

Developing Learners' Intercultural Understanding through a CLIL Approach

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Abstract | Language and culture are interconnected and teaching a language should also be concerned with offering learners a wide range of opportunities to gain insights into other cultures. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approaches have an invaluable contribution to make towards developing learners' intercultural understanding (ICU), by making the content culturally relevant to the language of instruction. Within this paradigm, this paper presents the findings of an action-based research project seeking to develop ICU among secondary learners of French in England, through the teaching of a series of lessons following a CLIL approach. Stemming from its findings, it is proposed here that a renewed understanding of CLIL be defined, in which CLIL would stand for **Content and Language Intercultural Learning**. Within this framework, the **content** would be conceptualised through the lens of culture, to offer learners opportunities to compare and contrast experiences and viewpoints, to develop their cultural knowledge, as well as their **intercultural skills and attitudes** – by means of exposure, independent exploration and collaborative work. The **language**, still driven by the content, would encompass both the language of learning, and the language required through the learning processes - and would be language that is both accessible and cognitively challenging. **Learning** would occur through cognitively demanding content that is real, relevant and engaging, yet accessible to all.

Key words | CLIL, intercultural understanding, modern languages, secondary education, curriculum, England

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. *Culture, Intercultural Understanding and Intercultural Communicative Competence*

Defining culture is complex. Little consensus exists on how best to define the concept – with much of the literature retaining the longstanding distinction between ‘little c’ and ‘big C’ culture, between cultural knowledge and cultural awareness (Saniei 11-12). For the purpose of the study, Byram’s useful definition of culture as “shared beliefs, values and behaviours” (*From Foreign Language Education* 60) was adopted. Intercultural understanding (ICU), therefore, is the willingness to alter one’s viewpoint with the aim to discover and understand otherness, and intercultural communicative competence (ICC), the ability to demonstrate the necessary attitudinal attributes in order to interact and mediate between the two perspectives (Byram 68).

1.2. *The Place of ICU in Language Education*

Brown contends that language is the most evident manifestation of culture (171). As such, it could be argued that language educators need to embrace this necessary cultural dimension. This is further emphasised by the imperative to support our learners into becoming competent global citizens (Byram and Wagner 141). However, while much has been written about the importance of the intercultural dimension in languages education, very little of this concerns the secondary context (Hennebry 144) or the place of ICU in everyday practice (Baker 134). While the majority of language teachers view intercultural teaching as an important aspect of language learning, there is much literature pointing to a disparity between these beliefs and classroom practice (Grenfell 39). This is particularly true in England, where despite earlier attempts to include the development of intercultural understanding in the curriculum for languages (QCA 166), this is given little place in current policy and everyday practice.

1.3. *CLIL and Intercultural Understanding*

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) can be defined as the teaching and learning of subject content through the medium of an additional language; within a CLIL framework, the

purpose of learning needs to be authentic and relevant to the learners' context, and while the focus may need to shift between the content and the language, both content and language are given parity. Coyle and her colleagues provide a useful framework for CLIL implementation, the 4Cs model, where content, communication, cognition and culture are considered in equal measures for planning, teaching and learning purposes (Coyle et al. 53-56). Because the cultural dimension is central to the CLIL framework, Byram argues that the approach could facilitate teaching for ICU (320), and Sudhoff contends that this may be because CLIL classes offer the "added dimension" of interculturality by offering differing perspective on a wide range of topics (33).

However, despite the need to develop ICU further within languages education in England, and the potential of CLIL to achieve this, CLIL approaches remain experimental and isolated in the national context. This paper presents the findings of an action-based research project exploring the perceptions of teachers and learners in this context, and the outcome of a CLIL intervention programme aimed at developing ICU.

2. The Place of ICU in Language Education

There has been sustained interest in ensuring that the various languages curricula provide opportunities to develop the intercultural skills, knowledge and understanding learners will need to ready them for the demands of an increasingly changing and globalised society. While it is worth noting that in diverse classrooms, many learners will already be actively engaged in multilingual and intercultural interaction (Campos 384), this often remains to be fully acknowledged, celebrated and built on. Therefore, it could be argued that pedagogical models offering scope for intercultural engagement have become an imperative (Aktor and Risager 221) even if teachers and policy makers' motivation in addressing this need is purely a pragmatic one (Furstenberg 329-330). Indeed, Byram argues that the intercultural dimension can only be fully realised if it "fulfil[s] purposes that are both educational and utilitarian" (Byram 319-320).

Therefore, language teaching and learning should include opportunities to acquire and develop both language and culture (Sudhoff 32), as well as intercultural capability (Scarino 325).

Duffy and Mayes further contend that such opportunities should be available to all and not be dependent on advanced levels of linguistic competence (Duffy and Mayes 93).

While an element of cultural transmission is always inherent in the teaching of languages, Scarino argues that this has often taken a subordinate place (324), a view shared by Kramsch (8). Despite the low importance attributed to intercultural aspects, the role of language teachers in contributing to the development of global, interculturally-competent future citizens is viewed as central by some (Driscoll and Simpson 170-171; Goodman 611), while approaches to teaching languages which reduce the place of the intercultural dimension can be seen as inadequate.

Integrative approaches to language teaching are often seen as an ideal vehicle to develop intercultural learning opportunities (Beacco et al. 16) through their dual focus on developing both linguistic and intercultural aspects. Such approaches have been implemented over the years in a range of contexts, including content-based instruction, bilingual education and immersion programmes. In Europe, CLIL was introduced in the early 1990s as an umbrella term for integrative approaches to language teaching and learning and is best defined as “the planned pedagogic integration of contextualized content, cognition, communication and culture into teaching and learning practice” (Coyle et al. 6).

