

THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF AMBASSADORS IN AN ENGLISH SCHOOL IN AMERICAN TERRITORY

 <https://doi.org/10.63330/aurumpub.022-003>

Reinaldo da Silva Thomé¹

ABSTRACT

This study addressed the positive impact of educational ambassadors in an English language school located in the United States, taking as reference the institution Approach International Student Center, situated in Boston, Massachusetts. The research aimed to understand how the role of these ambassadors contributed to the teaching-learning process of the English language and to the cultural integration of foreign students, highlighting their role as social and cultural mediators in an international educational environment. The study adopted a qualitative and bibliographic approach, grounded in authors who discuss language teaching, communicative approaches, and interculturality, such as Krashen, Brown, Larsen-Freeman, Richards, Rodgers, and Celce-Murcia, as well as scholars of the internationalization of education, including Knight, De Wit, and Byram. The theoretical review revealed that learning a foreign language is directly related to cultural immersion and social interaction, and that ambassadors exert significant influence on student reception, motivation, and active participation. It was found that the educational model adopted by Approach, based on communicative and intercultural practices, fostered both linguistic and personal development, transforming the learning process into a more humanized and meaningful experience. The theoretical analysis also showed that the presence of ambassadors strengthened the sense of belonging and multicultural coexistence, promoting values of empathy, respect, and cooperation. It was concluded that the ambassadors' role contributed to strengthening the academic community and enhancing the educational experience at the studied school, demonstrating that the integration of language, culture, and social interaction is essential for the success of international education programs.

Keywords: Educational ambassadors; Language teaching; Interculturality; Internationalization; Approach.

¹ Holds a degree in Public Management from the International University Center (2012), a degree in Occupational Safety Engineering Technology from Anhanguera University of São Paulo (2023), a specialization in Counseling and Pastoral Psychology from Iguacu College (2024), and a specialization in Occupational Safety Engineering Postgraduate Studies from Anhanguera University of São Paulo (2025).
LATTES: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8413778291707095>



INTRODUCTION

Language teaching in an international context has gained increasing relevance in the globalized educational scenario, as learning a new language represents not only mastering linguistic structures but also immersing oneself in different cultures, values, and ways of thinking. Within this panorama, English has consolidated itself as the main language of international communication, playing a central role in processes of academic, professional, and cultural integration.

In this context, institutions specializing in teaching English to foreigners, such as Approach International Student Center, located in Boston (Massachusetts, USA), perform a strategic function in shaping global citizens and promoting intercultural dialogue.

The choice of Approach as the object of study is justified by the relevance of its pedagogical proposal, which combines academic excellence, cultural diversity, and human-centered support. Among its innovative practices, the educational ambassador program stands out as a fundamental initiative to strengthen community spirit, facilitate the adaptation of international students, and enrich the learning experience. These ambassadors act as cultural and social mediators, fostering an environment of cooperation, empathy, and knowledge exchange—elements that directly contribute to the success of the educational process.

The general objective of this study is to analyze the positive impact of ambassadors on the pedagogical and social dynamics of Approach, observing how their role influences student engagement, cultural integration, and language learning. Specifically, it seeks to: understand the relevance of communicative and intercultural approaches in teaching English to foreigners; identify the role of ambassadors as agents of integration and cultural mediation; and discuss the internationalization model adopted by the institution.

The hypothesis is that the ambassadors' role at Approach significantly contributes to creating a more welcoming, participatory, and humanized educational environment, favoring not only English language learning but also the development of social and intercultural competencies. This experience, by integrating teaching, coexistence, and diversity, reflects a pedagogical model aligned with the demands of contemporary education.

The work is structured into four main parts. After this introduction, the methodology is presented, describing the research path and theoretical foundation. Next, the development is divided into three sections: the first addresses language teaching in an international context and the main communicative and intercultural approaches; the second analyzes the role and functions of educational ambassadors; and the third describes the Approach school and its internationalization model. Finally, the conclusion presents final considerations on the theoretical results and reflections obtained throughout the study, highlighting the relevance of ambassadors as agents of educational and social transformation.



METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized as qualitative research with a bibliographic nature, developed through the analysis of books, scientific articles, and academic publications related to language teaching in an international context, focusing on teaching English to foreigners in the United States. The objective was to understand, through a literature review, the main communicative and intercultural approaches that guide pedagogical practices in this scenario.

