THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES KEY STAGE 3 CURRICULUM:

THE PERSPECTIVES OF POLICY MAKERS, TEACHERS AND PUPILS

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Abstract

This study focuses on the significance of Intercultural Understanding (IU) in the Key Stage 3 Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) curriculum. It investigates the perspectives of the three key stakeholders: policy makers, teachers and pupils. The research is situated against the backdrop of the 2008 National Curriculum revision which placed a new emphasis on Intercultural Understanding in MFL. At the macro level, it examines the drivers for this curriculum change and the extent to which the new terminology for the cultural dimension (which was previously called "cultural awareness") overlaps with theoretical research on intercultural languages education. At the micro level, it investigates teachers' conceptualisations of IU and the factors which affect their intercultural practice. It is equally concerned with pupils' perceptions about the significance of IU, investigating how these may vary as a function of demographic and social influences.

The study adopts a predominantly interpretative approach, employing semi-structured interviews with policy makers (n=2) and secondary MFL teachers (n=18). Pupil perceptions were investigated using a questionnaire survey (n=765) which was followed up with group interviews (n=5). The teacher and pupil samples were drawn from a total of fourteen state schools in the North West of England that comprise of mixed comprehensive, girls' comprehensive, boys' comprehensive, girls' grammar and boys' grammar schools.

The study finds that the reference to Intercultural Understanding in curriculum policy was primarily influenced by broader political concerns that overlooked intercultural languages theory and has resulted in ambiguous curriculum guidelines. This research reveals a new insight into the teacher perspective, showing that attitudes and pedagogical approaches to the cultural dimension are highly individualistic and are closely related to interests, personalities and life experiences. Furthermore, the pupil perspective on IU varies not only from school to school, but also from pupil to pupil. Overall, the findings suggest that effective IU curriculum development in MFL must be flexible enough to respond to and cater for this evident diversity.

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CA	Cultural awareness
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
NC	National Curriculum
ICC	Intercultural communicative competence
IcLL	Intercultural language learning
ICS	Intercultural sensitivity
IDI	Intercultural Development Inventory
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
IU	Intercultural understanding
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
PoS	Programme of Study
QC(D)A	Qualifications, Curriculum (and Development) Authority
SIDT	Social identity development theory
SSCMT	Social-cultural-cognitive-motivational theory
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools

1. Introduction

1.1 Personal background to the research

The original inspiration for this thesis came from two directions: the year abroad I spent as a third year undergraduate in Germany (1992-3) and my professional experience as a secondary school modern foreign languages (MFL) teacher (1995 – 2006). At the outset of the research journey, I had a hunch that the MFL curriculum may be more interesting if teachers could better translate some of the intercultural experiences they had gathered during an extended stay abroad into teaching and learning. At the same time, I had professional concerns about what I perceived, to be unappealing topic content in the English MFL National Curriculum. Thus, I wanted to investigate whether a greater focus on the cultural dimension may generate greater pupil enthusiasm for MFL.

Like most undergraduates of Modern Languages in British universities, I was required to spend the third year of my studies in the target language country. Whilst some of the experiences I relate are very personal and are by no means generalizable, it has been recognised in the literature (Ehrenreich, 2006, Göbel, 2009) that the year abroad of the MFL student is, in the main, a formative life experience. The majority of teachers who train to teach MFL in the English system will have taken this undergraduate route before embarking on the postgraduate teacher education course (PGCE). Equally, foreign students training in England to be language teachers of their mother tongue tend to have spent an extended period of time in the UK before the PGCE. Therefore, most MFL teachers will have gathered a wealth of intercultural experiences and knowledge during this period.

