

Negotiation in the Foreign Language Classroom: Developing Global Learners as Negotiators

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“Like it or not, you are a negotiator. Negotiation is a fact of life.”
(Fisher & Ury, 2011, p. 6)

Abstract

Negotiation is a fact of life, a pervasive skill that we unknowingly use in any situation to avoid breakdowns in communication. It is surprising that it has not yet become a school subject worldwide, yet it should, because it stands at the core of *emotional literacy* – our ability to express personal feelings and to deal effectively with other people's feelings in conflict situations.

This paper follows up on its author's ongoing research and field practice in the design of experimental FL materials for social and emotional learning (SEL). It draws attention to the socio-emotional, behavioural, and sociopragmatic potential of negotiation, intended as a learnable discipline in its own right. It hunts for shared topics and learning objectives related to negotiation within *global citizenship education* guidance in Europe. The author's aim is to elicit curiosity in all FL teachers and to suggest why and how negotiation can be integrated as language-specific content in their lessons. Teachers and students exploring the art of negotiation and language-awareness may contribute peace and long-term vision to their schools and communities as active global citizens.

1. Enriching the Role of FL Education: A Proposal

Communication is virtually everything we do or say, and even what we do not say, given the relative importance of words versus nonverbal cues (Mehrabian, 1981). But how many of us are trained to be good communicators? If more and more of us begin to understand all facets of communication, we may then take responsibility for our choice and use of words and non-verbal cues, getting a solid grasp on our attitudes towards problem solving and conflict management.

At that point, we may reach a critical mass that will truly make a difference in cultivating identities, relationships, and respect for diversity. Communication skills *can* be learned. The problem is: How can we learn *more* of them, and how can we learn them *faster*?

With these issues in mind, this proposal focuses on the integration of social and emotional skills in the FL classroom.

2. Global Education for the Realities of Today's World

The first European strategy framework for improving and increasing global education (GE) in Europe to the year 2015 was established by the Maastricht Congress. In what is known as The Maastricht Declaration (2002) we read:

Global education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalised world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all. (p. 2)

Clearly, to *open people's eyes and minds* to the world may sound quite familiar to any FL teacher who has consistently pursued learner-centered education, bringing *the world* (the learner's inner and outer realities, either at home or abroad) into the classroom, in order to promote the development of cross-cultural, social, and emotional skills. That focus has always been a rewarding priority in this author's work (see Cherubini, 2016).

Negotiation is an empowering conflict resolution activity that stands at the core of emotional literacy (Fisher & Ury, 1981, para. 4). And, should we wonder if negotiation has a rightful place in GE, we then need to verify that it obeys pedagogical concepts related to today's world; that it offers a response to the need to create peace, justice, and solidarity; that it enables people to develop skills, values, and attitudes to manifest a sustainable world and their personal potential; and that it opens people's eyes and minds.

3. Global Citizenship Education

The concept of *global citizenship* refers to “a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasises political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global” (UNESCO, 2014).

In 2015 the 3rd European Congress on Global Education, titled *Education for a Global Citizenship - Unity in Diversity* (Zagreb 2015) gathered over 200 stakeholders in GE, from formal and non-formal education areas, civil society platforms, governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities, and inter-governmental organisations from European and non-European countries, using the principle of a *holistic approach* to GE. The Congress set out to link the concept of GE to that of *global citizenship education* (GCED) in order to contribute a competence and methodological framework; in particular, they outlined key competences for intercultural and interreligious understanding, to be used in both formal and non-formal education sectors. GE/GCED core values are reflected in the UNESCO (2015) definition of competences needed by the active global citizen, as follows:

- Respect for human life and dignity;
- Equal rights and social justice;
- Cultural and social diversity;
- A sense of human solidarity and shared responsibility for our common future.

Admittedly, if FL teachers elected to integrate the art of negotiation in their classrooms, they would greatly contribute to all the above core values.

