

## JELF Colloquium

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# Intercultural citizenship and the internationalisation of higher education: the role of English language teaching

<https://doi.org/10.1515/jelf-2022-2067>

**Abstract:** The expanding internationalisation of higher education (HE) has resulted in the intercultural dimensions becoming a core aim of many institutions. This is frequently represented through the concept of intercultural or global citizenship with students expected to engage with academic, professional and social communities across multiple scales from the local to the global. The language through which both the internationalisation of HE and intercultural citizenships is expected to take place is often English, or more precisely ELF, especially in English medium education (EME). Therefore, given this key role for English, English language teaching (ELT) provides an ideal setting for developing intercultural citizenship education. However, at present, this is an under-researched area. To address this gap, this collection of short papers provides a snapshot of current thinking and research from ELF perspectives. We include reports on the development of intercultural citizenship through study abroad for university students from China, Japan and Thailand; the role of intercultural citizenship in pre-service teacher education in Turkey; and a discussion of the relationship between intercultural citizenship, identity, symbolic power and language in the ELT and EMI classroom.

**Keywords:** English language teaching; English medium education; intercultural citizenship; internationalisation of higher education

**摘要:** 高等教育的不断国际化使得跨文化维度成为许多院校的核心目标。这通常通过学生从本土到全球，在学术、职业及社交领域等多个尺度的跨文化或全球公

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民身份观念来体现。高等教育的国际化和跨文化公民身份所使用的语言通常是英语，更确切地说是英语通用语，尤其是在全英文授课教育领域。因此，鉴于英语这一关键角色，英语语言教学则成为发展跨文化公民教育的理想条件。然而，目前该领域的研究仍不足。为填补研究空缺，该短篇论文系列收录了从英语通用语视角下对当前学界的思考和研究的简要概述。这包括了研究中国留学生、日本留学生，及泰国留学生对跨文化公民发展的调查，跨文化公民意识在土耳其教师岗前培训中的作用研究，以及跨文化公民意识、身份认同、符号化权力与语言在英语教学和全英文授课课堂的讨论。

## 1 Introduction

The internationalisation of higher education (HE) is a diverse and multi-layered process interpreted and enacted in different ways in different settings. However, in theorisations of internationalised HE the intercultural dimension is often central (e.g. Knight 2008), and a core aim is producing interculturally aware globally connected graduates. This is often conceptualised through the notions of intercultural and global citizenship, with students expected to engage with academic, professional and social communities across multiple scales from the local, to the national and the global. Interaction across these diverse groups entails extensive intercultural communication in which language use is crucial. Furthermore, for better or worse, that language is often English due to the central place it has taken in the internationalisation of HE and particularly English medium instruction (EMI). We argue that given this key role for English, English language teaching (ELT), including English for academic purposes (EAP) and English for specific purposes (ESP), provides an ideal setting for developing intercultural citizenship education. However, at present, this is an under-researched area.

To address this gap, in this collection of short papers we provide a snapshot of current thinking and research from English as a lingua franca (ELF) perspectives. These papers came together in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and are an attempt to replicate in written form the type of discussion and collaboration associated with conference colloquiums. We hope that with Covid restrictions lifting at the time of writing the final versions, it may be possible to have that missed live colloquium in the not too distant future. ELF researchers are well-positioned to contribute to understanding the role of intercultural citizenship in ELT and HE due to the intercultural and global focus of ELF since the field's inception and its increasing interest in both ELT and EMI over the last decade (see Jenkins et al. 2018). In addition to the paper presented here, we include: reports on the development of intercultural citizenship through study abroad for university students from Japan (paper 2) and Thailand (paper 3); the role of intercultural

citizenship in pre-service teacher education in Turkey (paper 4); and a discussion of the relationship between intercultural citizenship, identity, symbolic power and language in the ELT and EMI classroom (paper 5).