During my year in Germany, I became fascinated in the process of learning about another culture through the foreign language. It became clear to me that my linguistic ability

in German helped to provide insights into the German culture that would be more difficult to access through the medium of English. Learning in this way about German culture, however, was also formative for me for much more personal reasons. I entered the country in 1992 as an anxious 20 year old Jewish student with many family members who had died in the Holocaust. I was sceptical about my ability to feel at ease in a country that had once been Hitler's Nazi regime. As I spent more time immersed in the language and culture, however, I began to realise that many Germans were still deeply steeped in their past and were indeed involved in a complex process of coming to terms with it. Curiously, the German language has even coined a word to express this process: *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. I constantly heard or read reference to the Holocaust in the media and realised that for many Germans, even those who were born after the war, these historical events have had a profound impact on their identity and psyche. My foreign language ability and my historical and political knowledge (as I was a student on a combined degree in European Studies and Languages) enabled me to listen, read and talk to people about these complexities. It was through this process that I began to become less anxious about being in Germany and that many of my prejudices began to fade. In effect, my black and white perceptions about 'The Germans' from the start of the year transformed into shades of grey that were no longer quite so one-dimensional.

At the start of my career as an MFL teacher in 1995, I was keen to make the most of my range of formative cultural experiences. However, as I became submerged in the everyday hurly-burly of school life the cultural aspects moved lower down my list of priorities. My teaching became dominated by the demands of the National Curriculum, its assessment regime and the communicative teaching method for languages. That is not to say that I did not deal with it at all; it is simply the case that I became conscious eleven years later,

after I had made a career transition from secondary to higher education, that I did not deal with it nearly as much as I would have liked. At this time, I also wondered whether a greater emphasis on the cultural dimension may be a way of capturing young people's interest in languages learning which, in my own experience, I found to be so lacking. I had felt frustrated by the blank expressions on pupils' faces in response to some of the topics on Key Stage 3 Programmes of Study, GCSE exam syllabi and MFL textbooks such as describing families, talking about bedrooms or reporting missing items in lost property offices. However, once I started to research what I considered to be a problem, it soon became clear that my own personal experiences were located within and limited by a curriculum policy framework that was affecting teachers and pupils all over the country.

1.2 The MFL curriculum policy context

When I entered the profession in 1995, it was compulsory for all English teenagers to study a language until the age of 16. By 1997, all students at the end of the Key Stage 4 (for ages 14-16) were entered for a GCSE in a modern foreign language. However by 2002, the status of the subject changed when a Green Paper (DfES, 2002a) proposed that languages at Key Stage 4 should become an entitlement rather than a core subject. This policy decision was prompted by concerns about the growing number of school leavers without qualifications. A more flexible curriculum with greater choice, in which MFL was optional, was considered an appropriate response. Thus, by 2004, it was optional to sit a GCSE in an MFL and it is from here on that the number of exam entries started to fall. In 2001, 78% of pupils took a language at GCSE compared to only 50% in 2006. In 2009, 44% of pupils took at least one language GCSE and in 2010, the percentage had fallen to a mere 43%, almost half of the number 10 years earlier (CILT, 2010). This dramatic decline was indicative of the subject's

apparent lack of the popularity of the subject with both pupils and a significant mass of school leaders who made limited attempts to encourage pupils to take a GCSE in MFL. Figures from a survey conducted by ALL reported by Henry and Shaw (2002) in the *Times Educational Supplement* (24.5.2002) showed that nearly a third of the schools canvassed after the publication of the Green Paper actually planned to abandon compulsory language lessons for Key Stage 4 from September 2002. The available evidence pointed to majority of these schools being within the inner cities. Not only did this raise the matter of subject elitism, but was also indicative that school leaders thought that their positions in the League Tables may rise if pupils opted for subjects in which it would be 'easier' to secure a GCSE pass. In any case, the declining numbers were indicative of pupils' lack of motivation and an implicit acknowledgement in certain environments that there was limited value in their study.

However, the problems with motivation had been recognised by others as a concern long before publication of these statistics. For example, the Nuffield Foundation (2000) reported that pupils lacked motivation or direction in their study of MFL; Stables and Wikely (1999: 27) found that in spite of the advent of the GCSE and the compulsory and therefore enhanced status of MFL in Key Stages 3 and 4, there was "no discernible improvement in English pupils' attitudes to MFL since the mid-1980s"; and McPake et al. (1999) (in their study of the pupil perspective in Scottish secondary schools) established that young people were dissatisfied with what could be termed a 'mechanistic' approach to language learning. This approach referred to the communicative method for teaching and learning languages, whereby vocabulary and set phrases were taught for specific contexts with limited, if any, attention, to grammatical structure. The emphasis on vocabulary rather than structure meant that pupils faced difficulties in their production of independent language. They were all too often reliant on set phrases that had been learnt by rote.

