. For instance, the Argentinian children created videos and songs and shared them on a Facebook page of the project (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uysvpqx2vN0>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zTIOCskmo8>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjgTR6QeetQ>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGE9oq3hTdo>), designed by themselves; they were interviewed by a local journalist and the collaborative posters appeared in the local newspaper (<http://www.eldia.com.ar/edis/20131121/Alumnos-Plata-Dinamarca-abrazan-medio-ambiente-laciudad2.htm>); and they designed a banner that they hung across the school street. In Denmark, students put up the collaborative posters in their school and their community; they contacted Greenpeace and the local newspaper *Øbro Avis* and shared information about the project (<https://www.facebook.com/osterbroavis>); and they created videos and songs (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8usDFI6lEmA>), among other initiatives. These actions in the community enact a political dimension of education: political in the sense that a group of children committed themselves to bringing about environmental changes in the world by working together collaboratively, resolving potential conflict and disagreement amongst themselves harmoniously by discussion using a common language, English, which was a foreign language for everyone involved. This phase of the project embodies the discourses of education on hope (Andrews, 2010; Webb, 2010) that call upon students to act on the world with the aim to contribute to an improved way of life. The fact that they went beyond their homes and their schools toward their local communities and also the international community of Greenpeace relates to an important dimension of ecological citizenship, which refers to the responsibility of individuals to

fulfill their obligations to the environment, not only for themselves but also for future generations. This deep view of education relies on values such as care and compassion (toward fellow inhabitants of the world) (Dobson, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2007) but also justice and fairness stemming from a sense of collective responsibility and obligation (Budd, 2013, Dobson, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2007; Dobson & Bell, 2006). The perspectives on global education (Abdullahi, 2010) and global citizenship education (Myers, 2006; Myers & Zaman, 2009) referred to before are also relevant here.

Analysis, findings and discussion

Conversational and documentary data were collected. Conversational data comprise Skype conversations in October 2013 (synchronous communication), chats in the wiki written between September and December 2013 (asynchronous communication), class discussions during these four months and group interviews in Spanish (December 2013). Documentary data, collected between September 2013 and March 2014, comprise the collaborative posters, student productions (songs, videos and drawings), reflection logs and the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (AIE) (Byram et al., 2009), a resource designed to encourage people to think about and learn from intercultural encounters, which the Argentinian children completed in Spanish at the end of the project. Data were analysed qualitatively following the guidelines and procedures in Corbin and Strauss (2008), Hatch (2002) and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), in particular using content analysis. Confidentiality and ethical issues were taken care of following the guidelines and considerations in Corbin and Strauss (2008), Cohen et al. (2007) and De Costa (2014). Parents signed consent forms and pseudonyms are used here. Data in Spanish were translated into English by me and a research assistant. All data extracts appear verbatim.

Consistent with recent developments in the notion of education for intercultural citizenship in the foreign-language classroom (Byram, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014; Byram et al., *in press*), findings show that an international/transnational identification between the Argentinian and Danish children emerged, that they developed the skills involved in intercultural citizenship, and also that criticality was possible in this primary school context, even in its ultimate form of civic engagement – illustrated through the actions in the local community mentioned before. Congruent with developments in ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2007; Dobson & Bell, 2006), findings show its de-territorialized nature (simultaneously related to the international/transnational identification noted earlier), its inseparable public–private dimension, and a sense of collective commitment and responsibility to take care of the environment with the underlying value of fairness and justice implicated. I will focus on each finding in turn.

Intercultural citizenship skills and an international/transnational identification developed

The skills involved in intercultural citizenship (observing, discovering, describing, analysing, comparing and contrasting, relating, interpreting, perspective-taking, de-centering, critical thinking and reflexivity) (Byram, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014; Byram et al., *in press*) were observed recurrently in all data types. Processes of comparing and contrasting occurred simultaneously in the languages involved in the

project (Spanish, English, Danish) as well as in the Argentinian and Danish perspectives among children and also in the texts used as triggers. Regarding languages, the Argentinian children learned phrases in Danish such as *miljøet* (environment), *at beskytte miljøet* (protect the environment), *grønne forbrydelser* (green crimes), *vand-spild/papir-spild* (waste water/paper), *sortere affald* (sort waste), *genbruge* (recycle), *at redde verden* (save the world) and by the end of the project they had created, collaboratively with their Danish peers, a comparative chart with key language concerning the environment in Spanish, English and Danish.