Since the inception of the term, CLIL approaches have become prevalent in much of Europe, albeit to varying degrees (Eurydice 55), with some noted benefits: for Dalton-Puffer, CLIL offers opportunities to increase learners' motivation (8), and Coyle adds that this may be particularly true where learners may otherwise have a negative attitude towards either the content or the language studied (89). Coyle further contends that CLIL approaches can support learners' conceptualisation processes (10-11), and therefore help develop their cognitive competence, a view supported by Marsh (8) – although Coyle highlights a need for careful scaffolding to ensure cognitive gains and the retention of motivation.

Campos also suggests that integrated approaches may be more efficient in developing students' cultural knowledge than isolated exposure to cultural elements (387-388). Beyond cultural knowledge gains, Wolff notes that such approaches, including CLIL, offer opportunities

for reflection on otherness and differing perspectives, a key aspect of intercultural understanding (78). Sudhoff further notes that the CLIL classroom offers this added intercultural dimension (33), by providing learners with the required tools for intercultural competence – although Kearney aptly notes that, for this to be realised, learners' engagement and experiences with both language and culture need to be carefully considered (333).

However, despite the above-mentioned importance and benefits, the development of intercultural understanding through integrated approaches has been given little place in recent languages education policy in England. This can seem an apparent contradiction given the documented issues with learners' motivation for language learning in the country (Davies 57). This contradiction may well stem from the constant shift that languages have seen in terms of the place they were given in the curriculum over the years, despite recent assertions that "learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures" (Gov.uk). Another reason could be the overarching focus on formal, summative assessment serving a performativity agenda at all levels of the curriculum, which seems to compel language teachers in England to shy away from more innovative approaches and materials, with an over-reliance on less engaging sources such as textbooks, often seen as a poor medium for the transmission of intercultural awareness and understanding (Baker 134). Nonetheless, there remains a marked need for England to do more to empower its young citizens to face the growing demands of an internationalised world, and language learning holds a key role in facilitating this (British Council 3).

3. Design of the Research Project

3.1. *Background and Rationale*

The project contributed to the completion of a doctoral thesis on the topic of CLIL. The study stemmed from my own experiences teaching languages in English secondary schools, from my belief that culture and language are intrinsically linked, and from the ensuing frustration in observing that often, in the context of language teaching in England, this was not the experience

for learners. I also viewed the project as a means to actualise my belief that teachers have agency in the curriculum they deliver to their learners.

Having initially experimented with short CLIL projects, I wished to explore its potential further, and to investigate the scope of the approach for developing learners' ICU. It was hoped that the project would enhance my practice as well as contribute to the wider body of knowledge, and provide a possible model of application in the context of language teaching and learning in England. For the purpose of the study, the following three research aims were formulated:

- to explore the importance attributed to the development of ICU within language teaching and learning;
- to observe whether ICU is evident in practice;
- to investigate the potential for a CLIL approach and teaching materials to contribute to the development of learners' intercultural understanding.

3.2. Participants

The study aimed to explore the rationale for cross-curricular, integrative approaches traditionally only being aimed at higher-performing, older language students – and so younger secondary students (aged 12-13) in lower attaining groups were selected as the focus for the inquiry. One group was my own, as the study was intended to take the form of an action-research project; further schools were selected for broad comparability: all were mixed-gender, state-maintained secondary schools in England, with classes selected as French was the sole foreign language studied by participants.

Overall, the research involved the participation of 94 students across four different schools, and 19 teachers; as can be expected in many language faculties, the profile of teachers ranged in experience, personal theories of practice and levels of language proficiency.

Teachers were offered a choice of intercultural topics, each linked to prescribed language content in the textbook used across all schools, while at the same time connected to another area of the curriculum: French children in the second World War (history), daily life in French-speaking

developing countries (geography) or industrial and technological advances from the French-speaking world (design and technology). All teachers opted for the first topic, due to the nature of the language content as well as the likely level of interest this might generate among their students.

In the belief that intercultural gains cannot be measured against rigid parameters, it was decided that only the achievements of students having participated in the CLIL lessons would be measured pre and post-intervention, rather than attempting to compare these to that of their peers in non-intervention, 'control' schools, an approach advocated by Coyle (139). Responses from these schools served to explore broader issues and perspectives, and in recognition of their contribution to the study, the teaching materials were shared with them post intervention.

3.3. Research Design

A literature review was first carried out to explore the existing body of knowledge pertaining to culture in language education, the dichotomy between teachers' beliefs about intercultural understanding and their everyday practice and the potential benefits of integrated approaches such as CLIL to develop ICU (as discussed in the previous section) – with an exploration of what the literature perceived to be the optimal audience as well as the most suited materials for intercultural teaching.

3.4. Instruments: Questionnaires

Following the literature review, research instruments were designed to reflect key emerging themes identified. In order to address the first two research aims (the importance attributed to the development of ICU within language teaching and learning, and its place in actual practice) teacher and student questionnaires, as well as teacher interviews, were used to measure experiences, perceptions and attitudes.

The students' questionnaires were designed in line with the findings of the literature review, and organised around three broad themes:

- a) Attitudes and perceptions;

- b) Experiences of learning a language;
- c) Existing intercultural knowledge and understanding.

In line with these, the student questionnaire consisted of five sections:

1. A first section, gathering basic information on the profile of individual students;
2. A second section, seeking to establish their linguistic heritage and background, and their language learning history;
3. A third section, exploring learners' attitudes towards language learning, through a mixture of multiple-choice, open response and ranking questions;
4. A fourth section, consisting of a quiz to establish their existing level of ICU;
5. A fifth section, providing a further quiz, aimed at establishing learners' existing (or lack of) cultural knowledge on France, its culture and people.