We begin with a brief summary of two recent projects (Baker and Fang 2019; Fang and Baker 2018) exploring Chinese international HE students' experiences of ELT and the development of intercultural citizenship before, during and after study abroad (SA). The findings suggest positive attitudes to intercultural citizenship and strong links to English use and learning but little formal incorporation of intercultural citizenship education into ELT. Drawing on this research, we suggest a number of approaches for integrating intercultural citizenship education into ELT and EAP practices to better prepare and support students for the multilingual and multicultural nature of international HE environments.

## 2 Internationalisation of HE, EMI and intercultural citizenship

The increasing internationalisation of HE is now well-documented, with the number of recorded international students doubling in the last decade (OECD 2014). One of the core rationales for this increase has been to further intercultural connections in academia as highlighted in Knight's oft-cited definition of internationalisation as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of HE at the institutional and national levels" (Knight 2008: 21). In parallel with the expansion of internationalisation has been a rapid expansion of EMI programmes (Galloway 2020). While there is some debate about how best to define EMI, we will follow Dafouz and Smit who refer to English medium education in multilingual university settings, with research that "focuses on English-medium education because of the particular role that English plays both as an academic language of teaching and learning as well as a means of international communication" (Dafouz and Smit 2016: 399). It is important to point out that EMI includes international Anglophone settings since many programmes in international Anglophone universities share features with other international EMI programmes in terms of linguistic and cultural diversity (Baker and Hüttner 2019; Jenkins and Mauranen 2019). Although internationalisation and EMI are both established areas of research, issues around how best to understand the 'intercultural dimension', to paraphrase Knight (2008), and the representation of 'English' in EMI are far from resolved and this is especially true of the pedagogic implications.

Beginning with the intercultural dimension, students and staff in international HE are expected to be able to work in multicultural teams, network across cultures and be prepared for globally connected workplaces. This can be conceptualised through the notions of global or intercultural citizenship (the two terms will be used synonymously here). For example, in the strategy documents of the first author's university, developing "graduates who are confident global citizens" is prominently featured. However, the notion of intercultural citizenship is not unproblematic. There are neoliberal conceptions related to networks and gains for globally connected elites and contrasting notions related to social justice and engagement across diverse social groupings (Aktas et al. 2017; De Costa 2016; De Costa et al. 2021). Intercultural citizenship can also be given diverse interpretations in different national and educational settings and by different stakeholders (see Han et al. [2017] in China and (Sharkey 2018) in the US). Nonetheless, within education there has been a shared interest in intercultural citizenship as a way to take the notion of community connections and responsibilities from citizenship and expand it beyond the nation, in recognition of globally connected societies. Thus, intercultural citizens are aware of the global scale of social relations, respect and value diversity across borders and participate in and are responsible to communities from the local, to the national and the global (Gaudelli 2016). This conceptualisation of intercultural citizenship seems especially relevant at the time of writing this in the Covid-19 pandemic in which the links between community responsibility, national borders and global connections are particularly evident. Under this conception, intercultural citizenship education is proposed as a core aim across the curriculum since globalisation influences all aspects and subjects of education (Gaudelli 2016; Killick 2013).

While relevant to all education, second/additional language teaching is particularly suitable as a setting to introduce global or intercultural citizenship education due to its focus on 'other' cultures, international connections and intercultural communication (Byram et al. 2017; Porto et al. 2018). A central strand in intercultural citizenship education and language teaching is engagement in intercultural communities and experiences, which results in change in the individual and their relationships to 'others', leading to positive action. Thus, intercultural citizenship education involves going beyond raising awareness, as in intercultural communicative competence and awareness (although this is still important), and encompasses action on the part of students to engage in multicultural communities. This perspective on language education is, we suggest, especially relevant to ELT given the global scale of English learning and its use for intercultural and transcultural communication across the boundaries between nations, languages and cultures (Baker 2015). Furthermore, the extensive use of

English in international HE and EMI makes intercultural citizenship a pertinent issue for ELT and EAP programmes that prepare and support students for SA.