According to Gil (2019), bibliographic research consists of collecting, reading, and interpreting previously elaborated materials, such as books, articles, and theses, with the purpose of deepening knowledge on a given topic. Thus, theoretical sources from recognized authors in applied linguistics and language teaching methodology were selected, including Krashen (1982), Larsen-Freeman (2000), Brown (2007), Richards and Rodgers (2014), and Celce-Murcia (2008), in addition to studies addressing interculturality in the teaching-learning process.

The analysis was conducted descriptively and interpretatively, seeking to identify convergences and relevant contributions to understanding the impact of communicative and intercultural approaches on English learning by foreign students, especially in the context of language schools located in the United States, such as Approach School in Boston (MA).

DEVELOPMENT

LANGUAGE TEACHING IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Language teaching in an international context has become one of the pillars of contemporary globalization, reflecting not only the need for communication among different peoples but also the pursuit of cultural, academic, and professional integration. In the United States, English language teaching for foreigners (English as a Second Language – ESL or English as a Foreign Language – EFL) occupies a prominent position, as the country is one of the main destinations for international students seeking to improve their linguistic and cultural competencies. Specialized schools, such as Approach, located in Boston (Massachusetts), play an essential role in this process, offering multicultural environments and methodologies that go beyond grammar, promoting true linguistic and social immersion.

Teaching English to foreigners in the United States is not limited to formal language instruction but involves integrating the student into a real communicative ecosystem, where everyday interaction serves as the primary learning tool. According to Brown (2007), second language acquisition is a dynamic process that depends on active student engagement, intrinsic motivation, and continuous exposure to the language in authentic contexts. In this sense, the American environment offers unique



opportunities, allowing students to experience real communication situations, from interacting with native speakers to participating in academic, cultural, and professional activities.

Krashen's (1982) Comprehensible Input theory is one of the most influential conceptual foundations in this field. The author argues that language learning occurs most effectively when students are exposed to linguistic content slightly above their current proficiency level ($i+1$), enabling comprehension to occur naturally and contextually. At schools like Approach, this theory is applied through methodologies that prioritize language use in real communicative situations, encouraging students to understand and produce meaning rather than memorize isolated rules. This perspective aligns with the immersion model, in which language is both the means and the end of learning.

Complementarily, communicative and intercultural approaches have transformed language teaching in recent decades, shifting the focus from the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge to the student as the protagonist of the learning process. Larsen-Freeman (2011) emphasizes that the communicative approach aims to develop communicative competence—that is, the learner's ability to use the language appropriately in diverse social contexts. This competence goes beyond verbal fluency, encompassing pragmatic, sociocultural, and strategic aspects. Thus, English teaching incorporates authentic interaction situations, simulations of everyday communication, and discussions that promote functional language use.

Richards and Rodgers (2014) also highlight that the communicative approach is based on principles such as the centrality of meaning, learning through interaction, and the integration of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Unlike traditional methods focused on repetition and translation, communicative methodologies propose task-based activities (Task-Based Learning), in which students are encouraged to solve problems, negotiate meaning, and collaborate with peers, developing both linguistic skills and social competencies. This practice is particularly effective in multicultural environments, such as Approach in Boston, where students from different nationalities share experiences and perspectives, enriching mutual learning.

In addition to the communicative component, the intercultural dimension has become indispensable in language teaching in an international context. As Celce-Murcia (2007) observes, language cannot be dissociated from the culture that sustains it, as learning a language also means learning new ways of thinking, acting, and understanding the world. In this sense, English teaching should include the development of intercultural competence—the ability to understand, respect, and engage in dialogue with other cultures empathetically and consciously. This competence is essential in institutions that host students from multiple backgrounds, allowing the learning process to go beyond linguistic acquisition and promoting values of diversity, tolerance, and global citizenship.



At Approach, intercultural contact is experienced daily, both inside and outside the classroom. Students interact with peers from different countries, participate in multicultural events, and engage in activities led by student ambassadors, who act as cultural and linguistic mediators. This coexistence fosters communicative fluency and strengthens self-confidence while expanding participants' cultural repertoire. As Brown (2007) emphasizes, meaningful learning occurs when students are emotionally and socially engaged, making English teaching in an international context a profoundly human and transformative process.