The teachers' questionnaires were also organised around three broad themes:

- a) Beliefs, attitudes and perceptions;
- b) Current practice, including use of materials;
- c) Barriers to the teaching and learning of intercultural understanding.

These also consisted of five sections, exploring the following aspects:

1. Languages spoken and taught;
2. Their school context, and the place of languages in the school's *curriculum*;
3. Teachers' own definition of the term 'culture';
4. The place of culture in the teaching and learning of languages, including a range of scale and ranking questions;

5. Teachers' length of service – this section also provided an opportunity for teachers to write further comments and to indicate their willingness to participate in interviews.

3.5. Instruments: Intervention Lessons

In order to fully explore the third research aim (whether a CLIL approach and teaching materials can contribute to the development of learners' intercultural understanding), a taught intervention was designed, consisting of a series of fifteen lessons (and related teaching materials) following a CLIL approach integrating history and French, delivered to two of the four classes / schools involved in the study.

In planning the history content, subject specialist teachers were consulted to establish learners' existing historical knowledge, as well as the subject-specific skills and terminology they needed to acquire or develop. However, the constraints within each of the participating schools did not allow for the team teaching of the sequence of lessons.

Adapted from the 4Cs model (Coyle et al. 53-56), a framework for the planning of the intervention lessons was designed, in which content is conceptualised through the lens of culture in order to achieve six broad aims (see Figure 1).

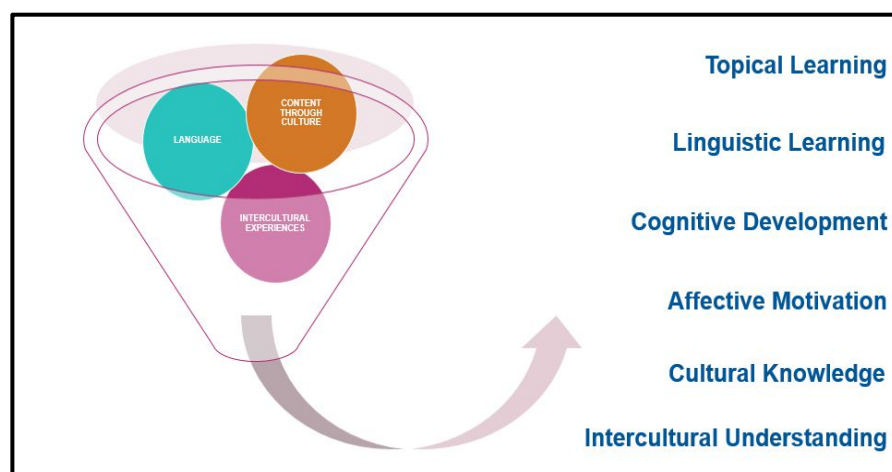


Figure 1. A CLIL Framework for Intercultural Understanding: Content through the Lens of Culture

The premise of the framework was to ensure that the content aspect was steeped in a French cultural perspective, a process termed 'content through the lens of culture', with the aim to offer learners opportunities to explore familiar events through the eye (and the language) of the 'other', in the hope to foster intercultural attributes. The principles of this intercultural CLIL framework are presented in Table 1.

Content through Culture	Language of/for/through Learning	Intercultural Attributes and Experiences	Learning – Cognition and Meaningful Outcomes
presenting content through the lens of the target culture	using highly recyclable language, applied in the topic's context	offering intercultural experiences – through familiar events / themes, but through different perspectives	supporting learners in accessing cognitively challenging language
offering authentic content	offering challenging content, manageable through the use of cognates	developing intercultural attributes, with a focus on empathy and a sense of curiosity	supporting learners in producing cognitively challenging language
using a wide range of sources and types of materials	providing language needed by the students to carry out the planned activities	promoting affective motivation through the use of engaging and relatable content	developing learners' ability to work independently and collaboratively to produce meaningful outcomes

Table 1. Principles of a CLIL Framework for Intercultural Understanding

Examples for each of the principle are presented in Appendix 1.

A quantitative approach was needed to establish whether the use of the teaching intervention had an impact on developing learners' intercultural understanding through the completion of a pre and post-test quiz. Qualitative methods were also used to complement the quantitative findings through lesson observations and interviews to gather teachers' and learners' views about the intervention approach and materials.

3.6. Instruments: Teaching Materials

The teaching materials for the intervention were designed to present learners with opportunities to engage with less frequent types of materials, and to provide a learning experience different to that which they were accustomed. A full set of ready materials was designed, focusing on a range of skills and investigative and collaborative activities. Materials included presentation slides, worksheets, online resources, songs, poems and a full-length movie leading to a film study.

As previously mentioned, teachers had been able to select the topic / cross-curricular link, but care was taken to retain key linguistic structures as prescribed by the schools' language programme – to ensure that participating students would not be academically disadvantaged. Teachers approached for participation had unanimously opted for a cross-curricular link with history on the topic of 'children in France during the second world war (WW2)', a familiar topic to students, but approached through the lens of another cultural perspective. The aim of this approach was to make the content more relevant to learners, and to develop their sense of empathy, a key aspect of intercultural understanding. In particular, the topic was centred on events in a martyred village, Oradour sur Glane.

4. The Taught Intervention

Before the teaching intervention took place, students completed their questionnaires. They then participated in the series of fifteen lessons which took place over a period of six to eight weeks, depending on the curriculum time allocated to language lessons in each of the participating schools. Lessons were delivered by a language teacher in each participating school.

In the first and second lessons, the scene was set, and students were introduced to the village of Oradour sur Glane. Through a series of collaborative investigative tasks, students then had to find out for themselves what had made the village so notorious.