The comparative perspective in texts took place as the children in both countries analysed critically texts produced in Argentina (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAn3jhn2_k4) and in Denmark (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsDxOx7PUP0>, <http://vimeo.com/69160394>, <http://video.kk.dk/video/8548433/genbrug-er-guld-reklame>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7fcyyBJRvI>). Text here refers to anything that can be ‘read’ and ‘interpreted’, in a variety of sign systems and mediums, including print, non-print, visual, digital, multimodal or others (Hagood & Skinner, 2012). Included here are digital reading and writing (Warschauer et al., 2013), digital literacies (Hafner et al., 2013) and new multimodal literacy practices as described in Wolfe and Flewitt (2010). Prompted by questions like ‘What environmental problems can you see in the videos?’, ‘Who takes responsibility for the environment?’, ‘Why?’, ‘Is this normally really the case?’, the comparative focus was encouraged through observation, analysis, reflection and discovery. For instance, in response to the Danish video ‘City of Cyclists’ (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsDxOx7PUP0>), the Argentinian children discovered that through strategic governmental actions the Copenhagen City Council has been working for over 15 years to become the world’s best city for cyclists before the end of 2015. With surprise they learned that Copenhageners cycle to work or school, to go out for pleasure in the evening, to transport objects with different purposes, to take children to kindergarten (basically for almost everything) and they reflected on how this scenario contrasts with poor developments in this area in Argentina. The first domain of criticality in Barnett (1997), ‘propositions, ideas and theories’, refers in this case to what children learned, specifically information on environmental habits and governmental actions in this area in Copenhagen. Looking toward the future, the Argentinian children became aware of big investments in the city with the Bicycle Strategy 2012–2025 and Cycle Track Priority Plan 2006–2026 and they compared and contrasted that with local efforts by the government of Buenos Aires (<http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/ciudadverde>).

In this process, these children exercised almost all the skills involved in intercultural citizenship, namely observing, discovering, describing, analysing, relating, comparing, contrasting, perspective-taking, criticality and reflexivity. In so doing, they discovered commonalities among themselves, reflected on the fact that their interest in the environment brought them together and in this way they created a sense of bonding that transcended geographical boundaries. In their Autobiographies of Intercultural Encounters (AIEs) and in the interviews, the Argentinian children expressed a common message, shared with the Danish students, to foster environmental awareness (evidence in italics). For instance, in the interview Miguel said: ‘**estábamos los dos** [both countries] **de acuerdo en cuidar el medio ambiente**’ (‘**both of us** [both countries] **agreed on taking care of the environment**’). Likewise, Ramiro expressed: ‘**estamos** colaborando [con] otros países para decirle no a los crímenes verdes y crear conciencia en todo el mundo’ (‘**we are** collaborating [with]

other countries *to say no to green crimes and raise awareness all over the world*) (Ramiro, AIE). He continued: '**vivimos en el mismo planeta en el mismo en el que estamos en peligro**' ('*we live in the same world, the same place where we are in danger*') (Ramiro, AIE).

Highlighted in bold in these previous extracts is evidence of an international/transnational identification among the Argentinian and Danish children, which emerged during the online communication phase of the project, and is revealed linguistically in the use of first-person plural forms in all data types. This means that the children temporarily abandoned their identifications as Argentinian or Danish and worked in cooperation with their international peers to foster environmental awareness in the world. Miguel and Ramiro developed an international/transnational way of thinking and acting toward the environment that went beyond local concerns, or, in other words, they developed a collective sense of engagement and responsibility in relation to the environment.

