Chapter 9
How Critical Has Intercultural Learning and Teaching Become? A Diachronic and Synchronic View of "Critical Cultural Awareness" in Language Education

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9.1 Introduction

This chapter has the wider aim of introducing new debates on "critical cultural awareness" in intercultural learning and teaching. Among those debates, there will be a discussion on the indiscriminate use of terminologies related to the idea of "intercultural encounters" within the scope of a critical pedagogy and a discussion on the limits of the concept of intercultural competence. This chapter then undertakes a diachronic comparative analysis of two studies investigating secondary-level English language teachers in Portugal, the former by Guilherme (2000a) and the latter in Japan by Sawyer (2013), which replicated some aspects of the first study. The chapter will also feature a synchronic analysis between the Portuguese data and some new corresponding data from Japanese teachers of English. In these contexts, the primary aim of these studies is to reveal the orientations of teachers toward promoting "critical cultural awareness" among their students. More specifically, it assesses the teachers' general view of the role of culture in the L2 classroom, their understandings of a critical approach to culture, and various facets of their implementation of this approach. Additionally, the chapter will also briefly refer to two other projects, one on the intercultural dimension of citizenship education carried out with secondary school teachers of various subjects in Portugal and the other about English teaching and learning in higher education in Brazil. The case studies mentioned above have different levels of contextual representativeness, although

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none is nationally representative. Nevertheless, they may contribute to conceptual and practical reflection on the criticality of intercultural learning and teaching.

9.2 Literature Review: Theoretical Considerations for Foreign Language Education

9.2.1 The Incompleteness of the Concept of Intercultural Competence

Toward equipping young students and adult citizens for leading their lives in increasingly diverse societies and as mobile citizens in a globalizing world, academics and policy-makers have proposed many terms, definitions and descriptions, and usable models to fit the development of the most needed capacities. Unfortunately, they are often handled as if they were understood in consensual ways by everyone in whichever position or of whichever origin, and the term intercultural competence (IC) is no exception. Byram (2013) is explicit in countering this view: "'Intercultural competence' is a phrase best used when describing a person's abilities in context." In addition, Guilherme's (2000b–2013) attempts to define it, over a span of 13 years (Byram, 2000; Byram & Hu, 2013), well express that, in her view, no matter how condensed definitions should be for encyclopedia readers, the more researchers dig into this area, the more complexity they find. Despite attempts to provide practitioners with hands-on models that compartmentalize and organize elements assumed to foster IC, misunderstandings, doubts, and, above all, misleading certainties remain. Not every methodology, pedagogy, policy, or philosophy suits IC or vice versa. Among the best attempts to provide clarification, critique and proposals are some that have appeared in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning* (Byram [Ed.], 2000; Byram & Hu [Eds.], 2013), *The SAGE handbook of Intercultural Competence* (Deardorff [Ed.], 2009a), and *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence* (Bennett [Ed.], 2015).

In the former, the first edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*, IC was briefly defined as "...the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognize as different from our own" (Guilherme, 2000b, p. 297), while in the second edition, the same author reformulated the definition into a "general capacity...[that] combines notions of communication and interaction across languages and cultures by focusing on the readiness to establish fluid relationships at the interstices of different and multiply-determined identities whilst having a purpose or task in mind" (Guilherme, 2013, p. 346). There is almost a world between them, not that they are incompatible but that the latter expands the former exponentially and eventually leads the idea of intercultural competencies into the concept of "intercultural responsibility," aiming to "grasp the sociological, political and ethical intersections of a critical cosmopolitan society" (Guilherme, 2013, p. 349). Intercultural responsibility moves beyond

the functionality of IC into the need of including language education into a larger scope of critical cosmopolitan citizenship education. A fundamental element that pushes IC into intercultural responsibility is *critical cultural awareness*. While Byram (1997) introduced this concept, also labeled "*savoir s'engager,*" among other "savoirs" for the *bildung* of "intercultural communicative competence," Guilherme (2000a, 2002) posited a more central role for "critical cultural awareness." Not that the other "savoirs" should be discarded but that, while focusing on intercultural communication and interaction, the development of "critical cultural awareness" is paramount in order to explore IC's intercultural component, which indeed means to get down to the "nitty gritty" of this issue, to be discussed below.

Regarding both *the intercultural* and the *competence* of IC, *The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence* (Deardorff [Ed.], 2009a) includes several theoretical reflections based on empirical studies raising important issues on both concepts. Although competence seems to be the one term calling for more "objectivity," in the scientific sense, Spitzberg and Chagnon (2009) appropriately highlight that "no particular skill or ability is likely to ever be universally 'competent'" (p. 6), especially when dealing with difference in relation. As far as the concept *intercultural* is concerned, most authors in this book add elements in order to disentangle its intricacy, although it remains dense and perplexing largely due to its deep historical and cultural backgrounds, which also bring more variety and richness to the concept. Kim (2009) concentrates on the "identity factor in IC," by combining the individual and the collective dimensions, and defines ". . .intercultural competence as an individual's overall capacity to engage in behaviors and activities that foster cooperative relationships. . ." (pp. 61–62). In this same collection, well-known scholars in the field single out and examine different elements such as "the implications of trust in intercultural competence" within "the notion of a moral circle as key to intercultural competence" (Hofstede, 2009, pp. 96–98) and "intercultural conflict competence" for which "mindfulness" is a main component, according to Ting-Toomey (2009), which "means attending to one's internal communication assumptions, cognitions, and emotions" (pp. 103–104). In addition, Bennett (2009) brings in the idea of IC as a "positioning tool" through which we find some orientation "at the *interface*" between "differing culture maps" (p. 126).

The authors above have managed to push the concept of IC beyond a mere functional tool to deal with difference in such a way that the term itself now falls short of the needs of its own meaning. Therefore, it is not by coincidence that the *SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence* (Bennett [Ed.], 2015) includes entries such as cosmopolitanism, social responsibility, critical theory, and critical pedagogy, as *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* (Chapelle [Ed.], 2013) also includes an entry on critical pedagogy.