In the third lesson, students consolidated their knowledge of WW2, with a focus on determining events from a French perspective. This was achieved through the use of a range of video materials, as well as an extended reading task, explored collaboratively as a class.

In lessons four to eight, students explored the life of a child in the village through the medium of a diary, narrating life before and after the German attack.

Lesson nine gave an opportunity for students to recount the events in their own words and in their own language through the writing of a newsletter article aimed at the local school community – and they shared this with each other in the twelfth lesson.

The tenth lesson exposed learners to opportunities to engage with lesser-used materials, namely French songs and poems related to WW2, to further develop their understanding of the period.

In lesson eleven, they looked at other key events having affected children in France during WW2, while lessons thirteen, fourteen and fifteen explored the period through a structured film study using the movie *La Rafle*.

Following the end of the taught sequence, students who participated were asked to complete the same questionnaire again to provide an insight into the impact of the intervention on their intercultural attitudes, knowledge and understanding. This data was used to supplement those gathered through interviews, lesson observations and collated students' work (see Appendices 2 and 3).

5. Findings

For clarity of discussion, the findings section, as well as the subsequent discussion, will first discuss teachers' perspectives followed by those of the students. The choice of materials will then be explored before a reflection on the scope for a CLIL approach to develop students' intercultural understanding.

5.1. Teachers' Perspectives: Beliefs vs. Practice

Although most language teachers surveyed (78.9%) believed that ICU should be an integral part of language instruction and acquisition, cultural awareness was ranked as the least important of a range of skills to be developed in the language classroom by most (63.1%), as can be seen in Figure 2.

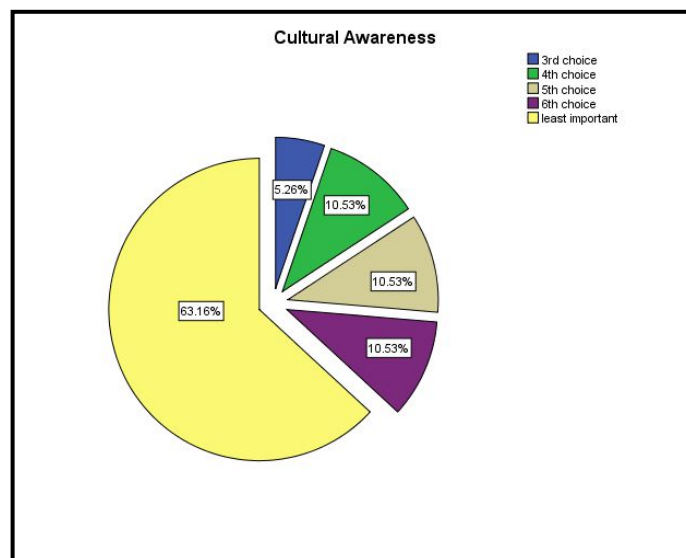


Fig. 2. The Importance Attributed to Cultural Awareness in Language Teaching according to Teachers of MFL (N=19)

It was also interesting to note teachers' expectations with regards to their learners' desired attitudinal attributes with those related to intercultural understanding and competence, such as empathy and an understanding of different social conventions and customs, ranked low when compared to more 'traditional' linguistic aspects, as shown in Table 2 below.

Item	ranked 1 st	ranked 2 nd	ranked 3 rd	ranked 4 th	ranked 5 th	Cumulative
%						
positive attitude	26.3	21.1	10.5	10.5	0	68.4
understanding of grammar	0	15.8	5.3	26.3	15.8	63.2
interest for the subject	31.6	5.3	5.3	10.5	10.5	63.2
Motivation	15.8	21.1	15.8	0	5.3	58
sense of curiosity	10.5	26.3	10.5	10.5	0	57.8
ability to memorise a large amount of vocabulary over time	10.5	0	26.3	10.5	0	47.3
knowledge of a wide range of vocabulary	0	0	10.5	10.5	10.5	31.5
open-mindedness	0	5.3	5.3	5.3	10.5	26.4
good pronunciation	0	5.3	5.3	5.3	10.5	26.4
ability to write at length and accurately	0	0	5.3	0	10.5	15.8
ability to understand and use idioms	0	0	0	5.3	5.3	10.6
spends time abroad practising the language	5.3	0	0	0	5.3	10.6
knowledge about cultural facts	0	0	0	0	10.5	10.5
understanding of differing social conventions and customs	0	0	0	5.3	0	5.3
Fluency	0	0	0	0	5.3	5.3
sense of empathy	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2. Desired Language Learners' Attributes, as ranked by teachers (N =19)

5.2. Teachers' Perspectives: Perceived Barriers to Intercultural Teaching

Many language teachers identified barriers preventing them from implementing intercultural teaching. Most teachers commented on the adverse impact of rigid and demanding curriculum and assessment frameworks on their ability to explore more innovative approaches:

[the current examination framework] is a really poor foundation for helping the students to appreciate the culture of learning another language. [...] Unfortunately, today, everything is measured in exam success, so there's little time to develop a love or appreciation for the culture of the country. (Teacher F)

In addition to the scarcity of time left for intercultural teaching because of these demands, many teachers (57.9%) also noted that more general time constraints would prevent them from designing suitable teaching materials for intercultural teaching.

Another important aspect which teachers identified as a likely barrier to intercultural teaching was their learners' lack of linguistic proficiency; in other words, teachers often stated that only learners with a more advanced linguistic level would be able to access intercultural teaching. As a result, lower attaining or younger students were not seen as the ideal audience, as stated by Teacher E: "It depends on the students – I use far more [cultural] materials at Key Stage 5 [advanced learners]".