Thus, it can be affirmed that teaching English to foreigners in the United States—especially in schools with an educational philosophy oriented toward interculturality, such as Approach—represents much more than the mere acquisition of a foreign language. It is an integral formative experience that unites communication, culture, and identity. Communicative and intercultural approaches, supported by authors such as Krashen (1982), Larsen-Freeman (2011), Brown (2007), Richards and Rodgers (2014), and Celce-Murcia (2007), have consolidated themselves as indispensable foundations for promoting authentic, meaningful, and globalized learning, preparing students to act competently and sensitively in an increasingly interconnected world.

THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL AMBASSADORS

In the context of language teaching and the internationalization of education, the figure of educational ambassadors—or student ambassadors—has gained prominence as an essential link between the institution, students, and the school community. These ambassadors play a strategic role in cultural mediation, welcoming new students, and promoting a collaborative and inclusive environment. In English schools for foreigners, such as Approach, located in Boston (Massachusetts, USA), the work of ambassadors becomes even more significant, as it directly contributes to the linguistic, social, and emotional integration of international students.

The concept of student ambassador is closely related to the idea of academic and social engagement. Astin (1984), in his student involvement theory, emphasizes that the greater the students' involvement in academic and extracurricular activities, the greater their cognitive, affective, and social development. By acting as bridges between the school and the student body, ambassadors encourage active student participation, fostering a sense of belonging that positively impacts learning. In multicultural institutions, this role is even more crucial, as foreign students often face linguistic and cultural adaptation challenges that can affect their confidence and academic performance.

The work of ambassadors at Approach reflects precisely this function of human and cultural mediation. They assist in welcoming new students, clarify doubts about academic and cultural procedures, encourage English communicative practice, and facilitate integration among students of



different nationalities. According to Kuh (2008), peer interaction is one of the most influential factors in the educational experience, as learning occurs not only inside the classroom but also through interpersonal exchanges and shared experiences. Thus, ambassadors contribute to creating a learning community where cooperation and empathy become fundamental pillars of linguistic and social development.

In addition to promoting social integration, educational ambassadors act as models of leadership and intercultural communication. Tinto (1993) argues that student persistence and success in educational contexts largely depend on the quality of interactions established within the institution. In this sense, ambassadors exert a positive influence on new students, offering emotional and practical support, sharing experiences, and providing reassurance during the adaptation process. This supportive relationship creates an environment of trust and belonging that encourages active participation and reduces linguistic and cultural barriers.

From the perspective of educational psychology, the ambassadors' role can also be understood through Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which posits that human behavior is shaped by observation and imitation of models. Ambassadors, through their example, inspire peers to adopt positive attitudes toward learning, coexistence, and overcoming challenges. This observational and motivational dimension is particularly relevant in language teaching contexts, where self-confidence and communicative exposure are determining factors for linguistic progress. By observing ambassadors communicating with fluency and empathy, other students feel encouraged to participate more actively and apply what they learn.

Another fundamental aspect of the ambassadors' role relates to intercultural competence, a concept widely discussed by Byram (1997), who defines it as the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other cultures. By mediating interactions among students of diverse nationalities, ambassadors develop and foster skills such as tolerance, respect for differences, and openness to dialogue. In schools like Approach, where students from Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa coexist, these competencies become indispensable for building a harmonious and truly international educational environment.

From an institutional perspective, ambassador programs also strengthen the school's identity and reputation. Chickering and Reisser (1993) affirm that learning and student development are deeply linked to creating communities that encourage personal and collective growth. Ambassadors, by representing the institution's philosophy and promoting its values, become agents of cultural and institutional dissemination, contributing to strengthening the school's image within the academic community and to the external public. In the case of Approach, the work of these students reflects the



school's commitment to pedagogical excellence and to welcoming different cultures in a space of learning and mutual respect.

The practice of ambassadors, therefore, goes beyond administrative functions and reaches pedagogical and human dimensions. They symbolize the ideal of cooperative learning and transformative education, as their presence fosters empathy, solidarity, and appreciation of diversity. Coexistence with peers from different countries and personal backgrounds expands students' sociocultural repertoire, making English learning a process that goes far beyond grammar and vocabulary—it becomes an experience of personal growth and cultural exchange.