In step with the researchers cited above, language teachers around the world have become more deeply aware that their students' future success in communication with cultural others depends on much more than functional language proficiency. In consequence, those teachers begin to search more earnestly for theoretical frameworks and pedagogical suggestions for understanding and promoting IC. Recently, such frameworks and suggestions have proliferated, providing an abundance,

perhaps overabundance, of attractive ideas; some examples were presented above. There are at least three important issues that have added to teachers' confusion in trying to provide the most useful curriculum for their students. The first is that in the search for what constitutes IC and how it can best be fostered, many researchers have used terminology without sufficient care to how it relates to other researchers' work. Therefore, it is not uncommon for different researchers to use the same terms for different concepts and different words for the same concepts. Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe (2007), Deardorff (2009b), and most recently, Guilherme and Dietz (2015) are among the scholars who are making efforts to clarify the similarities and differences among proposals regarding IC and the concept of interculturality. Guilherme and Dietz (2015) expand previous work (e.g., Dietz & Mateos Cortés, 2012; Guilherme, 2014; Mateos Cortés, 2009; Medina-López-Portillo & Sinningen, 2009) on the meanings of interculturality. The word *intercultural*, academically speaking, is recent and generally traced back to Hall's (1959) work on intercultural relations in the 1950s. However, the EC-funded project "INTERACT: The intercultural dimension of citizenship education" (http://www.ces.uc.pt/interact/documents/final_activity_report.pdf) showed that as late as the early 2000s, the word was virtually unknown to secondary school teachers in England and Denmark who were involved in a citizenship education and project. While they preferred the word *multicultural,* their peers in Portugal and Spain were well familiar with *intercultural*. In fact, the term *intercultural* corresponds to a different idea of social diversity structure, familiar in the Portuguese/Spanish languages and originating in colonial matrices different from that of England, based as they were in miscegenation and hybridization rather than segregation. Therefore, the fact that *interculturality* in English is much less clear than *multiculturalism* results from the lack of ontological, epistemological, and sociopolitical roots of *interculturalidad(e)* such as those present in Portuguese and Spanish.

A second issue, also highlighted by Deardorff (2009b), is that there is not likely to be any single model of IC that can respond adequately and equally to every intercultural situation. This means, for example, that foreign language teachers either in Portugal, Brazil, or Japan may rightly choose different models of IC and pedagogical means to develop it. Although scholarship in IC has been dominated by northern European and North American approaches, successful intercultural communication involving people from the "South" or "East" will clearly need to be informed by perspectives from these areas. In a very useful discussion focusing on IC in Asia, Parmenter (2003) pointed out how cultural differences in viewing basic identity, and the importance of considering relationships, roles, and face in most interactions, present severe challenges for a universal model of IC. On a view from the South, the curriculum development analysis undertaken by Guilherme in three federal universities in Brazil (http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/glocademics/), with respect to English, Portuguese, and Spanish undergraduate education (Guilherme, 2019), gives abundant evidence of a critical and postcolonial approach to language education, although a neoliberal, hegemonic, and acritical version of English as lingua franca is still prevalent. Although English as lingua franca assumes that it is giving voice to non-native speakers, it bases its arguments on a native-speakerism

that is outdated, fictional, and still considered as central; that is, the issue is wrongly put and constructed upon scientifically fragile foundations. However, this discussion shall not be included here. On the theoretical support for such postcolonial approaches, it is fundamental to give account of Santos' (1999, 2010, 2014) work, considered as a main reference in Brazil.

A third issue is the adequacy of IC as the ultimate goal of foreign language education. Just as foreign language teachers came to question the adequacy of communicative competence as the goal of language teaching in the 1990s, many teachers in the twenty-first century have likewise come to view IC as a too limited goal. Many conceptions of IC bear some resemblance to that of Spitzberg and Chagnon's (2009, p. 7) concept, which refers to "the effective and appropriate management of interaction between people who, to some degree, represent divergent affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations to the world." While effective and appropriate communication with perceived others is clearly a worthy goal of foreign language education, it fails to make reference to the critical development of relationships much less the cooperative working together toward a society that is more just and respectful to diversity. Thus, Byram and colleagues (e.g., Alred, Byram, & Fleming, 2006; Sawyer, 2014a, b) have been working on a higher-level goal of intercultural citizenship, while Guilherme (e.g., 2013) has been developing the concept of intercultural responsibility, which expands the concept of intercultural competence, as mentioned above (Guilherme, 2012a, 2012b; Guilherme, Keating, & Hoppe, 2010).

9.2.2   More Than Ever, a Pressing Need to Get Back to "Critical Cultural Awareness"

Considering the three issues above, the research reported in this chapter focuses on the mid-level concept of "critical cultural awareness." As will be shown below, it is definitionally precise, theoretically grounded, pedagogically practical, and eminently worthwhile as a goal for self- and societal improvement.

Critical cultural awareness (CCA) is a concept first introduced by Byram (1997) who defined it as "an ability to evaluate critically on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices, and products of one's own and other cultures and countries" (p. 53). He, at first, equated it with *savoir de engager*, one of the five *savoirs* that comprise his model of intercultural communicative competence. However, CCA is related to but transcends intercultural communicative competence because, for one thing, it involves rethinking and reexperiencing the concept of cultural identity itself. When students examine deeply their own multiple cultural identities, as well as the multiple cultural identities of members of other cultural groups with whom they have an opportunity or need to relate, they are able to understand, and eventually to feel, not only the overlap of identities between themselves and other groups but also the non-unitary, non-fixed nature of identity. The flexibility and openness to additional

identities that result make it possible to feel real membership in diverse multicultural working groups, which have been normal in many parts of the world for a long time but until recently unusual in some other parts. Education for CCA involves helping students reach the point of appreciating deeply that all cultures and people are not separate, but interrelated, and not static, but constantly changing. With such an appreciation, a student is prepared to live and work comfortably with diverse groups of people and can get things done by working and negotiating skillfully and democratically with diverse others whose ideas, judgments, and values will certainly clash on many occasions.