Miguel's and Ramiro's reflections also illustrate aspects of ecological citizenship as defined earlier in this article. For instance, '*vivimos en el mismo planeta en el mismo en el que estamos en peligro*' ('*we live in the same world, the same place where we are in danger*') (Ramiro, AIE) indicates that Ramiro was not thinking in national terms (i.e. Argentina or Denmark) but rather in global terms, and de-territorialization is a characteristic of ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2007). Stemming from his critical evaluation and reflection that they all share the same world and that this world is in danger, he reflected on commonalities shared with the group of Danish children ('*estábamos los dos [both countries] de acuerdo en ...*', '*both of us [both countries] agreed on ...*'; '*estamos colaborando [con] otros países para ...*', '*we are collaborating [with] other countries to ...*'). Ramiro also reflected on their shared interest to make the world a better place in which to live from an environmental perspective ('*cuidar el medio ambiente*', '*taking care of the environment*'; '*decirle no a los crímenes verdes y crear conciencia en todo el mundo*', '*say no to green crimes and raise awareness all over the world*'). This interest is related to three 'virtues' which, Dobson (2007) argues, are necessary for ecological citizenship to be developed, i.e. justice (fairness), care and compassion. These are explained by highlighting the significant role of the obligations that the ecological citizen (Vives Rego, 2013) feels toward fellow human beings. This commitment to unknown people and to future generations brings in an important moral and ethical dimension, also pointed out by theorists on global education (Abdullahi, 2010) and global citizenship education (Myers, 2006; Myers & Zaman, 2009). Dobson (2007, p. 282, emphasis in the original) concludes: 'It should be clear that environmental citizenship gets at things at a different level. It works at a *deeper* level by asking people to reflect on the attitudes that inform their behavior. More specifically, it asks people to consider their behavior in the context of justice and injustice.'

Criticality, critical cultural awareness, social justice and fairness, and collective responsibility

The three dimensions of criticality described by Barnett (1997) were observed in this project. This is important because Barnett (1997), Byram (2014) and others point out that this is usually associated with higher education but not primary, and in this sense this project shows that criticality is also possible in lower levels of education.

Before, I illustrated the first level of criticality, i.e. ‘propositions, ideas and theories’, which refers to what children learned as the content of EFL instruction, in this case information concerning the environment and how to protect it as well as information regarding environmental habits and governmental action in both countries. I have also illustrated the highest dimension, i.e. ‘the external world’, manifested in the civic actions in the local community that both the Argentinian and Danish children carried out. Criticality in this third and highest dimension can be seen as critical cultural awareness in Byram’s (1997, 2009) view as children creating a community of action outside their schools to engage in concrete actions to protect the environment. The civic actions in the community mentioned earlier are the ultimate and most significant form of engagement. But there are others at lower levels such as changes in attitudes, beliefs and individual behavior (Houghton, 2012). For instance, in her AIE Estela wrote: ‘Decidí que en el día de la tierra iba a organizar una recolección de basura y una planta de árboles en una plaza *cerca de mi casa, mientras tanto reciclo la basura para ayudar*’ (‘I decided that on Earth Day I would organize a trash collection and a tree planting *near my house, meanwhile I recycle trash to help*’).

Estela’s AIE extract simultaneously shows two ways in which ecological citizenship breaks with traditional conceptions of citizenship (Dobson, 2000a, 2000b, 2003, 2007; Dobson & Bell, 2006). First, the extract shows (highlighted in italics) that Estela was not concerned with her rights but rather with her obligations and responsibility toward the environment and that is why she planned concrete actions such as cleaning up garbage in her home area and planting a tree nearby, and recycling in her home. Second, these actions are not related exclusively to the public domain (as are cleaning up garbage and planting a tree in a local square) but crucially also to the private sphere (recycling in the home). Regarding the importance of the private domain, Dobson says:

From the point of view of ecological citizenship, the private realm should not be regarded as a barrier to citizenship, but as a place where it can be carried out, where virtues can be learnt – a springboard to the international and intergenerational arenas. (Dobson, 2000b, p. 60)

Estela’s decision to recycle in her home while she waited for Earth Day to arrive (‘*Decidí que en el día de la tierra iba a ... mientras tanto reciclo la basura para ayudar*’, ‘*I decided that on Earth Day I would ... meanwhile I recycle trash to help*’) is indicative of her awareness that her actions in her home have environmental consequences that affect all human beings. This may be the reason why she did not say who in particular she intended to help by recycling in her home. She just wrote ‘para ayudar’ (‘to help’). The extract illustrates well Dobson’s (2007, p. 282) distinction between the public and the private in ecological citizenship:

Traditionally, citizenship has been associated with public spaces: debating, acting, protesting, demanding – in public. Environmental citizenship shares this traditional element. Environmental citizens will debate, act, protest, demand – in public, but environmental citizens also know that their private actions have public implications ... from an environmental point of view all actions are public actions – even those that originate in the home, so we heat our homes, we cool our homes, we buy food to consume in our homes – and so on. Each of these apparently ‘private’ decisions has public environmental implications, so environmental citizenship is a citizenship of the private sphere as well as the public sphere.

This interconnection between the public and the private in ecological citizenship in turn leads to a sense of collective responsibility based on morals, ethics and justice. Evidence can also be seen in an extract from the media analysis task – the task in which children analysed six videos about the environment from Argentina and Denmark (three from each country): ‘Se trata de que *todos tienen que cuidar el medio ambiente*’ (*Everyone has to take care of the environment*); ‘*We take responsibility*’. The media analysis task (Figure 1) also shows this.

When prompted by the question ‘Who takes responsibility for the environment in this video?’, this group of four Argentinian children said: ‘the responsibility is una persona, *cada uno se hace cargo del medio ambiente*’ (‘the responsibility is one person, *each one is in charge of the environment*’) and also ‘*la gente que participa en cada caso*’ (‘*the people who participate in each case*’). This shows that responsibility is individual (private) (‘una persona’, ‘one person’; ‘cada uno’, ‘each one’; ‘en cada caso’, ‘in each case’) as well as shared (public) because everyone is involved (‘cada uno se hace cargo’, ‘each one is in charge’; ‘la gente’, ‘the people’). There is a sense of collective commitment and responsibility here too and evidence of the de-territorialized nature of ecological citizenship (‘the environment’; ‘la gente’, ‘the people’). I will say more about this later.

The poster (Figure 2), produced by a group of Argentinian children on their own initiative and in their own free time (i.e. not one of the collaborative posters), offers further evidence of criticality, in particular the dimension known as ‘the internal world’, which refers to critical thinking revealed through self-reflection, analysis and evaluation. Here this is shown in the use of expressions like ‘is not good to’, ‘is better of[f] [to]’, ‘no ... because ...’. This self-reflection, analysis and evaluation result not only in a refashioning of thought (i.e. what is good and bad for the environment) but also in a refashioning of action. There is an explicit call here to change one’s behavior (for instance, by avoiding unnecessary use of power, avoiding littering and cycling).

In this poster the Argentinian children conveyed a ‘green’ message, which they embraced as their own, and they spoke directly to their reader by using imperatives (‘care for the planet’, ‘no street littering’). This direct address to the reader is a way of involving the audience in their environmental ‘campaign’ and emphasizing the commonalities that bring them (designers of this poster and audience) together, in this case their care for the environment. The poster simultaneously illustrates other aspects of ecological citizenship discussed earlier, such as its inseparable public–private dimension (our individual actions have an effect on the environment) and the underlying values of fairness and justice implicated (‘care for the planet’, ‘no street littering because *it pollutes the environment*’). These children addressed a general reader ([*You*] ‘care for the planet’) and recognized that they all lived in the same world (note the definite article in ‘*the planet*’, ‘*the environment*’). These elements are also observed in the media analysis task in Figure 1. Implicated here as well is an underlying collective commitment and responsibility to take care of the environment, manifested in the concrete actions recommended (no power misuse, no littering, cycling), which reflect the weight of obligations (not only rights) in ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2007), global education (Abdullahi, 2010) and global citizenship education (Myers, 2006; Myers & Zaman, 2009).