The National Curriculum for MFL heavily promoted the communicative method; the emphasis on transactional language suited economic concerns of the day with the Single European Market created in 1992. A focus on transactional language would prepare students for the challenges they might meet in the world of work. As Kramsch (2005) points out, the performance-based and task-based methods of language teaching served an "agenda of economic profitability" (p. 549). However, the declining exam entries clearly indicate that this technicist driven curriculum was not popular with pupils and was beginning to flounder. Whilst the 2002 decision to make MFL an optional subject may be intended to provide curriculum flexibility, it was also an implicit acknowledgement that the communicative teaching method had been inadequate in achieving its original utilitarian goals. Pachler (2002) claimed that "What is needed is an overhaul of the curriculum and the current examination prescriptions together with an improvement of the 'usefulness' of the subject rather than the adoption of a defeatist attitude towards FL education" (p. 6). Pachler criticised the curriculum framework as a "diet geared towards the memorisation of a strictly finite number of expressions and phrases in narrowly situational dialogues across topics of mainly adult (vocational and tourist) interest" (p. 6). He called for a rethink of curriculum purpose which should involve a "genuine engagement with how a particular FL works and/or more broadly educational aims such as *intercultural (communicative) competence*" (p.5; emphasis added). Similarly, Grenfell (2000) criticised communicative language teaching as "too concerned with the ways to get things done in the language, to transact business [...] this has often led to a premature emphasis on modern languages as a vocational adjunct" (p. 26). Like Pachler, Grenfell called for serious consideration of the aims of language education which, *inter alia*, should also include the enhancement of intercultural understanding.

Between 1991 and 2008, there have been a staggering five changes to the MFL curriculum for Key Stage 3. On each occasion, there have been alterations to the cultural dimension, leaving its status ambiguous and essentially unresolved.

In spite of the overwhelming emphasis on utilitarian goals, the authors of the National Curriculum for MFL (NCMFL) did pay tribute to both an economic and a broader educational rationale for learning languages in the original curriculum documents. The Programme of Study (DES / WO 1991) stated that learners were to have frequent opportunities "to identify with the experience and perspective of people in the countries and communities where the target language is spoken" (p. 6). During Key Stage 4, pupils were to "investigate, discuss and report on aspects of the language and culture of these countries or communities" (p.26). However, although policy documents were generous in their provision of more edifying aims, tensions arose in their practical application. As outlined above, the focus on transactional language was a major barrier. In his discussion on the use of the communicative method and the target language, Buttjes (1990) remarked that the "language profession came to concentrate more and more on the efficiency of methods rather than educational evaluation" (p. 54). In Buttjes's view, the limitation of foreign languages to technical skills meant that its social significance for learners and it societal significance was potentially being lost. Furthermore, the NCMFL assessment regime which measured attainment in terms of "can do" linguistic skills (without any attention to cultural awareness or understanding) was criticised as sitting uneasily with the broader educational process in languages education (Giovanazzi, 1998).

Up until 2003, the status of the cultural dimension in the NCMFL remained relatively unchanged. In some respects, it might be argued that it even lost further status due to the removal of the Areas of Experience (that defined cultural contexts) in the 1999 curriculum review (DFEE & QCA, 1999). Similarly, the new emphasis on grammar in the 1999 revision potentially distracted from the importance of the cultural context of the language. However, the MFL Key Stage 3 Framework, published in 2003 (DES, 2003) suggested that the cultural dimension was to be given a new lease of life. The Framework contained five strands: words, sentences, texts (reading and writing), listening and speaking, and *cultural knowledge and contact* (my emphasis). However, the assessment criteria in the format of attainment targets which comprised only of linguistic skills remained unchanged. The scheme of assessment therefore catered for the first four strands, but not the fifth. Given that teachers were increasingly under pressure to improve results at the end of Key Stage 3 which were now published by the DfES in Key Stage 3 league tables, this did little to enhance the cultural awareness aspect of MFL curriculum which, in any case, had been struggling to assert itself over the years. In their review of the Key Stage 3 Framework, Evans et al. (2009) found that the cultural knowledge and contact strand was the one that received the least attention. They also noted that Ofsted (2004, 2008) had found that teaching and learning of cultural awareness received comparatively little attention.