The need to "evaluate critically" in Byram's (1997) definition of CCA is not so much to express criticism as it is to bring unconscious assumptions to the level of awareness, that is, to ask oneself "why?" about things that one has previously taken for granted. At the most basic level, this involves fundamental questions to oneself about how one's identities, values, and practices have developed (reflection), as well as curiosity, speculation, and inquiry about the corresponding items for cultural others (exploration). This process not only makes visible areas of commonality with diverse others but also allows deeper understanding of the nature of conflicts when they occur. Byram's specification of "explicit criteria" for evaluation allows the transcendence of a general disapproval of and/or unexamined annoyance with cultural others' statements, positions, approaches, practices, etc. Equally important, it gives multicultural group members the ability to pinpoint and articulate difference, such that conflicts can more likely be resolved with minimum misunderstanding, wasted time, and negative emotion.

Based on Byram's lead, Guilherme's (2002) definition of CCA is as follows: "A reflective, exploratory, dialogical, and active stance toward cultural knowledge and life that allows for dissonance, contradiction, and conflict as well as for consensus, concurrence, and transformation. It is a cognitive and emotional endeavor that aims at individual and collective emancipation, social justice, and political commitment" (p. 219). She completes the definition by adding that its development is cyclical rather than linear. She also later proposes specific cognitive/affective operations that can drive the cycle forward.

There is nothing in Guilherme's (2002) definition contradictory to the one of Byram (1997). However, there are at least two important differences. Firstly, Guilherme's definition is more specific in implicating classroom practices that will actually foster CCA. For example, whereas Byram (1997) suggests "an ability to evaluate critically," Guilherme specifies more particular qualities and actions that will lead to that ability, that is, reflection, exploration, dialogue, and proactiveness. She also warns that the process will necessarily involve some discomfort, in the form of dissonance, contradiction, and conflict, along with the hoped-for consensus, concurrence, and transformation. She makes it explicit that developing CCA is not solely a cognitive endeavor but also involves emotions, as indicated by the inclusion of dissonance, etc., in her articulation of the appropriate aims of CCA. She also shows its connection with responsible democratic citizenship, whether at local, national, or supranational levels. Keeping these elements in mind, ways to work toward CCA with adjustments to already existing classroom practices become

readily apparent. Moreover, though Guilherme's (2002) intended domain is foreign language education, the components can serve as a potential template for all forms of citizenship education.

A second difference that distinguishes Guilherme's (2002) elaboration of CCA from Byram's (1997) definition is its groundedness in philosophy and political theory. Although Byram's discussions of his axiological model make reference to its political nature, Guilherme (2000a) goes much further in showing how her model of CCA is derived from and supported by several solid foundations of theory. The most pervasive influence is the critical pedagogy of Freire (1970) and his successors such as Giroux (1997). As philosophical underpinnings of CCA, Guilherme also draws on the Frankfurt School scholars of critical theory (Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse), Habermas, and the postmodern theorists Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, and Baudrillard. In applying critical pedagogy to foreign language education, she connects her ideas not only to the approaches to intercultural communicative competence of Byram (1997) and Kramsch (1993) but also to the postcolonial language education suggestions of Pennycook (1994) and Canagarajah (2013), among others, and the progressive curriculum documents *The Common European Framework for Languages* (Council of Europe, 1996) and *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1996). In developing her ideas on CCA since 2000, Santos's (2014) theory of the epistemologies of the South has provided productive interconnections, as have the work of scholars such Mignolo, Walsh, Canclini, and Bhabha, among others.

The above discussion has hopefully shown that CCA is a compellingly worthwhile goal for students of foreign languages in the twenty-first century, which is both theoretically sound and pedagogically practical. Although alternative proposals with overlapping aims and/or content have proliferated in recent years, none have surpassed CCA in preparing students with personal and societal visions for thriving in the conflicted but promising intercultural world. The insightful vision of Byram provided the foundation to language/culture educators to the end of the past century and inspired additional work by the beginning of this century. The apparent slowing down of such an emancipatory energy has to some extent eclipsed the concept of CCA, unfortunately pervading global educational systems with what Phipps (2010) calls "quick fix solutions." In an indispensable text about the risks involved in intercultural education and training, Phipps (2010) elaborates:

> intercultural encounter is a volatile, tricky and messy process which, like the learning of other languages to which it is inherently allied, changes the bedrock of the self and of self-understanding. In such a context there is no room for an immediately "satisfying" critical outcome, other than a performance of critical transformation in stated understandings about difference and culture and "the way things are always going to be." (p. 64)

Generating CCA in language/culture education is clearly challenging; therefore, it may be tempting to avoid the challenge, settling for more superficial and easily affordable goals. However, this is exactly the reason why maintaining the focus is essential until achieving the *inédito viável* proposed by Freire (1970), a concept which is as difficult to translate into English as *saudade* or *interculturalidade*. 'The

feasible unknown' may capture it best, although Freire's translator Myra Ramas translated it as "untested feasibility" (Freire, 1993, p. 75) which is close. Nevertheless, Freire's (1970) work provides us with ample clarification of what he meant, for example, "*Consciousness of* and *action* upon reality are, therefore, inseparable constituents of the transforming act by which men become beings of relation" (Freire, 1970, p. 453). Phipps' (2010) quote above is highly consonant with Freire's (1970) idea, and together, they reinforce the need for not settling for less than CCA.

In focusing on CCA in foreign language education, it is clear that there is good conceptual and theoretical justification. The following sections will examine empirically the extent to which teachers in Portugal and Japan are also in agreement with this focus.