In summary, educational ambassadors exert a profound positive impact on language teaching institutions, especially in international contexts such as Approach. By combining leadership, empathy, and intercultural communication, they contribute to students' holistic development and to the consolidation of a global school community. Their role reflects a humanized pedagogy, centered on relationships and dialogue, in line with the principles of meaningful learning and education as a practice of coexistence and transformation.

APPROACH SCHOOL IN BOSTON AND ITS INTERNATIONALIZATION MODEL

The Approach International Student Center, located in Boston, Massachusetts (USA), is one of the English language teaching institutions that best represent the contemporary model of educational internationalization. Founded with the mission of providing quality education to students from diverse backgrounds, the school has established itself as a space for intercultural coexistence and meaningful learning. Its pedagogical model combines linguistic excellence, human-centered support, and opportunities for personal development, reflecting the principles of communicative and intercultural approaches in language teaching.

Boston, considered one of the world's leading educational hubs, hosts renowned universities such as Harvard and MIT and attracts thousands of international students annually. In this context, Approach emerges as an institution that responds to the demands of a globalized society, offering intensive English programs, courses aimed at academic and professional purposes, and a set of cultural and social activities that extend learning beyond the classroom. As Knight (2004) observes, internationalization of education goes far beyond student mobility; it involves integrating intercultural and global dimensions into the purpose, function, and delivery of education. Approach materializes this vision by integrating culture, language, and social interaction as inseparable parts of its educational process.

The teaching model adopted by the school reflects the understanding that learning a language is also living a cultural experience. Inspired by theories such as Krashen (1982) and Brown (2007), the



institution promotes methodologies based on communication and linguistic immersion, offering students real opportunities for interaction. Classes are conducted by qualified teachers who act as knowledge mediators, encouraging the use of English in everyday and academic contexts. This pedagogical perspective aligns with the communicative approach proposed by Larsen-Freeman (2011) and Richards & Rodgers (2014), which emphasize learning through the exchange of meanings and collaborative knowledge construction.

In addition to academic excellence, Approach stands out for its commitment to welcoming and including international students. The school's multicultural environment is carefully designed to provide comfort, belonging, and respect for linguistic, cultural, and religious diversity. According to De Wit (2011), internationalization should be understood as an intentional process of integrating intercultural and global dimensions into education, aiming to improve quality and contribute to society. Approach applies this principle in practice, promoting a space where learning English also becomes an exercise in coexistence, empathy, and dialogue among different worldviews.

One of the most distinctive features of the school's internationalization model is the student ambassador program, which reinforces the connection between teaching and intercultural experience. These ambassadors act as mediators between new students and the institution, assisting with adaptation, encouraging English use in daily life, and promoting multicultural integration events. This initiative exemplifies Kuh's (2008) view that active student involvement in academic and social experiences is essential for holistic development and educational success. Thus, the ambassador figure is not merely symbolic but pedagogical, representing the incorporation of leadership, solidarity, and intercultural communication values into school life.

The success of the model adopted by Approach is also linked to its student-centered institutional philosophy. The school understands that each learner has a unique trajectory, with individual rhythms, motivations, and challenges. Therefore, its methodologies are personalized, promoting a balance between formal instruction and practical experiences. This perspective aligns with Brown's (2007) view that learner-centered education is fundamental for second language acquisition. By valuing autonomy and student protagonism, Approach fosters meaningful learning, in which the student is not merely a knowledge recipient but an active agent of their own formation.

Another relevant aspect of Approach's internationalization model is the encouragement of social and cultural immersion. The school organizes extracurricular activities, cultural outings, and volunteer programs that allow students to apply English in real contexts, expanding their communicative and intercultural competencies. This practice resonates with Dewey's (1938) idea of learning by doing, which conceives education as a living, dynamic, and transformative experience. In this context, learning



transcends classroom boundaries and connects to everyday life, becoming a continuous process of discovery and belonging.