However, in the 2007, there was yet another curriculum review that was to be launched with a phased implementation from 2008. The revised Programme of Study for MFL to be introduced in 2008 listed "intercultural understanding" (IU) as a new key concept underpinning the study of languages. The new Programme of Study explains: "Learning languages contributes to mutual understanding, a sense of global citizenship" (QCA, 2007a). In a subsequent webpage document, entitled 'New Opportunities in MFL' (QCA, 2008a), the

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) further endorsed that there should be "a greater emphasis on intercultural understanding" and that teachers were "to root language learning firmly in the cultural context of the target language". But would this more explicit reference to the broader educational aims of modern languages education balance out the hitherto prioritisation of instrumental, skills based performance? Furthermore, where did the impetus for an increased emphasis on intercultural understanding actually come from? A reading of the Languages Review (Dearing and King, 2007) which was written in response to the Nuffield Report (2000), suggests that one of the reasons for this new emphasis was to provide teenagers with more engaging curriculum content which had previously been so lacking. However, there were also indications that the new reference to "intercultural understanding" has been driven by education policy documents at a macro level and recently, political concerns within the EU and the UK.

1.4 Macro policy concerns

Over the last two decades, macro educational policy documents have stressed the need for young people to learn to become accepting of other cultures through the school curriculum (e.g. the Resolution on the European Dimension, European Commission, 1988, the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Council Of Europe, 2008, the Recommendation on Education for Democratic Citizenship, Council of Europe, 2002, the Report of the International Commission for Education, UNESCO, 1996). Policy makers around the world have responded to such directives in their national curricula with special attention to this in individual subjects, especially in modern languages. Since 2002, the Council of Europe has promoted the importance of *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (EDC) which strives for greater intercultural understanding and positive interaction between diverse cultural groups

within the EU. In terms of the school curriculum, the Council of Europe (2002) has suggested that this should involve "multidisciplinary approaches and actions combining civic and political education with the teaching of history, philosophy, religions, languages, social sciences" (p. 3). Furthermore, the Council of Europe named 2008 the Year of Intercultural Dialogue and urged educational establishments to promote the development of skills required for living in diverse, multicultural communities. In addition to policy drivers from Europe, policy makers in the UK were concerned about community cohesion at home as well as the UK's economic competitiveness in the globalised economy. Politicians were conscious of extremism and terrorism in the wake of race riots in northern English towns in 2001, the attack on September 11th in New York and the London July bombings in 2005. In 2007, the then Labour government commissioned the Ajegbo Report (DFES 2007) to address to issues of citizenship, national identity and the integration of minorities. The result was a new strand that was to be added to the already existing Citizenship curriculum and to be delivered as a cross-curriculum theme, entitled 'Identity and diversity: living together in the UK' (QCA 2008c).

Parallel to concerns about community cohesion, the publication of the Labour government's international strategy in education (DfES, 2004), explained that in order to achieve economic competitiveness, it was necessary for young people to acquire a "critical understanding of values and perceptions of other parts of the world" (p. 7). The fact that the Programme of Study for MFL explains that intercultural understanding involves "developing an international outlook" suggests that the term is likely to have been chosen to address economic imperatives and geopolitical changes.

Whilst there are reasons to believe that the new emphasis on intercultural understanding

reflected a pragmatic response to broader policy goals, there was, long before the revision of

the National Curriculum for 2008, a shift in thinking about the cultural dimension in language

learning among applied linguists. Risager (2007) notes that this shift, which she explains as

move from the bicultural to a transnational paradigm, occurred at the beginning of the 1990s.

The bicultural paradigm takes an essentialist view of culture which is static and associated

with the dominant group in a particular country whilst the latter recognises cultural

complexities and flows and seeks to bridge cultural differences. Other theorists talk about the

transcultural paradigm in terms of the intercultural approach (e.g. Byram and Zarate 1994,

Byram 1997, Kramsch 1998 and 1999).