Turning to the ‘English’ used in EMI, because of the diversity of EMI settings and participants, the use of English is likely to be as varied as its settings and users. However, as comparative studies of EMI have shown (Baker and Hüttner 2019; Jenkins and Mauranen 2019), awareness of variability and multilingualism is minimal, even among staff and students who engage in multilingual uses of English. In terms of language policies of EMI, English is often taken for granted as representing an Anglophone native standard without recognising the complicated and dynamic English use in reality. Nonetheless, there is increasing agreement in research that the English in EMI is English as an academic lingua franca (ELFA) used alongside other languages in multilingual settings (Jenkins and Mauranen 2019). Such English use is characterised by variability, adaptability and translanguaging, rather than conformity to a single ‘standard’ or Anglophone variety (Fang and Liu 2020). Again, given the role ELT plays in preparing for and supporting students during EMI programmes, issues around ‘standard’ English, ELFA, multilingualism and translanguaging are crucial.

In sum, the expansion of internationalisation and EMI programmes in HE, which typically involve extensive multilingualism and intercultural communication, brings linguistic and cultural issues to the fore. These issues need to be incorporated into educational goals and practices, with ELT and EAP being well-situated as the space to do this. We propose that intercultural citizenship education and ELF perspectives offer two potentially relevant approaches to enable ELT to fulfil this aim. However, at present there are few empirical or conceptual studies addressing these issues. In the following section, we provide a brief overview of key findings from recent research into intercultural citizenship, EMI, ELF and ELT. These serve as examples of the small but growing number of studies in this area (Byram et al. 2017; De Costa 2016; Porto et al. 2018) and also, crucially, through their interest in English, as the basis for potential pedagogic implications for ELT and EAP.

### **3 Two studies of intercultural citizenship and English language use and teaching**

The studies reported on here (Baker and Fang 2019; Fang and Baker 2018) were conducted among Chinese students in a provincial key university located in southeast China and a large international university in the UK. These settings and

participants were particularly relevant to understanding the internationalisation of HE since Chinese students form the largest group of international students worldwide, and the UK has been at the forefront of international HE (OECD 2014). Data was collected before, during and after SA, primarily through qualitative methods involving interviews and focus groups but also supported by a questionnaire in the second study (Baker and Fang 2019). There were 43 participants for the interviews and focus groups, with 223 questionnaire respondents across a wide range of subjects and levels, from undergraduate to PhD. Both studies were focused on four areas: participants' understanding of intercultural citizenship; the influence of SA on their development of intercultural citizenship; the relationship between English, other languages and intercultural citizenship; and the role of ELT in preparing and supporting participants for SA and intercultural citizenship development. A number of key findings were shared across both studies.

Firstly, the majority of students expressed positive attitudes to intercultural citizenship, feeling it was a worthwhile notion, an identity they would like to develop, and something that should be part of their education. However, understanding of the concept was quite mixed, often at a superficial level and focused on essentialised national level conceptualisations of culture, language and identity. Nonetheless, students were frequently able to discuss intercultural citizenship in relation to experiences of other cultures and countries, as well as their ability to use English, and less frequently other languages, for intercultural communication as part of a globally connected community.

Secondly, for many participants their experiences of SA in EMI settings led to some degree of development of intercultural citizenship and there was greater awareness and identification among students who had experience of SA than those without. Participants often reported feeling they had changed as a person, becoming more aware of diversity and more 'open-minded' as a result of their experiences of intercultural interactions while living in international environments. Many students were members of a variety of social groups both within and outside their universities, such as study groups, social and sports clubs, religious groups and volunteer work. These groups were frequently multilingual and multicultural. However, the development of intercultural citizenship was not the same for all participants. While some students experienced deep changes, for others essentialist and stereotyped views of cultures and communities remained. A number of participants expressed frustration at the lack of opportunities for intercultural interactions, often due to the large number of other Chinese international students. For a small number of students, intercultural citizenship was not viewed as relevant as their interest was solely in gaining academic knowledge to make use of in future careers back in China. Most concerning from an educational perspective was that for a few of the participants their SA experiences led to a rejection of intercultural citizenship, even when they initially had positive

attitudes. The reasons for this included negative impressions of intercultural interactions, other cultures and multicultural environments, and feeling that their ‘Chinese’ identity was under threat.