When intercultural opportunities were offered to learners, this was often approached as an 'add-on', end of term short and isolated activity, mostly aimed at fostering a little more motivation and to fill time once the 'important' work had been completed, or as a treat or a special occasion, for instance when discussing festivals and traditions.

Interestingly, teachers also begrudged their students' lack of cultural awareness, although they were quite honest in their assessment that this may be a direct result of their own practice, with Teacher C noting that:

Students don't even know enough about their own culture so it's hard for them to compare with others [...] Mind you, that might be our own fault, because a lot of teachers are just too afraid of giving time to teaching cultural stuff [...] but then we can't really complain at their lack of awareness.

5.3. Learners' Perspectives

Learners, although aware that little place was given to intercultural learning in their regular lessons, showed motivation for greater intercultural opportunities when responding to a range of statements: 56% said that they wanted to learn more about French-speaking countries and people, 70.6% that they liked learning about different people, and 82.6% that they enjoyed learning about different countries.

5.4. Materials for Intercultural Teaching

Many learners were perceptive of the fact that their teachers rarely used materials seen as more interculturally rich, as detailed in Table 3.

Item	almost always	often	sometimes	rarely	never
	%				
textbook	37.5	30.6	18.1	12.5	1.4
worksheets	26.4	33.3	27.8	9.7	2.8
teacher's presentations and slides	83.3	9.7	4.2	2.8	0.0
online resources	5.6	14.1	35.2	31.0	11.3
magazines, books, newspapers	1.4	4.2	4.2	18.3	69.0
songs and poems	2.8	4.2	18.3	21.1	50.7
video clips	2.8	15.3	27.8	33.3	20.8
movies	0.0	0.0	6.9	48.6	41.7
quizzes and games	19.4	44.4	23.6	9.7	2.8

Table 3. Learners' Perception of the Frequency of Use of Teaching Materials in Language Lessons (N=75)

Teachers valued the use of video clips for the teaching of ICU (47.4%), but movies, pictures, internet resources, songs and poems were ranked much lower, with 10.5% each. Furthermore, teachers failed to note the importance of texts, magazines, newspapers and books for intercultural teaching, a likely reflection of the low importance they seemed to attribute to reading skills as an aspect of language learning.

Despite their teachers not attributing much value to the use of certain materials in developing intercultural understanding, learners were particularly responsive to the use of video clips and movies and, following the intervention and related exposure to a wider range of material types, the learners' preferences had shifted, as seen in Table 4.

Type of material	Pre-test %	Post-test %
textbooks	34.3	19.4
worksheets	11.4	5.6
teacher's presentations / slides	25.7	19.4
online resources	11.4	25
magazines, books, newspapers	0	0
songs and poems	0	0
video clips	0	8.3
movies	5.7	16.7
quizzes and games	11.4	5.6

Table 4. Learners' Preferred Material Type, pre and post-test (N=36)

This shift could be interpreted as a willingness on the part of learners to embrace more authentic, challenging and culturally rich materials, if given the opportunity.

5.5. CLIL to Develop Cultural Knowledge

While intercultural competence also requires the demonstration of intercultural skills and attitudes, developing cultural knowledge can contribute to developing learners' ability to operate the necessary compare / contrast. Following the intervention, learners had increased their cultural

knowledge, and were able to identify or recall more factual cultural items. For instance, while 50% of learners were unable to name more than one famous French city or town before the intervention, and 61.8% unable to name more than two, this fell to 12.1% and 33.3% respectively following the intervention.

5.6. CLIL to Develop Intercultural Understanding

Findings also revealed implications in terms of learners' motivation for language learning. They were asked to rank the different benefits of language learning, indicated by a range of statements, seen in Table 5.

Benefits of language learning	pre-test%	post-test%
it can get you a better job later	43.2	23.1
it can help you get into university	14.3	24.5
you can use the language when you go on holidays	7.1	3.8
it gives you access to more jobs	17.9	18.5
INSTRUMENTAL ASPECTS – CUMULATIVE	82.5	69.9
it helps you meet people from different countries	3.6	14.8
it can help you understand and use your own language better	3.6	3.8
it can help you understand how people may do things differently	10.3	11.5
INTERCULTURAL ASPECTS – CUMULATIVE	17.5	30.1

Table 5. Pre and Post-Test Students' First Responses on the Benefits of Language Learning (N=36)

Items related to instrumental motivation were given more prominence before the intervention (82.5% of first responses) while those relating to intercultural attitudes and attributes less so (17.5%). Following the intervention, rankings had changed to 69.9%, and 30.1% respectively, indicating a shift from the instrumental towards the affective and intercultural. Although Wilcoxon signed rank tests did not overall demonstrate statistically significant differences pre and post-test, the one statement: *'It can help you understand how people may do things*

differently' did indicate a significant change ($z=1.497$, $p=.134$, $r=.21$), seemingly indicating a shift towards a greater ability to consider different perspectives.

Also of significance was the proportion of students who indicated that they enjoyed language learning because of intercultural elements in their language lessons that increased from 4.3% pre-test, to 26.1% post-test, a possible indication that intercultural learning can contribute to improving learners' enjoyment and engagement with the subject. Perhaps more interestingly, while those who did not enjoy learning French did not change their mind following the intervention, none said this was because it was 'too different', perhaps an indication of a shift in attitudes, too. Results can be found in Table 6.