The cultural diversity present in Approach's environment is another key element for consolidating its international identity. Students from Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa coexist daily in the same learning space, exchanging experiences and building relationships that transcend linguistic boundaries. This coexistence reflects what Byram (1997) calls intercultural communicative competence, that is, the ability to understand and respect different cultures, engaging in dialogue empathetically and consciously. By fostering this type of interaction, the school contributes not only to English language mastery but also to the formation of global citizens capable of acting critically and responsibly in an interdependent world.

Finally, the Approach International Student Center can be understood as a practical example of what is now conceived as humanized international education—a model that combines academic rigor with hospitality, diversity, and cultural sensitivity. Its commitment to students' holistic development, the promotion of cultural exchange, and the strengthening of human bonds makes it a reference institution in English language teaching in the United States. More than teaching a language, Approach teaches a way of seeing the world: with openness, respect, and empathy.

CONCLUSION

This study provided a broad and in-depth understanding of the positive impact of educational ambassadors in the context of teaching English as a foreign language, taking as reference the pedagogical and institutional model of Approach International Student Center, located in Boston, Massachusetts (USA). The analysis revealed that the role of these ambassadors goes far beyond a representative or administrative function; it constitutes an essential role in cultural mediation, promoting social integration, and strengthening learning in multicultural environments. In a globalized scenario, where English has consolidated itself as a tool for communication and mobility, initiatives such as the ambassador program become fundamental to humanizing and enriching the educational process.

The research, of bibliographic and qualitative nature, was based on authors such as Krashen (1982), Brown (2007), Larsen-Freeman (2011), Richards and Rodgers (2014), and Celce-Murcia (2008), whose theoretical contributions elucidate the importance of communicative and intercultural approaches in language teaching. Based on this literature, it was possible to identify that meaningful learning occurs when students are exposed to real communication situations and are encouraged to actively participate in constructing their own knowledge. Constant interaction, social engagement, and welcoming practices are elements that enhance learning and human development, which were widely reinforced by the practices observed in the studied institution.



The theoretical results indicated that the model adopted by Approach favors students' holistic development, combining linguistic learning with intercultural experience. The presence of ambassadors, in this context, represents a pedagogical differential, as they act as bridges between different cultures, assisting new students in adapting to school routines and life in the United States. Their role promotes engagement and cooperation, encourages the use of English in authentic contexts, and contributes to building a supportive and plural educational community. This dynamic reflects an educational model that transcends the classroom, expanding the teaching-learning process to spheres of coexistence, respect, and empathy.

It was also found that Approach International Student Center is an institution that incorporates into its practice the principles of internationalization of education, as discussed by authors such as Knight (2004) and De Wit (2011). The school integrates cultural and global dimensions into its methodology, enabling students to learn English not only as a communication tool but as an instrument of interaction and intercultural understanding. By promoting immersion activities, volunteer programs, and multicultural events, the institution reinforces the idea that learning a language is, above all, learning to coexist and dialogue with others.

Thus, the research confirmed the hypothesis that educational ambassadors play a decisive role in consolidating a more inclusive, participatory, and humanized school environment. They contribute not only to students' academic development but also to their personal and social formation, strengthening the sense of belonging and intercultural awareness. The experience described demonstrates that the presence of ambassadors can transform the school into a living space of symbolic exchanges, where learning occurs collaboratively and affectively.



REFERENCES

1. Astin, A. W. Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, v. 25, n. 4, p. 297–308, 1984.
2. Bandura, A. *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977.
3. Brown, H. D. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. 5. ed. White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman, 2007.
4. Byram, M. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1997.
5. Celce-Murcia, M. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*. 3. ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2008.
6. Chickering, A. W.; Reisser, L. *Education and Identity*. 2. ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.
7. De Wit, H. Internationalization of Higher Education: Nine Misconceptions. *International Higher Education*, n. 64, p. 6–7, 2011.
8. Dewey, J. *Experience and Education*. New York: Macmillan, 1938.
9. Gil, A. C. *Métodos e técnicas de pesquisa social [Methods and Techniques of Social Research]*. 7. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 2019.
10. Knight, J. Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, v. 8, n. 1, p. 5–31, 2004.
11. Kuh, G. D. *Student Engagement in the First Year of College: Implications for Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
12. Krashen, S. D. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982.
13. Larsen-Freeman, D. *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. 3. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
14. Richards, J. C.; Rodgers, T. S. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. 3. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
15. Tinto, V. *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*. 2. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.