Media analysis 1

Names:

Video 1 - Argentina:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAn3jhn2_k4

Your immediate analysis of the video: What is it about?

It's about protect the environment

[protect]

What kind of strategies could the pupils from Denmark use in order to understand the video?

por medio de dibujos o imágenes in the video

[by means of drawings or images in the video]

Who takes responsibility for the environment? Discuss: Why? Is this normally really the case?

the responsibility is one person each one is in charge of the environment

[the responsibility is one person each one is in charge of the environment]

yes is the normal

Video 2 - Denmark:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7fcyyBJRvI>

Your immediate analysis of the video: What is it about?

in general in the festival they have green crimes in denmark

[there are]

What strategies did you use in order to understand the text?

it's about protect the environment

Who takes responsibility for the environment? Discuss: Why? Is this normally really the case?

la gente que participa de cada caso

[The people who participate in each case]

yes

Figure 1. Media analysis task.

Fluidity of findings in this context

The previous description of findings shows that criticality, critical cultural awareness, social justice and fairness, the skills of intercultural citizenship, the international/transnational identification, and the characteristics associated with ecological citizenship all traversed the different stages in the project. This means that

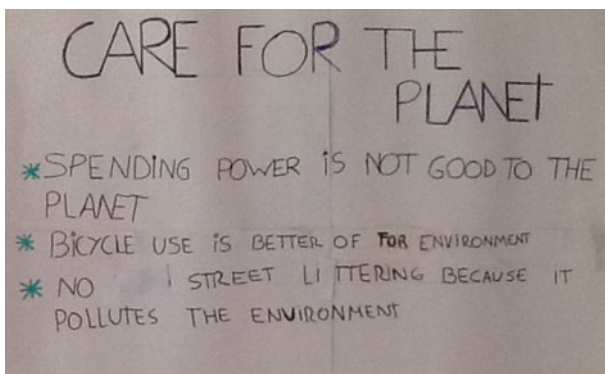


Figure 2. Poster about the environment by a group of Argentinian children.

these findings were observed in all data types (documentary and conversational) and also that they were in general observed simultaneously in each data type. In this sense, this research has contributed to further our understanding of how multimodal literacy practices take place, in particular in foreign-language-learning contexts – a need pointed out by Wolfe and Flewitt (2010). Let me illustrate this fluidity once more, in this case with an extract from a conversation between the Argentinian and Danish children in the wiki. The students formed groups of mixed nationalities (in this case it consisted of 12 Argentinian and four Danish children) and they had been given a task sheet aimed to guide them in the process of creating an advertisement to raise awareness of the importance of taking care of the environment. The task sheet prompted them to think about, and decide on, the form of the advertisement (video, poster, song, leaflet and others), its content (recycling, transport, air pollution, waste of water and waste of power, among others), the inclusion (or not) of images and other resources; and the language samples to be included in the three languages (English, Spanish, Danish). Before adding a contribution to the conversation in the wiki, the students in each country had to previously agree amongst themselves on what to say. This prior discussion is not part of the following conversation extract.

- DEN: **We** will make a film? Do you think that's a good idea?
 ARG: Yes, we think it's a good idea. **We** would like a film.
 DEN: What will the advertisement focus on? ... **We** could focus on transport, because **we** think that people are not taking the transport serious[ly]. Transport is very bad for *the environment*.
 ARG: We agree. Cars pollute *the air we breathe*.
 DEN: **We** could include [images of] cars contaminating the air. Then [images of] people riding bikes. ... [What will be said in English?] Save *the planet* [What will be said in Danish?] Red *planeten* [What will be said in Spanish?] *Cuidemos el planeta juntos*. (Wiki conversation, October 2013)