Item	Pre-test %	Post-test %
I enjoy learning about France, French culture, French people	4.3	26.1
I enjoy learning collaboratively with friends	4.3	0
it is challenging, hard, difficult	4.3	0
it is easy	4.3	0
it is educational, you learn something new	4.3	0
it is fun or enjoyable	52.2	26.1
it is good to know more than one language	4.3	7.7
it is interesting, diferente	13.0	17.4
it prepares you for real interaction	4.3	0
I have good, helpful teachers	4.3	4.3
it will facilitate future travel	4.3	4.3
it will help for future career or prospects	4.3	0
it is boring, it lacks interest	57.1	46.2
it is difficult	28.7	23.1
I don't like it	0	15.4
there is no need to learn another language	7.1	7.7
it is too diferente	7.1	0
I don't get on with the teacher	0	7.7

Table 6. Pre and Post-Test Reasons given by Students for Enjoying / not Enjoying Language Learning (N=36)

There was also evidence of learners' ability to consider different perspectives and to express empathy following exposure to the intervention materials, both through their own language (English) and that of instruction (French), collaboratively and on their own (Appendices 2 and 3).

6. Discussion

6.1. *Teachers' Perspectives: Beliefs vs. Practice*

As suggested by Baker (134), there was a marked dichotomy between teachers' beliefs and their practice. Many perceived linguistic performance as the driving force for their practice, as found by Aktor and Risager (222); at the same time, in line with Baker' findings, cultural aspects were not seen as an integral part of language teaching for many – despite teachers' having a clear understanding of the role they could play in promoting this dimension of language learning. Perhaps, if teachers only attribute value to what can be measured, as suggested by Hennebray (148) it should be deemed necessary to consider models for assessing intercultural competence – although as Coyle and colleagues argued, such models should view language learning as a holistic process, where performance and affective aspects are afforded parity (157).

6.2. *Teachers' Perspectives: Perceived Barriers*

Teachers identified a range of constraints to the implementation of intercultural teaching within the context of language education in England. For many, such constraints pertained to learners' lack of sufficient linguistic competence to access intercultural materials, and their perceived lack of motivation for the subject – yet the intervention phase of the study demonstrated that, with careful planning and design, interculturally rich and cognitively challenging materials can be made accessible and can further develop learners' intrinsic motivation for the subject. Another constraint related to the rigidity of the curriculum, yet it was found that teachers had enough scope for agency in presenting prescribed language through a more challenging and engaging medium, serving to develop in equal measures learners' linguistic competence and their intercultural understanding.

6.3. *Learners' Perspectives*

The study found that learners valued intercultural aspects of language learning to a greater extent than their teachers did, and relished opportunities to engage with intercultural content; where this happened, motivation, cultural knowledge and intercultural understanding increased.

Another interesting point to draw from the findings is that of what constitutes the 'ideal' audience for intercultural instruction; teachers were quick to dismiss the potential of intercultural teaching for their lower attaining and/or younger students, often on account of their level of linguistic competence – yet Dalton-Puffer argues that an increase in cognitive challenge can only serve to contribute to successful language learning for all students (126). Indeed, the very fact that the participants in this study belonged to this demographic served, albeit on a small scale, to demonstrate the value of offering younger secondary learners such opportunities. At an age when motivation for language learning begins to decrease, surely providing learners with alternative approaches can only help (Davies 57). With the pragmatic teachers in mind, it might also be worth noting that intercultural teaching with this age group is less likely to be subject to the same constraints linked to the high-stakes assessment frameworks their older peers may have to abide by.

6.4. *Materials for Intercultural Teaching*

Effective materials are essential for intercultural teaching (Aktor and Risager 223). This study has also highlighted the importance of materials for intercultural teaching and determined that learners will readily engage with a broader range of culturally rich materials and develop both their cultural knowledge and intercultural understanding. It was interesting to note that films, often identified as a rich source of intercultural content (Gross 794), were not valued by teachers – yet the use of film seemed to have the most impact on participating students.

Students responded positively to the range of materials; these were authentic in nature, cognitively challenging yet accessible, spanning a range of skills and, most importantly, presented content which they could relate to.

6.5. CLIL for the Development in Intercultural Understanding

The CLIL framework followed, presenting the history content through the lens of French culture, provided a challenging yet engaging springboard to develop the students' intercultural understanding. Our initial premise was that intercultural understanding is defined as the willingness to alter one's viewpoint with the aim to discover and understand otherness. The CLIL intervention lessons provided ample opportunity for this process of discovery, an opportunity which learners embraced and indeed expressed strong affective motivation for – confirming Dalton-Puffer's argument that a CLIL approach can be successful in that respect (8). This was a particular achievement if we consider that many of the students who participated would not initially engage with the language subject content, perhaps an indication that an integrated approach could also address some of the issues identified by Davies (57) in the context of language learning in England.

If we further recall Byram's point that intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is the ability to demonstrate the necessary attitudinal attributes in order to interact and mediate between two perspectives (68), then we could argue that the range of work which students were able to access, but also to produce was testament to the potential of a CLIL approach for intercultural understanding (Appendices 1, 2 and 3).

7. Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, language and culture are intrinsically connected, and this should be reflected in our practice as language educators. It is hoped that this small-scale, action-based research project has demonstrated that learners have a clear appetite for intercultural learning, and much to gain in developing the key skills, knowledge and attributes required of them as future globally competent citizens.

Of course, the responsibility to equip them with such skills, knowledge and attitudes is one which must be shared by teachers, parents, educational organisations and policy makers alike. As we see a growing trend towards an education for global competencies, CLIL approaches

which envision the content through the lens of culture may offer solutions that are both practical and innovative, and that will contribute to making learners open to, and ready for interculturality.

To implement this vision of CLIL for intercultural understanding, three aspects should be considered:

- **A broad range of teaching materials**, authentic in nature, for real, diverse and relevant insights into the culture and language, at a level that is cognitively challenging;
- **An online community of CLIL practitioners**, to enable the sharing of successful CLIL materials and experiences, and to alleviate some of the constraints identified;
- **An opportunity for all learners**: CLIL approaches can be of benefit to all, and should not be limited to more advanced learners, be it on account of their age or their level of linguistic proficiency. Younger secondary learners may represent the best audience for intercultural teaching and gain in affective motivation for language learning – even (or especially) when they find language learning a challenge.