9.3   Methodology

The data on which this chapter is based comes from the following sources: (1) Guilherme's (2000a) empirical study with secondary school teachers of English in various regions of continental Portugal carried out for her PhD dissertation at the University of Durham[1] and is also inspired by two of her subsequent international research projects, namely, INTERACT (2004–2007)[2] on the intercultural dimension of citizenship education, also with secondary school teachers of diverse subjects and in different regions of continental Portugal (https://www.ces.uc.pt/interact/index.htm), and her just-completed study, at a few Brazilian public universities, about English curriculum development in higher education, within the scope of her Marie Skłodowska Curie project GLOCADEMICS (http://www.ces.uc.pt/projectos/glocademics/)[3], both funded by the European Commission; (2) Sawyer's (2013) follow-up study of Portuguese teachers of English; and (3) his extension/replication of the research agenda to Japanese teachers of English. Each of the three sets of data will be described in the section below.

9.3.1   Guilherme's (2000a) Dissertation

9.3.1.1   Aim of the Study

This study aimed to find out if, why, and how Portuguese teachers of English approach culture critically, how they define critical cultural awareness, and what sort of development models would help them improve their professional performance.

9.3.1.2   Data Collection Tools

The data consist of both questionnaire responses for quantitative analysis and transcribed focus group interviews as well as a few individual interviews for qualitative analysis. The questionnaire consists of six sections totaling 63 questions with predetermined alternatives.

9.3.1.3   Participants

The questionnaire was completed by 149 participants. The focus groups took place at seven schools, each with five to eight participants, and were the main and an especially valuable source of data due to the synergy and spontaneity that this methodology afforded the groups of participants. Additional data came from interviews with a Ministry of Education administrator, an English textbook author, and one of the authors of the national syllabus for foreign language teaching.

9.3.1.4   Data Analysis

In this chapter, the data are reanalyzed according to four categories: (1) the role of culture in foreign language education, (2) conceptions of critical cultural awareness, (3) student responses to critical culture in the classroom, and (4) experience and action in developing critical cultural awareness.

9.3.2   Sawyer's (2013) Follow-up Data Collection in Portugal

9.3.2.1   Aim of the Study

This study revisited the aims of Guilherme's (2000a) project but with a complementary methodology, and an eye to a diachronic comparison, to discover what, if anything, had changed in the intervening years.

9.3.2.2 Data Collection Tools

Individual interviews were conducted with a protocol consisting of 15 questions. The questions were developed jointly with the first author in an attempt to match the aims and scope of the earlier study. The interviews were between 45 minutes and 1 hour in length and were conducted in English, recorded, and transcribed. Although conducting the interviews in the participants' second language could potentially be a limitation, it turned out that without exception, the teachers were enthusiastic about having an opportunity to discuss their English teaching beliefs and practices in English. In that sense, the mood created was especially conducive to obtaining interesting material, parallel to the advantages that Alasuutari (1995) argues for focus groups.

9.3.2.3 Participants

Twelve Portuguese secondary teachers of English (seven in Lisbon, two in Oporto, and one in Setúbal) were invited to participate in the interviews. Two of the interviewees had participated in the previous study focus group interviews.

9.3.2.4 Data Analysis

The present chapter features the analyses of 10 of the 15 questions, those that bear specifically on the four categories mentioned above: (1) the role of culture in foreign language education, (2) conceptions of critical cultural awareness, (3) student responses to critical culture in the classroom, and (4) experience and action in developing critical cultural awareness.

9.3.3 Sawyer's (2016–2019) Ongoing Data Collection in Japan

9.3.3.1 Aim of the Study

This study's aim was to assess the orientation and level of awareness toward critical cultural awareness in Japan for the purpose of a synchronic comparison between teachers in very different geographical and cultural contexts.

9.3.3.2 Data Collection Tools

The data collection consisted of the exact same interview protocol of 15 questions that was specified in 3.2.2 above.

9.3.3.3 Participants

Four teachers have been interviewed so far (two in Osaka, two in Kobe). Although the number of informants is still small, the Japanese teachers have been equally as enthusiastic about sharing their beliefs and practices as the Portuguese teachers, and several interesting systematic differences with the Portuguese teachers are already evident.

9.3.3.4 Data Analysis

As specified in 3.2.4 above, the present chapter features the analyses of 10 of the 15 questions, those that bear specifically on the four categories mentioned above: (1) the role of culture in foreign language education, (2) conceptions of critical cultural awareness, (3) student responses to critical culture in the classroom, and (4) experience and action in developing critical cultural awareness. A different part of the comparative interview analysis, outside of the four categories analyzed for this chapter, can be found in Sawyer and Matos (2015).

9.4 Transversal Data Analysis Results

9.4.1 The Role of Culture in Foreign Language Education

Times were still special in Portugal when the first study was carried out with secondary school teachers of English in Guilherme's study (2000a). It was 25 years after the military coup. The democratic state was becoming stable, but the democratic society was still vibrant. Massification of all levels of education was at full speed, and school population diversity had grown exponentially with immigrants from Africa, East Timor, China, and eastern European countries. English had definitely replaced French supremacy, and above all, Portugal had recently joined the European Union and had just been one of the first to enthusiastically endorse the euro. Democracy, critique, debate, and citizenship were keywords in the massive teacher development programs. The Portuguese Ministry of Education had issued new national subject curricula following recommendations and joining projects emanating from the European Commission and the Council of Europe. In the following decades, the steam could not but lose pressure, but here is the context from where this diachronic and synchronic narrative begins.

In the English national syllabus in place when Guilherme's (2000a) study was carried out, a critical approach was a dominant perspective in the cultural component, and it also pervaded the sociolinguistic component, already inspired in the preparation activities of the Common European Framework for Languages. The national syllabus was one of the outcomes of a nationwide teacher trainer

development program, coordinated by the Ministry of Education, which was based on authentic materials and innovative and critical development. Guilherme was one of the participants along with all the syllabus authors. One of the syllabus authors explained:

> E, portanto, nós tentámos dar, de facto, um enfoque muito grande para que os professores percebessem que a aula de língua estrangeira, neste caso o Inglês, para já não é uma entidade franca, quando estás a estudar uma língua estás a estudar uma cultura, ela transmite padrões culturais... (And, therefore, we actually tried to put a strong focus on the need for teachers to understand that in a foreign language class, in this case it is English which is not a franca entity in itself, when you are learning a language you are studying a culture, it conveys cultural patterns).