This wiki conversation extract shows the sense of international/transnational identification that developed among the Argentinian and Danish children, revealed linguistically in the use of first-person plural forms (highlighted in bold). The word 'juntos' in Spanish ('together') is another example. This bonding was also fostered by the sense of collective responsibility and obligation that

children felt toward the environment, revealed by general references to ‘the environment’, ‘the air we breathe’, ‘the air’, ‘the planet’, ‘el planeta’, ‘planeten’ (in italics in the extract): these children were aware that there is one planet, that they all share it, and that it needs attention. These general references point to the de-territorialized nature of ecological citizenship mentioned before. There is also an underlying sense of universal social justice in their desire to raise awareness of the environment: there is nothing about the individual or the particular cases of Argentina or Denmark here (see for instance the reference to ‘people’ without a specific geographical location, repeated twice).

Despite this international/transnational identification and sense of bonding, the comparative perspective, essential in intercultural communication using a foreign language, is simultaneously present in the use of English, Spanish and Danish. Criticality is observed in the second level called ‘the internal world’ (Barnett, 1997), which involves analysis, reflection and evaluation (*‘We could focus on transport, because we think that people are not taking the transport serious[ly]. Transport is very bad for the environment’*). Furthermore, as children interacted with their peers and thought of ways of responding to the environmental hazard posed by transportation (for instance by encouraging the use of bikes), they performed and embodied their emotions toward the environment – what Kuby (2013) calls rhizomatic theories. Emotions were enacted for instance through emotional terms and the use of the present continuous for irritating habits (*‘people are not taking the transport serious[ly]. Transport is very bad for the environment’*), which also highlights the importance of attitudes, emotion and affect in intercultural understanding (Sharifian et al., 2004) and language learning (Dewaele, 2013).

Some caveats

Despite the contribution that this article can make to the question of what young people should learn in schools (Lai & Byram, 2012), in particular in the foreign-language classroom, a project of this kind also faces limitations. In the study reported here, retrospectively the main concern is that the project took an extremely long time to plan and execute, and this raises questions as to whether intercultural citizenship projects in the foreign-language classroom can become regular practice in schools. For instance, conversations between the researcher in Denmark and me began in June 2012 and finished with the end of the project in March 2014. The project was piloted in Argentina in 2013 and was finally carried out between September 2013 and March 2014. In addition, school and parental support was crucial and resulted from meetings and conversations with school authorities and parents during 2012 and 2013. The project also needed the commitment, willingness and dedication of the three classroom teachers involved in both countries, who adopted an active and transformatory role in adjusting their teaching practices to suit the proposed framework. Their sense of agency and discretionary judgment (Brew, 2010; Tatto, 2007) was essential for the success of the project. Finally, the project has not been externally evaluated yet but we intend to engage in this process following guidelines in Alderson and Beretta (1992) in the near future, in particular because we are all committed to making intercultural citizenship part of our regular English-language teaching practice in this context.

Conclusion

This article describes an online intercultural and ecological citizenship experience in the primary EFL classroom between Argentina and Denmark carried out in 2013/2014. Through a comparative perspective involving Argentinian and Danish texts on the environment, and the children's views and experiences on the topic in their national contexts, they developed an international/transnational identification as a group, which was different from their national identifications. The project is an empirical investigation of intercultural citizenship in the primary EFL classroom and fills a gap that exists in this field in Latin America. The primary school focus is also innovative, in particular because criticality was evidenced in the highest level described by Barnett (1997), i.e. transformatory critique in action, usually reserved to higher education. In this project, this level involved not only a refashioning of traditions and what is taken as common sense but also criticality in action, i.e. the civic forms of engagement revealed in the actions in the community described. Finally, the project illustrates the concept of ecological citizenship (Dobson, 2007) and shows how it can be developed in the foreign-language classroom and in the primary school context. These foci are innovative, as the scholarly literature tends to relate ecological citizenship to civics and social studies classrooms in secondary school.

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