It is therefore argued that implementing CLIL for intercultural learning is **possible, desirable and necessary**.

Possible, because for every constraint identified, real or perceived, there is a solution – and practitioners' research is beginning to offer a cumulative corpus of evidence to that effect. Teachers are the agents of change in their classrooms, and teachers and learners alike should have an expectation that language learning is exciting, challenging and enriching. Anything less would be to short-change both learners and teachers.

Desirable, because there is evidence that an intercultural CLIL approach can contribute to learners' affective motivation for language learning, their intercultural understanding, and their ability to handle cognitively challenging content.

Necessary, because our language classrooms need to reflect learners' diversity, and where there is none, offer a platform to explore otherness, to ensure learners' readiness for the challenges and opportunities that a globalised world presents.

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APPENDIX 1

Presenting content through the lens of the target culture

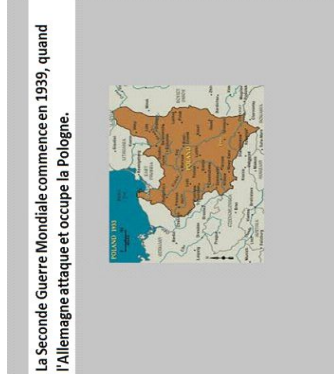
Here, learners were introduced to the events leading to the second world war, using the target language and presenting a different perspective to that they would have been familiar with.

Using highly recyclable language, applied in the topic's context

Grammatical concepts were introduced as part of the content study, with learners developing their linguistic understanding through exposure and application~

Providing language needed by the students to carry out the planned activities

This is an example of a speaking frame learners were provided with to complete one of the collaborative tasks.



Offering authentic content and using a wide range of sources and types of materials

In this lesson of the sequence, learners studied a range of songs and poems on the theme of the second world war, discussing a wide range of topics, for instance the Resistance movement.



Offering challenging content, manageable through the use of cognates

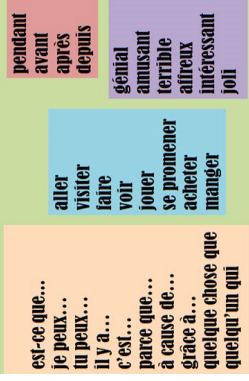
Here, learners were presented with a range of statements following the same sentence structure (repetition) and the use of cognates to support their understanding of more complex language (use of context).

Le mystère d'Oradour-sur-Glane

Oradour est un ancien village qui date de la période romaine.
Oradour n'est pas un vieux village: il a été construit en 1947.



Le mystère d'Oradour-sur-Gla



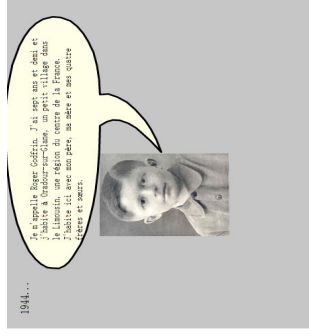
Offering intercultural experiences – through familiar themes, but unfamiliar perspectives

Here learners were given an opportunity to explore a known theme, that of the second world war, but through an unfamiliar perspective in more depth, by focusing on the events in Oradour sur Glane.



developing intercultural attributes, with a focus on empathy and a sense of curiosity

Here, learners were introduced to the events through the eyes (and the personal diary) of Roger Godfrin, a child survivor from the massacre in Oradour sur Glane.



Promoting affective motivation through the use of engaging and relatable content

Learners had the opportunity to watch a full-length movie in the target language (French) with English subtitles – engaging with a different and relatable medium.



supporting learners in accessing cognitively challenging language

This was a challenging listening task, involving authentic testimonials from survivors – the task was carefully scaffolded so that learners were successful in applying their listening skills.

	NOM	AGE	PROFESSION	HEURE?	OUT	AVEC?	BESSE?
1	Marguerite Bouffranche	47		14h	maison	filie	OUI
2	Roger Godfrin		écolier		école	professeur	NON
3	Robert Helens		mécanicien		Oradour	cognain	OUI
4	Jacqueline Freide	19		14h	maison	sœur et frère	NON

supporting learners in producing cognitively challenging language

This was another example of a speaking frame used for a paired activity where learners had to take on the role of one of the survivors sharing their experience with a reporter.

Tu l'appelles comment? Ça s'écrit comment? Tu as quel âge? Quel est ton métier? Où étais-tu? Avec qui étais-tu? Où t'ont amené(e) les allemands? Comment t'es-tu échappé(e)? Étais-tu blessé(e)?	J'ai ... ans Je me suis échappé(e) ... J'ai travaillé comme ... J'étais ... J'étais / Je n'étais pas ... J'étais avec ... J'étais avec ... Les allemands m'ont amené(e) dans ... Ça s'écrit ... Les allemands sont arrivés à ... heures.
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Developing learners' ability to work collaboratively to produce meaningful outcomes

Students had to produce their own account to share what they had learnt and were expected to supplement their work with their own research and illustrations.

Oradour-sur-Glane
You are going to prepare an article for the next newsletter / school website.
In this article, you will explain what you have been learning so far in French lessons about World War 2 and the village of Oradour-sur-Glane, and what happened there.
You will work in pairs.
The best 3 entries will win a prize and will feature on the school website / in the next newsletter.

Developing learners' ability to work independently to produce meaningful outcomes

Here, learners were asked to prepare an individual presentation in the target language, following pair practice in class.