This message echoed the enthusiastic endorsement of the teachers participating in Guilherme's (2000a) data collection. That is, they did not view English as a lingua franca, and they understood their mission as teaching a dominant language that, at the same time, provided a vehicle for the opening up of cultural identities, international experience, and knowledge acquisition, and therefore deserved being handled in a way that developed the qualities of CCA. In sum, Portuguese teachers believed that they were forming active European citizens who were critically aware of the different dimensions of their citizenship commitment, not only Portuguese and European but also regional (both Iberian and intranational), global (mainly lusophone [Portuguese-speaking]), local, and their various mixed individual identities.

Quantitative data displayed that a great majority of respondents agreed with the view that "European and global identities of the pupil/citizen should be fostered in foreign language/culture classes" (85.2%) and that "learning about a foreign culture can change the pupil's attitude towards [their] own culture" (84.7%) but not at the cost of the students' loss of cultural identity. They also agreed that "the most important goal in learning about a foreign culture is to develop a critical attitude towards both target and native cultures" (70.5%).

The Ministry of Education administrator interviewed focused particularly on the importance of learning foreign languages/cultures, especially English, for enabling one to fulfil membership of European and global spheres. From the administrator's point of view, English teaching was at a crossroads because, on the one hand, it had become a language for global communication, "*Inglês para a comunicação global,*" and for global knowledge, "*língua de conhecimento global,*" but, on the other hand, it is not a lingua franca in its exact terms because it is always conveying some kind of culture. Therefore, it can be used as a means of communication among diverse so-called native speakers, who may be culturally very different, between so-called native speakers and so-called non-native speakers, and among so-called non-native speakers. Because language always carries culture with it, each situation implies complexity and negotiation. If you are a so-called non-native speaker, you have to "*exprimir a tua própria cultura noutra língua*" (express your own culture in another language) and, moreover, "*com os falantes nativos tem que ser negociado*" (it has to be negotiated with the so-called native speakers) wherever they come from, whether it be Scotland, New Zealand, or South Africa.

Most participants shared the fact that they sometimes included contemporary texts about Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and India, although not frequently. One, for example, was even more vehement in condemning a Westernized perspective and criticized the excessive focus of the syllabus on the United States while disregarding South Africa; for example, when dealing with racism, "*estamos a dar voz, voz, voz, a quem já fala alto*" (we are giving voice, voice, voice, to those whose voices are already loud enough) they said.

In Sawyer's (2013) follow-up with interview data of Guilherme's (2000a) dissertation study, he found that Portuguese secondary teachers of English 14 years later maintained the enthusiasm of the teachers in 1999, but not until being asked about culture directly, and then with diverse ideas of what the culture in ELT should consist of. When asked in general about their pedagogical priorities, four teachers referred to some aspect of communication and two teachers prioritized motivation and two more classroom management. Only one teacher spontaneously specified culture ("because language is culture"), and one teacher specified national/world citizenship responsibilities, which implicitly invokes the kind of critical culture that motivated this study.

When asked specifically about the appropriate role for culture in ELT, the teachers' responses diverged into five distinct categories ranging from the intrinsic inseparability of language and culture to ambivalence based on its difficulty and Portuguese students' perceived unwillingness to read. In between were three approaches invoking the cultures of native English-speaking (NES) countries: (1) how particular aspects of language encoding depend on cultures (e.g., politeness systems), (2) contrasting cultural habits (e.g., eating habits, homework, school uniforms), and (3) the experience of "high" culture associated with NES countries (e.g., in painting, music). Finally, one teacher construed culture as including the reasons for the spread of English as a global language and the features of this global variety.

Unlike the teachers in Guilherme's earlier study (2000a), the teachers in Sawyer's 2013 study did not specifically refer to the national syllabus' emphasis on cultural content. However, several mentioned both the syllabus and the prescribed textbooks in favorable terms due to their allowance for and inclusion of cultural content. On the other hand, multiple teachers criticized the cultural content in the textbooks for being out of date and cited problems associated with supplementing the textbook with handouts.

When the same questions were asked in Japan, three of the four Japanese teachers of English were less oriented toward a role for culture than were the Portuguese teachers. When first asked generally about their priorities, three answered in terms of particular skills (reading, vocabulary, and balance among the four skills, respectively) in stark contrast to the fourth, who offered "engaging students to become good language users through interculturality." When the Japanese teachers were asked specifically about culture's role, two mentioned the interest that it creates in the students, and one had trouble finding an answer but eventually hit upon the idea of enhancing comprehension by exposure to different varieties of English. The teacher who had brought up interculturality suggested the value of teachers in sharing

intercultural experiences through their own interpretations and then giving students opportunities to develop their own interpretations.

9.4.2   Conceptions of Critical Cultural Awareness

Although the Portuguese teachers in Guilherme's (2000a) study did not consider their own academic preparation in interdisciplinary terms, an idea which pervaded most focus groups was that being critical was an interdisciplinary capability, that is, which was part of the student's general education, "*faz parte do desenvolvimento global do aluno ... porque também é fundamental para a vida deles no futuro, porque se tornam cidadãos mais válidos*" (it is part of the student's global development...because it is also fundamental for their future. It makes them better citizens), as one teacher put it. Apart from a few exceptions, the definition of "critical" with respect to teaching/learning a foreign culture remained within a domain taken for granted among researchers, policy-makers, and teachers. Participants in focus group interviews did not make any reference to theoretical sources on this matter either. According to one of the authors of the syllabus, the reason why it was not included was "*porque se achou que uma posição crítica toda a gente sabe o que é*" (because we thought that everybody knew what taking a critical perspective meant).