3.1 Is Negotiation Among the Topics and Learning Objectives of GCED?

Growing interest in global citizenship has resulted in “increased attention to the global dimension in citizenship education as well, and the implications for policy, curricula, teaching and learning,” according to the first pedagogical guidance on GCED, *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and Learning Objectives* (UNESCO, 2015). This handbook is the result of extensive research and consul-

tation with international experts. It draws on other UNESCO publications and events and it was field-tested to verify its relevance in different geographical and socio-cultural contexts. It presents a number of *suggestions for translating Global citizenship education concepts into practical and age-specific topics and learning objectives* in a way that fosters adaptation to local contexts. It is intended as a resource for educators, curriculum developers, trainers, as well as policy-makers, but it will also be useful for other education stakeholders working in non-formal and informal settings (UNESCO, 2015, p. 7). This guidance is based on three core conceptual dimensions of GCED, namely:

Cognitive dimension, which aims to acquire knowledge, understanding and critical thinking about global, regional, national and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations.

Socio-emotional dimension: which aims to have a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity.

Behavioural dimension: which aims to act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

(UNESCO, 2015, p. 15)

For the sake of this study, it was particularly intriguing to check the presence, role, and relevance of negotiation among the GCED aims listed in the guidance. The keyword *negotiation* is quoted in connection to:

1) The development of civic literacy:

Global citizenship education aims to enable learners to develop and apply critical skills for civic literacy, e.g. critical inquiry, information technology, media literacy, critical thinking, decision-making, problem solving, negotiation, peace building and personal and social responsibility. (UNESCO, 2015, p. 16)

- 2) The socio-emotional GCED learning objective “cultivate good relationships with diverse individuals and groups,” afferent to the topic *difference and respect for diversity*:

Key themes for Upper Primary (9–12 years): Developing values and skills that enable people to live together peacefully (respect, equality, caring, empathy, solidarity, tolerance, inclusion, communication, negotiation, managing and resolving conflict, accepting different perspectives, non-violence). (p. 37)

- 3) The socio-emotional GCED learning objective “debate on the benefits and challenges of difference and diversity,” also afferent to the topic *difference and respect for diversity*:

Key themes for Lower secondary (12–15 years): Practicing dialogue, negotiation and conflict management skills. (p. 37)

For both of the above age/level groups the Expected Key Learning Outcomes listed are clearly connected to negotiation skills and processes (see para. 4):

- a) Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights.
- b) Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversities. (p. 37)

- 4) The word negotiation pops up again with reference to the behavioural CGED learning objective “propose action for, and become agents of, positive change”, concerning the topic of *getting engaged and taking action*:

Key themes for Upper secondary (15–18+ years): Practicing communication, negotiation, advocacy skills. (p. 40)

For the above age/level group the following Expected Key Learning Outcomes are listed:

- a) Learners act effectively and responsively at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.
- b) Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions. (p. 40)

The term *negotiation* is also found in a list of keywords that can be used for discussion, under the indicative heading of “cultivating and managing identities, relationships and respect for diversity”:

5) The key word-family of *negotiation* is the following:

assertiveness, communication, conflict resolution, dialogue, inclusion, intercultural dialogue, life skills, managing difference (e.g. cultural difference), managing change, mediation, negotiation, partnership skills (international and local), prevention (conflict, bullying, violence) relationships, reconciliation, transformation, win-win solutions. (p. 43)

The preceding five points clearly show the presence and relevance of negotiation among the topics and learning objectives for global citizenship education, as outlined by UNESCO (2015). Negotiation thus has a rightful place within the learning domains afferent to socio-emotional learning and to behavioural learning. Interestingly, the age/level group of learners where learning negotiation applies spans from age 9 to age 18, that is from upper primary to upper secondary school.

4. Negotiation as a Learnable Discipline: The Fisher and Ury Model

Fisher and Ury of the Harvard Negotiation Project, respectively with backgrounds in international law and in anthropology, wrote a fundamental book on negotiation titled *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (1981, 2011). They have gained a lot of attention and endorsements from a broad readership ever since, and are frequently cited as inspiration for other work. In the authors' words, the book began as a question: “What is the best way for people to deal with their differences?” (2011, p. 4).