Thirdly, there was a clear link between English and intercultural citizenship for a number of students, with some even treating the two as synonymous (i.e. proficiency in English was equated with being an intercultural citizen). This was typically due to viewing English as the *de facto* language for intercultural communication and connections. For a minority of students this also extended to other languages and multilingualism. Students generally reported being satisfied with their proficiency in English for studying; however, many felt it could be ‘improved’ further due to a desire for ‘native-like’ English. Students frequently measured their own English use with this unrealistic and unnecessary model of idealised ‘native’ English, often reinforced through the language ideologies underpinning EMI and ELT practices, with the inevitable negative influence on their confidence in communicating (Jenkins and Mauranen 2019).

The final theme that emerged was that participants’ awareness and development of intercultural citizenship was not the result of formal education. No students reported any intercultural citizenship education; although, there were some ad hoc and optional experiences of intercultural communication courses. The majority of preparation and support for SA and EMI was through ELT and EAP courses which focused on IELTS before and general academic English skills during their SA experiences. Subsequently most students felt that they were not well prepared for the intercultural aspects of international HE and any development was a result of their own efforts beyond the classroom. However, students expressed a desire to have aspects of intercultural citizenship education incorporated into general education and language education, especially for students who planned to study abroad.

## 4 Pedagogic implications

Following earlier research demonstrating that without educational intervention experiences of SA do not necessarily result in positive attitudes to other cultures (Jackson 2012), we argue that a lack of formal education can be seen as a major cause for the uneven development of intercultural citizenship reported in these studies. Given the desire of many students to incorporate intercultural citizenship education into their SA experience, this is a missed opportunity on the part of both universities and ELT educators. Although intercultural citizenship should be part of the whole curriculum for international HE, as previously discussed, language

teaching provides an ideal site for the implementation of intercultural citizenship education. This is particularly relevant to ELT and EAP given its role in preparation and support for international study and EMI programmes. Based on the four key findings described above we make the following suggestions for ELT and EAP pedagogy.

As regards the first and final findings concerning the need for a greater understanding of intercultural citizenship and the wishes of students to include this in their language education, we believe that intercultural citizenship education should form an important strand of ELT programmes aiming to prepare learners for SA and EMI. This should include preparation courses, including as part of pre-sessional programmes, focusing on the intercultural aspects of SA including intercultural communication skills, knowledge and attitudes (Baker 2015; Crowther and De Costa 2017). However, this must go beyond preparation alone, as intercultural citizenship takes time to develop and students need space for reflection on intercultural experiences. Therefore, intercultural citizenship education should be incorporated in SA preparation, with provision made for support during SA and also reflection after SA. Research on how this might best be done is beginning to emerge (Byram et al. 2017; Porto et al. 2018), and there is a long history of SA research emphasising the importance of the intercultural dimension in education (Jackson 2012). Yet currently, intercultural citizenship remains an under-researched area in ELT and SA.

In relation to finding two, and particularly the lack of opportunities for intercultural communication and wider community interaction, the ELT and EAP classroom can provide a number of ways to address this. One well-documented approach is through online, or teletandem, intercultural exchanges with language learners in other parts of the world (O'Dowd 2011) as preparation before SA. Another approach is intercultural group work projects involving mini-ethnographies exploring linguistic cultural complexity in local communities (Byram et al. 2017; Porto et al. 2018) which can be used both in preparation and during SA. Significantly, these go beyond just raising awareness of intercultural issues and meet the aims of intercultural citizenship education through engaging learners in direct action with 'others' and 'other' communities. Additionally, it is important that universities encourage multilingual and multicultural group work across the curriculum, and the ELT and EAP classroom can be one place where students are prepared for this (Spencer-Oatey and Dauber 2017).