On a superficial level, teachers' descriptions of a critical approach to foreign cultures did coincide, to some extent, in some common features such as adopting a comparative/contrasting point of view, understanding, accepting, questioning, and assuming an objective/detached view of the other. Reflecting upon and justifying one's positions were also considered important elements. The questioning stance and the political nature of teaching/learning a foreign culture generated much discussion. It was evident from the study that the participants did have ideas about the political implications of their role since approximately two-thirds of the questionnaire respondents endorsed the option put forward in the questionnaire that "having a political attitude toward the teaching about a foreign culture means establishing the relationship between its power structure and forms of cultural production" (69.9%). This was reinforced by some participants in the group discussions who clearly viewed teaching as a political act in the sense that, as one remarked, "*qualquer acto educativo é um acto político*" (any educational act is a political act). However, this seems to remain mostly in the rhetorical domain because participants did not view themselves, or their students, as politically active in any practical way other than by voting or by expressing informed opinions.

The data collected on this matter, a critical pedagogy of cultural content, can be divided into three main areas: (a) resources, both material and human; (b) the interaction among human resources, teachers and students, and the target cultures; and (c) the procedures used to teach/learn foreign cultures that best develop CCA. As far as material resources are concerned, participants in group discussions most frequently referred to the organization of schools and of the curricula. In general,

participants in group discussions revealed that the topics included in the syllabus could increase or decrease the possibility of taking a critical approach toward the target cultures. Others expressed the feeling that the informational content included in the syllabus is so dominant that it does not leave enough time to approach it critically. Finally, the fact that a critical approach had not been considered in the final/national exams was also pointed out by group participants as a major impediment for teachers to focus on the development of CCA.

Similar to the teachers studied 14 years before, the Portuguese teachers in 2013 revealed approaches reflecting their own personalities and contexts and following more the general idea of critical thinking elaborated by Bloom (1956) than the more specific ideas of criticality developed later by Freire, Giroux, Byram, etc. The responses fell into four related categories, emphasizing respectively: (1) deeper questioning (for reasons), (2) skepticism (doubting), (3) knowledge (for justifying beliefs), and (4) observation and reflection (resisting first perceptions). When asked about scholars who had shaped their views, they yielded a startling array of scholars from wide-ranging fields as well as literary figures, but in terms of scholars producing work on the culture/pedagogy interface, only the names of Raymond Williams, James Banks, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner came up once each, whereas, for example, Freire, Giroux, Byram, Kramsch, Pennycook, and Canagarajah were not mentioned at all.

The Portuguese teachers in 2013 all affirmed that they were in fact implementing their conceptions of a critical approach to culture in their ELT classrooms. One teacher lamented that adopting a critical approach was "very difficult because Portuguese students are really narrow-minded," also claiming to have always tried to provoke the students with "bizarre scenarios," to make them analyze things and develop broader minds. The rest of the teachers were unambivalent and articulate about their versions of a critical pedagogy. Most of these involved getting students to question reading materials, TV shows and movies, and stereotypes about groups and cultures, but none of them mentioned encouraging engagement beyond the classroom.

Three of the four Japanese teachers were unfamiliar with the concept of a critical approach to culture but speculated that it had to do with opening students' minds to different cultural practices while suspending judgment. The fourth (interculturality-oriented) teacher associated criticality with having students interpret cultural phenomena and connected this with the work of Pennycook and Philipson on resisting cultural invasion. While the latter teacher claimed to adopt this conception consistently in the classroom, and one more believed that he/she used a critical approach frequently in terms of showing/eliciting rationales for cultural practices different from Japanese practices, two teachers did not consciously use a critical approach at all.

9.4.3   Student Responses to Critical Culture in the Classroom

On the one hand, some of the 2000a Portuguese participants in the group discussions showed their concern about their students' attitude toward other cultures, one of them having said that "*a atitude critica deles é sempre uma atitude destrutiva em relação aos outros e sobrevalorizando a nossa cultura*" (their critical attitude is always destructive toward other cultures and overvaluing our own). On the other hand, a few teachers expressed the feeling that when stimulated, their students had a good sense of critique. "*Têm o espírito crítico bem apurado*" (they have a refined sense of critique) according to one, while another added that their students' sense of critique was even more refined than their own had been at the same age, "*eles têm um sentido crítico até mais apurado do que quando eu fiz o liceu.*" Still another pointed out that students' sense of critique is only dormant: "*A sociedade em que estamos integrados não desenvolve muito essa capacidade nos nossos alunos, eles estão um bocado adormecidos, então a escola, para mim, deve exercer essa função de fazê-los pensar sobre as coisas, serem críticos e prepará-los para o futuro*" (our society does not develop that capacity very much. They are a little half asleep so, in my view, the school should fulfil that task and make them think about things, be critical and prepare them for the future).

Participants in both phases of the study—the questionnaire and the focus group interviews—were almost unanimous in recognizing the positive outcomes of the development of CCA in foreign language/culture classes. Both the questionnaire and the focus group discussions focused on two main sets of objectives, the first with regard to the individual and the second to the society in general. However, participants revealed that they feel constrained by school organization of time and space which prevents them from opening up the foreign language/culture classroom. They also brought up the point that the contents of the syllabus are not determinant of the adoption of a critical attitude, although some topics may increase/decrease the possibility of taking a critical approach. They also downplayed the textbook role. Human resources, namely, teachers and students, were considered as highly important in determining the implementation of a critical approach. Cultures were viewed as constantly changing, and thus, up-to-date cultural knowledge was considered fundamental.

When the 2013 Portuguese teachers were asked about the indications they had that their students had increased their critical cultural awareness, they offered a variety of ways that students had demonstrated development of CCA. Even the two teachers who claimed that such evidence was difficult to detect went on to say that they could detect changes in students' attitudes in compositions or presentations. Several of the teachers claimed confidently that change was clearly evident in how students expressed themselves, and several others had received direct feedback that the students had appreciated the cultural materials and tasks that the teachers had provided. One teacher saved student tasks so that they could see for themselves the following year how their ideas and attitudes had evolved. Another teacher was able to see the enhanced CCA of the students by having them rewrite the endings of

stories they had read in class. Although all these forms of evidence do not imply that the students will apply their CCA outside the school environment, one teacher spoke about how many students, upon hearing a guest lecture about a project to redistribute wasted restaurant food, expressed eagerness to join the project as volunteers.