For example, what is the best advice to give a husband and wife getting divorced (or to one of them) who want to reach a fair and mutually satisfactory agreement without ending up in a bitter fight? Their definition of *negotiation* is simple and direct:

Like it or not, you are a negotiator. Negotiation is a fact of life. ... Negotiation is a basic means of getting what you want from others. It is back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed. (2011, p. 6)

The point is that every day, “families, neighbors, couples, employees, bosses, businesses, consumers, salesmen, lawyers, and nations face this same dilemma of how to get to yes without going to war” (2011, p. 6).

Why then, we wonder, is no one taught negotiation routinely at school in modern society, treating it like a school subject comparable to science, civic education, or maths? In this author's view, negotiation should be included in every school curriculum in the world; yet it is not (except in advanced educational systems). It should be, because negotiation is clearly a teachable/learnable discipline in its own right.

As practitioners in the field of cross-cultural FL content teaching and of content and language integrated learning (CLIL), and as believers in the need for pragmatic self-awareness in verbal communication, we began promoting the integration of negotiation language and skills into FL teaching several years ago (Cherubini, 1999). Presently, facing an entropic communication crisis in world societies we suggest a teaching framework to turn negotiation skills into a GCED resource (see section 5).

Based on abundant feedback received from many types of practitioners over the years, Fisher and Ury (1981, 2011) outlined the three methodological criteria of a good agreement which—far from being a compromise—is much more than simply a way to “get to yes”:

[A good agreement] should produce a wise agreement if agreement is possible. It should be efficient. And it should improve or at least not damage the relationship between the parties. A wise agreement can be defined as one which meets the legitimate interests of each side to the extent possible, resolves conflicting interests fairly, is durable, and takes community interests into account. (2011, p. 7)

To reach a good agreement the involved parties must have both the knowledge to distinguish between *positional bargaining* and *principled negotiation* (see sections 4.1 and 4.2) and the skill to always argue interests, not positions.

4.1 Positional Bargaining

Whether a negotiation regards a contract, a family quarrel, or a peace settlement among nations, people normally engage in *positional bargaining*. Negotiating a price is a typical example of positional bargaining, which represents an undesirable win-lose paradigm. However, one of the main keys for success in negotiating a good agreement is for parties to refrain from positional bargaining.

In this kind of transaction each party opens with their position on an issue, then bargains from the party's different opening position to eventually agree on one position, with both parties having a bottom line outcome in mind. Yet Fisher and Ury (1981, 2011) clearly point out that positional bargaining does not tend to produce win-win agreements for the following reasons: It is an inefficient means of reaching agreements; the agreements tend to neglect the other party's respective interests; ego tends to be involved; and it encourages stubbornness, thus damaging the parties' relationship.

4.2 Principled Negotiation

The winning alternative to positional bargaining is *principled negotiation*, a process that may offer a better way of reaching good agreements and that can be used successfully to resolve almost any type of conflict. In the Fisher and Ury (1981, 2011) method, principled negotiation follows four *prescriptions*:

- First, *Separate the people from the problem* (since people tend to become personally involved with the issues and their respective position, they may perceive resistance to their position as a personal attack).
- Second, *Focus on Interests, not Positions* (people share certain basic interests or needs, such as the need for security; therefore identifying, understanding, and dealing with both parties' underlying interests is likely to generate a good agreement).
- Third, *Invent options for mutual gain* (which involves the principles of brainstorming and broadening options).

- Fourth, *Insist on using objective criteria* (both legitimate and practical ones, such as scientific findings, or professional standards and the like).

Our next step is devoted to give FL teachers of EFL/ESL and of Italian FL/SL a number of tips on how to integrate negotiation skills with FL teaching.

5. Design of an FL Teaching Module on *Discerning Interests from Positions* in Negotiation

We are now going to sketch a simple outline that teachers may wish to follow in designing FL teaching units on negotiation, with examples of language-specific (negotiation) functional content in English and in Italian.

