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***Multipolar Intercultural Awareness  
and  
Teacher Education and Training***

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**Introduction**

Developing foreign language (FL) teachers' intercultural awareness is considered an asset in teacher education and training since, in present day world, the intercultural perspective is highly esteemed (cf. Byram & Flemming (eds), 1998).<sup>1</sup> In my opinion, however, there are two important questions that we need to explore further concerning this issue:

- 1) What do we really mean by intercultural awareness in FL learning in general and teacher education and training in particular?
- 2) How easy is it to develop FL teachers' intercultural awareness if we train teachers in monolingualistic and monocultural contexts, as is the case with most FL teacher education and training programmes?

In my paper, I will try to explore these two queries in the light of the reflective approach to teacher education and training. *Second*, I will point out that the current definition of intercultural awareness does not really reflect present day realities any more. *Next*, I will briefly describe the contexts in which, in principle, we train teachers of foreign languages pointing out how limited these contexts usually are in terms of interculturality. *Then*, I will argue how we can expand these contexts making use of institutional collaboration between universities and colleges across countries as well as exploring and exploiting present-day technology and the Internet as new learning contexts in teacher education and training. I will conclude my argument making reference to the benefits that an expansion of contexts may have for developing FL teachers' *multipolar intercultural awareness*.

**1. The reflective approach in foreign language teacher education and training**

In the argument to be put forth and the framework for teacher education and training to be suggested in this paper, I believe that the reflective approach best suits the needs of FL teacher education and training. Arguing along similar lines with Richards & Lockhart (1994), I maintain that the reflective approach in teacher education and training can be FL teacher initiated and directed. It involves FL teachers critically observing others and themselves, collecting data about the participant classrooms – either in situ or videotaped ones – in order to explore FL teachers' and learners' roles