Associated with the indications of CCA development that the teachers observed, they perceived a range of benefits of their versions of critical culture teaching. Many teachers mentioned general developmental benefits to students, such as to "build their own personality"; "break the shell that they are in"; "think for themselves, to have their ideas, and be active in this society"; "grow a little bit psychologically and in terms of citizenship"; "get to develop a critical sense and open their minds and be more tolerant toward difference"; and "grow up and learn to respect other people, other cultures, and improve themselves as individuals." Two teachers made specific reference to the benefits of cultural comparison: "The more you learn about others, the better judge you are of yourself," and "students can learn the similarities and more about Portugal and being Portuguese." Four others cited the ability to make good free choices and remain committed to those choices: "In order to be a happy citizen, you have to choose to decide your way to be happy, the way to feel it"; "You have to fight, but you have to be right to fight, because the other thing is to respect values and to respect the society"; "[Students become] free to think and follow their own ideas, not as outsiders"; and "[One alumnus student] said it's what taught her to be responsible and committed and true to her commitments."

The most common difficulty that teachers perceived in implementing a critical approach to culture was overcoming student resistance, for example, "Sometimes, I find some difficulties in finding ways to [open minds]"; "It is the label 'culture is boring' for many of them"; "Sometimes, they believe that not only teachers or parents but adults in general came from a distant planet, inside a strange ship, and they spoke a different language that they could not understand"; and "I'm fighting against powers that are beyond my control—the [mindless] media." A variation on this theme was teachers' self-perceived inadequacy for this task: "We don't know how to do that. We don't have any support. We don't talk to anyone. We should work together but we don't." Finally, three teachers mentioned the challenge of finding time to promote CCA while dealing with all the other demands of the syllabus and textbook.

For three of the four Japanese teachers, it was not easy for them to offer indications of their students' enhanced CCA, given that the teachers were just developing their own understandings during the interviews, but two mentioned students giving positive feedback about the opportunities that they had had to analyze different cultural events and practices. One more said that students had revealed their increased cultural awareness through spontaneous humorous remarks. All of the Japanese teachers had thoughts about the general benefits of raising cultural awareness, including the ability to withhold judgment, to communicate successfully with people, to make implicit cultural ideas explicit, and to overcome confusion in communication in a foreign country. The difficulties that the Japanese teachers pointed out included the student attitudinal problems also mentioned by Portuguese teachers, that is, ethnocentricity and an unwillingness to listen, and the

time management problem also cited by two Portuguese teachers—too many things to teach in too little time. The fourth teacher mentioned the expectation of evaluation based purely on linguistic development, a difficulty which is much more severe in Japan than in Portugal.

9.4.4 Experience and Action in Developing Critical Cultural Awareness

One of the Portuguese teachers in Guilherme's study (2000a) mentioned the importance of the student's search for knowledge about the cultures they are learning about in order to attain a critical perspective, "*se houver uma pesquisa e uma procura do saber por parte do aluno ele vai conseguir chegar a essa postura crítica mesmo que não tenha ido ao país ...*" (if the student does some research and searches for knowledge, they will reach such a critical perspective even though they have not been to the target country before). It was also a general belief that enabling students to give, justify, and maintain their opinions was an essential element of a critical approach. This tendency was confirmed by the group discussions where only one participant identified action as a purpose for the development of CCA: "*Para adquirirem cada vez mais direitos e combaterem quando se sentem discriminados ou sentem que outras pessoas são discriminadas, lutarem por elas e pelos direitos que todos temos*" (in order to gain more and more rights and to fight when they feel discriminated against or when they feel that others are discriminated against so that they fight for them and for the rights we all have).

Although participating teachers suggested that students in general ignore everything that is not contemporary or shown in their favorite programs or films, they conceded that the fact that their students have some background knowledge, no matter how distorted, makes it easier to work with them critically. One participant shared, "*Nós estamos influenciados como os alunos, no fundo, pelo que vemos na televisão, pelo que ouvimos, pelo que lemos*" (like our students, we are, in the end, influenced by what we watch on television, what we listen to, what we read). In other words, a critical approach has to depart from students' lives and background knowledge and stimulate their intellectual curiosity and emotional involvement in order to lead them to further their knowledge about alternatives found in different cultural frames.

The Portuguese teachers in Sawyer's (2013) study on the whole did not express a strong sense of the importance of outside experience and action for developing CCA. Multiple teachers attributed this to the difficult economic realities that Portugal has been facing. Several mentioned the value of field trips, especially international ones, if and when feasible, and those teachers invariably added that what was important was for the students to reflect on aspects of such experiences and communicate their ideas to schoolmates who could not participate. Two teachers cited the enrichment that is possible when some class members come from different backgrounds or with

different experiences that they can share in class. Two other teachers expected that their students would eventually have individual intercultural experiences, so what was important was the advance preparation provided by what they were doing inside the classroom. In terms of more specific ways of facilitating CCA-relevant experience outside the classroom, two teachers mentioned simply trying to interact with their students outside the classroom to deepen understanding and trust. Others mentioned the importance of making students aware of cultural events such as concerts, plays, and valuable media programs. Museums were brought up by multiple teachers. Reading was mentioned several times as an effective and inexpensive way to promote CCA. One teacher's school featured various forms of cultural exchange, including American Field Service, Comenius projects with the European Union, the European Club, and a Moon Conference in Slovakia, but these resources were apparently not easily accessible in most of the other teachers' schools.

All four of the Japanese teachers had had extensive overseas experience themselves, and all felt that intercultural experience outside the classroom was very important. One teacher emphasized that self-initiated (not group or programmatic) study abroad, even if quite short, leads to dramatic changes. All of the Japanese teachers' schools featured official study abroad programs, though the number and scope varied largely with the economic level of the student population. In one school, all students had the opportunity to travel as a class to Singapore and Malaysia for 3 days, with various projects and presentations to complete upon return. Each of the schools also featured the participation of non-Japanese Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs), who took on various roles in the classroom with various periodicity and who were also sometimes available to interact informally with during break periods. Two of the schools also accommodated substantial numbers of international students for various periods of time. Finally, the teacher at the least affluent school also mentioned inviting university students with extensive overseas experiences to give guest lectures about their cultural experience.