Using languages to learn and learning to use languages has received considerable attention from European educational research for over two decades and continues to evolve (Marsh et al., 2010, 2012). We are going to draw from the CLIL methodology, which involves a dual-focused educational context in which an additional language (FL or SL)—thus not usually the first language of the learners involved—is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of a non-linguistic subject (negotiation, in our case). For structural purposes, we are following a *modular* concept of FL teaching that may include various didactic units and that fosters interdisciplinary work among teachers of different disciplines.¹

5.1 Selecting the negotiation content

FL Teachers wishing to include negotiation topics in their FL classrooms within a CLIL framework are to follow a dual focus approach. This involves two simultaneous actions:

- a) explaining to their learners the content subject of Negotiation that they wish to present, and
- b) focusing on their learners' FL skills.

The general competences needed by CLIL teachers to select the content concern: knowing how to select and adapt their teaching materials to make them

¹ For this concept see Balboni, 2002; Coonan 2002; Serragiotto, 2003; Marsh, 2010.

easily available and accessible to learners; and scaffolding learners' language to create comprehensible input—an outcome that they can reach by using communication strategies (reformulation, repetition, slower pace in speaking, etc.).

School and university CLIL teachers alike are to look for authentic materials and to adapt them according to the needs of their learners (be they future politicians, economists, psychologists, or educators, they will have preferences about the type of negotiations they wish to master).

5.1.1 Written materials

Many examples in Fisher and Ury's book provide good written source materials, and we are now going to suggest a didactic use of one of their most famous negotiation stories, the *Story of the Wise Librarian*:

Consider the story of two men quarreling in a library. One wants the window open and the other wants it closed. They bicker back and forth about how much to leave it open: a crack, halfway, three quarters of the way. No solution satisfies them both. Enter the librarian. She asks one why he wants the window open: "To get some fresh air." She asks the other why he wants it closed: "To avoid the draft." After thinking a minute, she opens wide a window in the next room, bringing in fresh air without a draft. (p. 23)

This tale looks like a typical win-lose / lose-win battle, because the window can either be closed or open, so in any case one of the parties must lose. Technically speaking, *the problem appears to be a conflict of positions*. Each man is defending his different personal position about what he wants. They think they have to agree on a position, so they keep talking about positions and in the process they often reach an impasse. But the librarian, who uses her conflict resolution skills to reach a win-win solution, asks the men *why* they want the window open or closed. Such a question allows the *interests* of each party to surface (fresh air for one and no draft for the other). Once the parties start focusing on their underlying interests, not on their verbalized positions, they can reconcile their needs. The rule is: *For a wise solution, discern and reconcile interests, not positions*.

5.1.2 Extra-linguistic materials

To make the content more understandable for learners, teachers may decide to use *extra-linguistic materials*, such as illustrations, photos, charts, or mind maps and the like.

For example, a chart similar to the one that we are presenting in Table 1 may be devised by teachers to introduce the concepts of *positional bargaining* and of *principled negotiation* in an inductive way, based on the above-mentioned story of the wise librarian. The chart may be read, role-played, or dramatized and video-recorded and then discussed by students, depending on teacher needs.

Table 1 – Charting and enacting *positional bargaining* (win-lose, lose-win) and *principled negotiation* (win-win) bargaining

WIN-LOSE	LOSE-WIN	WIN-WIN
George wants the window open.	Mark wants the window closed.	The librarian opens a window in the next room. George wins, Mark wins.
The window is left open.	The window is left closed.	
George wins, Mark loses.	George loses, Mark wins.	

Another type of chart may be used to highlight the concepts and to elicit basic speech acts of negotiation from learners, based on the learning objective of “discerning *interests* from *positions*” presented by the story.