In answer to finding three regarding the role of language and English in intercultural citizenship, the ELT and EAP classroom is clearly of high relevance. A critical approach to language that challenges native speakerism and



monolingual standard language norms (e.g. Cogo et al. 2021; Dewey 2015) should be adopted where it is recognised that international HE and EMI programmes are multilingual settings in which English operates alongside other languages. Furthermore, the use of English is likely to be as an academic lingua franca (ELFA) where variability and adaptability are crucial for successful communication (Jenkins and Mauranen 2019). Moreover, as documented in recent EMI and international HE studies (e.g. De Costa et al. 2021; Tsou and Baker 2021), translanguaging is likely to be a common phenomenon with potentially beneficial pedagogic practices that open up spaces for learners to use all of their linguistic resources. ELT, including EAP and pre-sessional programmes, need to prepare learners for this multilingual and dynamic approach to using English (Dewey 2021). Importantly, this also has significant implications for the relevance of monolingual native speaker orientated entrance exams, such as IELTS and TOEFL, questioning their validity as a measure of students' linguistic proficiency (Brown 2019; Jenkins and Leung 2019).

As such the perspectives on ELT outlined in ELF pedagogic research are highly salient (e.g. Bayyurt and Akcan 2015; Bayyurt and Dewey 2020; Bowles and Cogo 2015; Cogo et al. 2021; Crowther and De Costa 2017; De Costa 2016; Dewey 2012, 2015; Galloway and Rose 2018; Sifakis et al. 2018). These include exposing learners to different varieties and variable uses of English, engaging learners in discussions of who 'owns' English and what constitutes 'proficient' English use and providing opportunities for learners to use English, and other linguistic resources, in a variable and adaptable manner. Many of these ideas are drawn together through pedagogic perspectives such as post normative approaches (Dewey 2012), ELF awareness (Bayyurt and Sifakis 2015; Sifakis 2019) and, most recently, English as a multilingual franca (EMF) awareness and transcultural ELT, which combines multilingual, transmodal and transcultural perspectives (Ishikawa 2020; Baker and Ishikawa 2021). We would also give learners space to consider the links between language learning/use, intercultural connections and their identification with intercultural citizenship, as well as a move away from potentially negative 'native speaker' orientations. Furthermore, if teachers are expected to integrate intercultural citizenship and a critical ELF-aware approach to language into their practices, then it must be part of teacher education (Bayyurt and Sifakis 2015; Bayyurt and Dewey 2020; Dewey 2012, 2021). This also provides teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their own use of English and their development of an intercultural identity, thus following ELF perspectives in offering an empowering alternative to the much-criticised model of the idealised native English speaker as teacher.

## 5 Conclusion

In this paper we have argued for the necessity of incorporating intercultural citizenship into education in general and specifically ELT and EAP in preparation and support for students' experiences of studying at international universities and in EMI programmes. While the focus here has been on ELT, it is important to stress that intercultural citizenship education is not just for international students but for all students at international universities and it must be implemented across the curriculum. Nonetheless, ELT can be a core part of this and is an ideal setting to introduce intercultural citizenship education due to its focus on 'other' cultures and intercultural communication. Research has shown intercultural citizenship to be a relevant concept to students and a desirable aspect of their educational experience. However, more research is needed in this area and the pedagogic implications of this require further exploration, particularly from classroom-based studies. We believe that intercultural citizenship education combined with ELF approaches to ELT are a salient avenue to explore due to their potential to equip learners and teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to meaningfully engage in the complex multilingual and multicultural settings of EMI programmes and international universities.

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