LES DEVOIRS

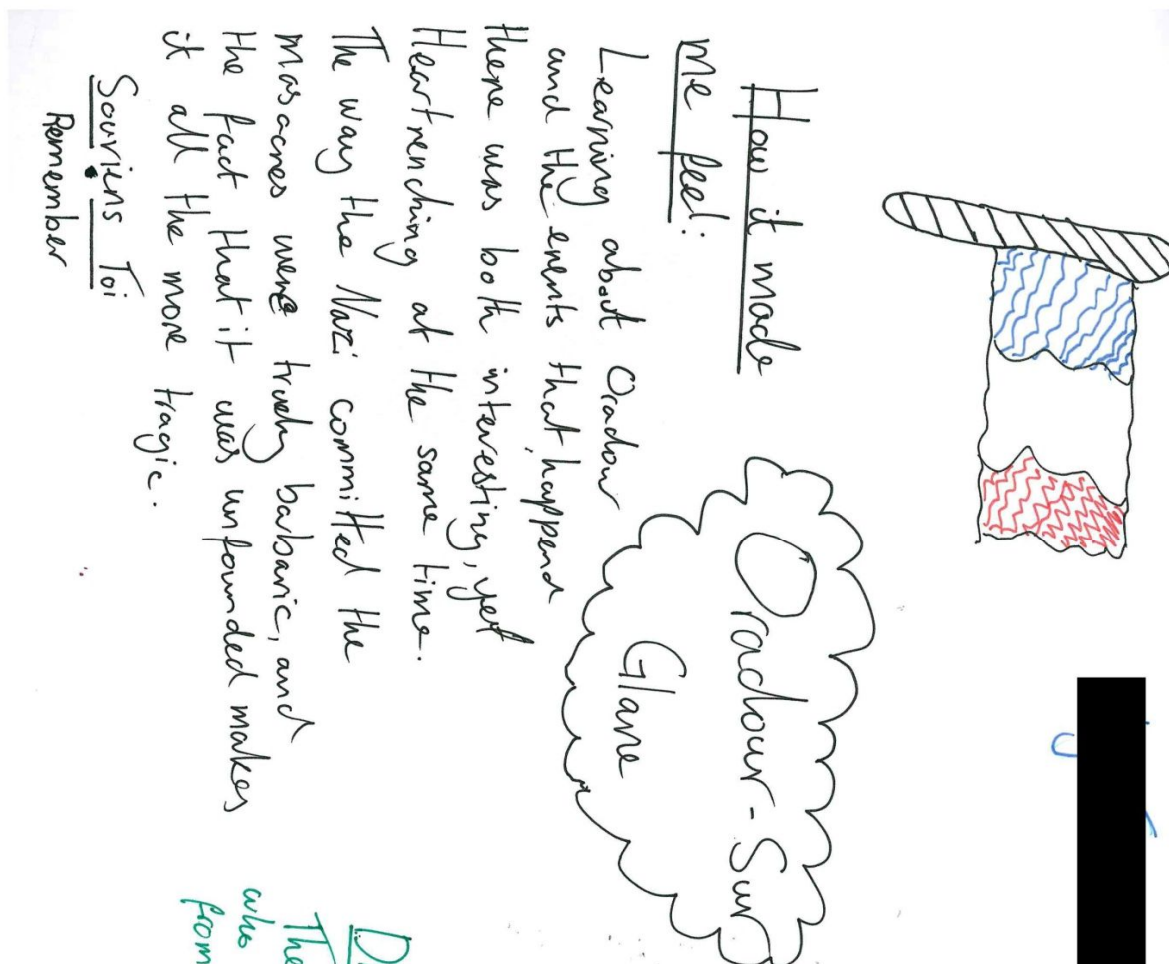
Imagine that you are one of the survivors. You may keep your name or invent a French name for yourself, or even research one of the other survivors of the massacre.

Prepare a spoken presentation lasting 2 minutes about yourself and your experience in Oradour. It should cover your basic personal details (name, spelling, age, job, family) as well as detail where you were, who with, what happened etc.

Use the notes you made today, as well as handouts from previous lessons. Use the internet to help you, if necessary.

You will present and/or record your presentation next lesson.

APPENDIX 2



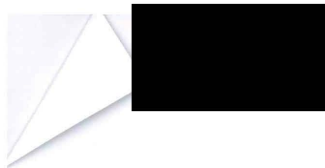
MIND MAP - PUPIL REFLECTION ON CONTENT (HALF-WAY THROUGH INTERVENTION PHASE)

What I have learnt:

We have learnt what happen in Oradour (10 June 1944) and why infamous. Some of the things we have learnt:-

- 642 people died,
- Oradour was the alone village,
- And more.

APPENDIX 3



Creative written piece from pupil putting himself in the place of one of the survivors. Low ability pupil who only started French at the start of the academic year. No writing frame provided. Pupils only used notes from previous tasks, such as the extended reading tasks, to complete the work.

Mon Témoignage

10th Juin 1944

Je m'appelle Sur Vivoir, ca s'écrit avec un V.

J'ai treize ans et je n'ai pas un métier. J'adore bonbons et faire du vélo. Je habité a la Oradour-sur-Glane, jusqu' a les allemands arrivé...

J'ai, je eu, une sœur, qui s'appelé Maria, elle est morte.

Quand les allemands arrivé, j'étais à l'école. Je savais que les allemands étaient dangereux parce que mon père a été lue par les a la guerre.

J'ai couru pour le forêt, avec un ami, qui s'appelle Roger. Nous avons vu la fumée, le village était massacré

*Après la guerre, je vais aller et résidé dans le
Oradour-sur-Vayes, avec ma grand mère et mon
grand père.*