Table 2 – Charting and enacting Negotiation outcomes based on an inefficient agreement

Expressed POSITIONS	OUTCOMES
George wants the window open and wins. <i>I want the window open.</i>	Win-Lose
Mark wants the window closed and wins. <i>I want the window closed.</i>	Lose-Win

Teachers may also wish to use visual materials, such as the well-known cartoon strip telling the story known as *The Tale of the Two Mules* (*I due muli* in Italian), which could be used to elicit brainstorming hypotheses from learners about win-win solutions available to the two parties.²

5.2 Dual Focused Learning Objectives

Teachers are also to verify the respect of the conditions for the integration of *FL learning objectives* with the *negotiation learning objectives*, that is, the *learning objectives pertaining to the non-linguistic discipline* that they are going to teach in a foreign language. Thus teachers—as a pre-requisite during the selection of materials on negotiation for their hypothetical module—should acquire some background knowledge of the concepts of *negotiation*, *interests*, and *positions* from the many sources available in books or online, or directly from Fisher and Ury's original essay (2011, pp. 7–8, 23). It will then become apparent that the negotiation objective in this module may be formulated in a similar way to the following:

Negotiation learning objective:

The parties involved in a conflict are going to become aware of the importance of finding out about the *interests* (or motivations, or needs) underlying the respective *positions* taken by the parties, in order to reach a win-win agreement.

Teachers will also need to verify the availability in their classrooms of the necessary technical equipment and hardware to present their chosen CLIL materials (written texts, video clips, CDs, film, photocopies, slides, etc.) to learners.

5.2.1 A precaution about method and teaching context

Global educators, however, are to take into account a precaution with regard to *method* and *contextualization*:

Global education is not just concerned with different perspectives on globalised themes and what you teach and learn about them. It is also concerned about how you teach and learn and the contextual conditions in which you

² Many renditions of this cartoon strip are available online, including a very useful frame-by-frame video, cfr. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cl1XwU3HdJA>.

teach and learn. In fact there is a necessary unity between the content, form and context in which the learning process takes place. (*Global Education Guidelines*, 2012, p. 20)

This implies, for instance, that it would not be meaningful to teach themes of cooperation in a non-cooperatively oriented classroom; nor would it work out well to teach the language and skills of cooperation if the teacher does not have a good understanding of his/her classroom interaction skills for achieving and sustaining a cooperative learning environment. In fact, as noted by Richards and Lockhart (1994, pp. 138–160), since FL teaching is a highly interactive process, FL teachers can have a great influence on the kind of interaction that takes place between the teacher and the learners, and the interaction among the learners themselves. Content and form are truly inseparable from participants in a global educational framework.³

5.3 The Functional Language of Negotiation

Negotiation not only requires mastery of its specific linguistic exponents, but may also create many involuntary misunderstandings stemming from the use of inappropriate expressions, especially among non-native speakers. Hence there is a need for a repertoire of useful, authentic sentences applicable to the main situations encountered during negotiation, which imply different language registers and an ongoing attention to the implied consequences expressed by each phrase.

Teachers will find sample phrases in Fisher and Ury's (1981, 2011) book and in its Italian translation (1995). They may also find some English linguistic exponents of negotiation and their Italian equivalents in a bilingual phrasal repertoire compiled by Lapeyre and Sheppard (1995), from which source the sentences presented below, which are heard in the negotiation step of finding out about interests (pp. 48–51).

3 More on this topic in Cherubini, 2019.

5.3.1 Negotiation language to find out about interests

Teachers may draw creatively from this repertoire or add similar, appropriate phrases in line with their learners' needs.

ENGLISH

- (1a) What is your basic concern in wanting to introduce this clause?*
- (2a) What do you have against this solution? In what way do you feel it would be harmful to your interests?*
- (3a) How exactly would this affect you?*
- (4a) Does this sound like a fair solution to you?*
- (5a) Why do you feel this is unfair?*

ITALIAN

- (1b) Qual è la ragione principale che vi spinge a introdurre questa clausola?*
- (2b) Che cosa avete contro questa soluzione? Perché pensate che potrebbe essere nociva per voi?*
- (3b) In che modo influirebbe sui [Suoi / tuoi] interessi concretamente?*
- (4b) La ritenete una soluzione accettabile per voi?*
- (5b) Perché pensate che non sia una proposta equa?*

The language of (3a) and (3b) is very simple and to the point, and is more frequent during one-on-one probing conversations than in large groups. In the next step, the negotiating parts may use the following sentences to try to find a solution on the basis of interests:

ENGLISH

- (6a) Can you see a solution that would suit you better?*
- (7a) Would this be compatibile with your concern to preserve confidentiality?*
- (8a) Do you feel this would be detrimental to your long-term interests?*

ITALIAN

- (6b) Vedete una soluzione conveniente per voi?*
- (7b) Sarebbe compatibile con la vostra politica di trattative riservate?*
- (8b) Pensate che nuocerebbe ai vostri interessi a lungo termine?*

Lapeyre and Sheppard (1995) suggest that, although the phrases are simple, the task is difficult and their success depends on the quality of rapport and trust that has been established among parties.

5.4 A simple Plan for Dual Focused Negotiation Lessons

The following outline is meant to elicit curiosity, understanding, and motivation to experiment, among those adventurous EFL/ESL and Italian FL/SL practitioners who want to take a role in the diffusion of negotiation skills among their students and in their schools and communities. The outline is meant to be expanded, modified, and improved in any possible way to meet your students' needs and to help them bring the art of negotiation into their life and in the world.

MODULE TITLE:

Learning to negotiate: Discerning interests from positions / Imparare l'arte del negoziato: distinguere fra interessi e posizioni

UNIT(S) OUTLINE:

- 1) SETTINGS: School, university, work, public life, etc.
- 2) TOPICS: Social and interpersonal relationships
- 3) SPEECH ACTS
 - a) FL FUNCTIONS: asking for factual information.
Ex.: *Why do you want the window open? / Perché vuole la finestra aperta?*
Why do you want the window closed? / Perché vuole la finestra chiusa?
 - b) NEGOTIATION FUNCTIONS: probing for interests in a conflict situation.
Ex.: *Why do you feel that [leaving the window open] is unfair? / Perché pensa che [lasciare la finestra aperta] non sia una proposta equa?*
Can you see a solution that would suit you better? / Vede una soluzione più conveniente per lei?
- 4) SKILLS
 - a) FL SKILLS: listening/speaking
 - b) NEGOTIATION SKILLS: active listening

5) LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- a) FL LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Learners will be able to request factual information.
- b) NEGOTIATION LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Learners will find out about the underlying interests of another party, in a conflict situation characterised by apparently conflictual positions. Learners will acquire negotiation language strategies that will develop and reinforce their skills for finding win-win solutions.

6) TEACHING NEEDS

- Vocabulary (at the Teacher's discretion)
- Grammar: Interrogative sentences; Direct and indirect speech

7) MATERIALS

Teachers are encouraged to choose materials from the various sources previously outlined, and from real life experiences of learners, stories, relevant articles in magazines and daily newspapers, and the like.

8) CULTURE

Working on the meaning of words like compromise and mediator in different cultures.

9) DIDACTIC STRATEGIES

Ex.:

- Roleplay: Learners use direct speech: "Why do you want the window open/close?"
- Discussion: Learners use indirect speech: (S)he said (s)he wants the window open, because (+ Interest).

6. Conclusion

The sociopragmatic scenario featuring teachers and learners engaged in understanding cultural differences and becoming dynamic players for a better, more sustainable, and just world for all is an exciting one. Its attractiveness is further enhanced by matching it to the crucial pedagogical role that may be played by teachers and students pursuing GE and GCED aims, as outlined by a number of international educational institutions in Europe and in the USA. In fact, global education aims at stimulating and motivating people to approach

global issues through *innovative teaching and pedagogy*; it challenges formal and non-formal education programmes and practices *by introducing its own content and methodology*; and it promotes participation in action. “In other words, it invites educators and learners to act dynamically for a more just and equal world for all” (*Global Education Guidelines*, 2012, p. 18). This is why this author vigorously encourages research and experimental work by FL teachers, curriculum designers, and policy makers alike, to further empower and develop the FL teaching practice by integrating social and emotional skills in the FL classroom. Any FL teacher can carry out this task, if they believe that emotional literacy is a key human investment in a brighter world future.

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