9.5 Discussion

Finally, the discussion below will highlight some of the salient similarities and differences that were revealed in the two groups of Portuguese teachers diachronically across a gap of 14 years between 1999 (Guilherme, 2000a) and 2013 (Sawyer, 2013) and synchronically between the latter group and Japanese teachers who were interviewed just a few months later.

9.5.1 Diachronic Findings

Although the slightly different methodologies lent prominence to different aspects of the Portuguese teachers' beliefs and practices, they were by and large quite similar at the two points in time. Perhaps the most salient difference over time was the relative backgrounding of the syllabus and foregrounding of textbooks, in both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, multiple teachers in 2013 made comments suggesting that their textbooks were helpful in allowing them both to implement the national syllabus and meet their students' overall needs. On the negative side, some teachers felt too tied to the textbook content and/or that the content too quickly became obsolete. Also, whereas many of the teachers in 1999 felt energized by the idealistic national syllabus, that energy was not evident in the 2013 data. Thus, there was a diachronic move from the reference to the national syllabus toward the focus on the textbook, supplemented by authentic and updated materials selected by the individual teacher.

An important reason for this move was that the Portuguese national syllabus in 1999 was more innovative, challenging, and inspiring to teachers, due to cultural content playing a prominent role within a critical approach. In turn, this approach fit within a compelling contextualization of language education in a wider scope of renewed national intercultural citizenship education, together with the development of intercultural democratic citizenship at European and additional levels. The 2013 data show how teachers are adapting toward new syllabuses where technology is the focus, and European and global citizenship are viewed from a more entrepreneurial perspective. Although many teachers maintained their interest for cultural content, their focus on the development of CCA had clearly lost some of its vigor. In this respect, the two Portuguese national syllabi reflect an evolution that has been unfolding in educational policies in general as well as in research priorities.

9.5.2 Synchronic Findings

In general, the Japanese teachers had much lower consciousness than the Portuguese teachers regarding both culture and criticality. This reflects the overall state of foreign language teaching in Japan, where the overwhelming majority of students, after 8 years of English instruction in secondary schools and university, typically reach the proficiency level of "false beginner." The main direct reason for this situation is the implicit priority of secondary English teachers for their students' success on high-stakes university entrance exams, which continue to feature obscure grammar and often decontextualized vocabulary in discrete-point format. Then, once admitted to university, most students do not maintain a high expectation or need for improving their foreign language ability. In the background is the Japanese ambivalence toward foreign language ability, which is still often perceived as a threat to Japanese identity (Seargeant, 2007). This contrasts with the situation in Portugal,

where efforts on many levels continue to promote integration into European and global identities, despite priorities having changed to more immediate and functional goals. Either way, the traditional Japanese protection of national identity, or the recent Portuguese focus on functionality, will likely prove counterproductive in the long term, both to high-level career expectations at the individual level and to committed participatory democracy at the societal level.

Regarding criticality, an additional constraint on Japanese teachers is the East Asian value of protecting the other's face in interaction (Parmenter, 2003). Since all disagreements are potentially face threatening in Japan, the care needed to handle them in a foreign language is understandably daunting for students and likewise so for teachers to try to integrate in low-proficiency language courses. Furthermore, the Japanese teachers reported that neither culture nor criticality have any role in current Japanese teacher education. Again, in the background, in contrast to the efforts in Portugal and throughout Europe to develop supranational identities, the Japanese government and media still promote improving international relations while maintaining a strong Japanese identity.

9.6 Conclusion

It was the researchers' intention in this chapter to alert language education professionals to the path which dominant language education policies, research, and teaching/learning have been taking, where the "thick" has given way to the "quick." Teachers are given insufficient time to think, even less to deepen and mature their ideas, as they are lured by the surface of things, by the brightness of the new, as they relinquish important ideals that they have not explored sufficiently but which will prove to be indispensable. Regarding this exploration, one important theoretical contribution of this chapter was the demonstration that the conceptual, historical, political, and cultural wealth of terms in use needs to be fully considered. Such consideration entails that ethnic and cultural complexities are not oversimplified, and it opens the way to maintaining a strong commitment in language/culture education toward social and epistemological justice, contributing to critical intercultural democratic citizenship. For such purpose, technologies are very important as a medium but not as a goal. Enhancing what is common is as important as respecting what is different, in reciprocity, not pretending that what appears consensual has not been somehow imposed. Researchers must be encouraged to cross the reductive boundaries of limiting terms, and teachers must act on their urge to look beyond imposed routines. Both are open to challenging their creativity and criticality, but often the pressure of entrepreneurial management and policies of educational institutions suffocate professional initiative. The development of CCA in depth promotes reflection and critique about the composition, negotiation, and conflicting views in diverse societies and about the various levels of citizenship. It generates hope and energy for the improvement of the self and social life. It gives teachers and students the dignity of having the "ability to evaluate critically on the basis of explicit criteria" (Byram,

1997, p. 53) every culture; to suspend judgment long enough to allow cultures, individuals, and societies to keep changing; to nurture intercultural encounters; and to create opportunities for mutual learning.

9.6.1 Teaching Implications and Applications

The implications and applications of this chapter for teachers in real language teaching contexts are somewhat different in the Portuguese context from in the Japanese context. In the Portuguese context, the teachers show some awareness of the importance of CCA and have ideas of how to develop it, but as suggested in the previous paragraph, they need to try even harder to resist the neoliberal forces that tend to vitiate their idealistic efforts. In the Japanese context, teachers need support for developing their incipient ideas about CCA into serious pedagogical goals that can compete with the currently dominant examination-oriented goals. It is a severe challenge because language teachers in Japan have traditionally not been encouraged to reflect deeply on their goals. However, there is growing realization in Japan that current language practices are not meeting the complexifying social needs of the twenty-first century, so the time is ripe for the substantial reorientation that CCA represents.

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