In the mid 1990s, the Council of Europe asked Byram and Zarate to develop socio-

cultural competences to support those writing the Common European Framework of

Reference for Languages (published by the Council of Europe in 2001). In the resulting

document, Byram and Zarate (1994) underlined the limitations of the acquisition of

communicative competence with its focus on the native speaker model. Instead, they argued

for the redefinition of the language learner as the intercultural speaker who needed skills to

manage harmonious relationships with people from other countries and cultures. They

encapsulated these skills in their '*savoirs* model'. The '*savoirs* model' was further developed

by Byram in 1997 which resulted in a model for intercultural communicative competence

(ICC). The ICC model provides a pedagogical framework for constructing a curriculum.

Parallel to the work of Byram and Zarate (1994) and Byram (1997) there has been a

proliferation of other intercultural models for language learning. By way of example,

Kramsch (1993a) developed a pedagogical model for the creation of cultural meaning or

cross-cultural understanding of spoken or written texts; Crozet et al. (1999b) have presented a three pronged vision of intercultural languages teaching; and Sercu (1998) promoted the acquisition of intercultural communicative competence through a dialogue with (the) foreign culture(s), whereby pupils are actively involved in meta reflection on cultural texts or media. Sercu (1998) claimed that this process should result in identity formation and the development of personality.

The proponents of the intercultural approach, or the transnational paradigm, all argue that the study of culture and language should be closely integrated, i.e. the study of culture should occur through the medium of the target language. Although the first models of intercultural competence which were developed for international relations and business in the 1950s had an instrumental rationale (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009), the intercultural models for languages education have predominantly humanistic aims, whereby the aim is to develop openness to other cultures. These models are reviewed in more detail in Chapter 2.1.

1.6 Deciding on a research focus

When I first started to think about my research, I wondered how my personal experiences and concerns may relate to current deliberations about the MFL curriculum. I was curious to find out whether a greater emphasis on intercultural competence was a potential vehicle for enhancing young people's motivation. My original interest was almost instrumental in that I thought it may help to provide a solution to this problem.

In my initial proposal for PhD study, I formulated the following tentative title: "The Potential of Modern Foreign Languages to develop and promote the Teaching and Learning

of Intercultural Competence in English Secondary Schools: a critical evaluation". My original research aims were:

- to assess whether a greater focus on the cultural dimension aspect of the secondary MFL curriculum, had the potential to generate more pupil enthusiasm and enhanced subject status

- to co-relate the perspectives of policy-makers, teachers and pupils in order to understand what makes for a purposeful and motivational MFL curriculum.

The inquiry was to involve interviews with policy makers, teachers and pupils in addition to questionnaire surveys with the latter group. I planned to collect data from the perspectives of the three key stakeholders in curriculum policy in order to understand what they considered to be potential opportunities and constraints in making a cultural dimension more central. I was also interested in discovering similarities of opinion, or tensions, between the views of the three groups. There was a particular motivation to gather data from the pupil point of view as very little research exists in this area. Furthermore, to develop appropriate culture pedagogy for this age group, I felt that it was vital to explore the perceptions and experiences of the targeted learners.

In the proposal, I set out the following research questions:

1   What has been the rationale informing MFL teaching and learning policy in English secondary schools over the last two decades?

2   What are the various theoretical perspectives and interpretations of Intercultural Competence and how might these be appropriate for the MFL curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4?

3   What are the opportunities and constraints faced by secondary teachers in incorporating the teaching and learning of Intercultural Competence in the MFL curriculum?

4   What are pupils' experiences of engaging with other cultures through the MFL curriculum?

5   What are the implications for the development of Intercultural Competence if MFL learning at secondary level is optional?

1.7 Refinement of the research focus

As the research progressed, the focus of investigation became much more refined. There was a need to respond to the changes in the revised Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum and also to consider the practicalities of the research approach and design and some of the significant themes emerging from the data.

It was by coincidence that the outset of my inquiry overlapped with the revision of the Key Stage 3 curriculum in which "intercultural understanding" (IU) had now become a new key concept. This was a significant development in the context of my study. After all, as I have explained, the references to the cultural dimension in previous National Curriculum frameworks had so far received relatively little attention. I was curious to understand how this would play out in practice and how the different stakeholders perceived this change: was this a genuine shift in curriculum purpose or was it merely the rhetoric of policy documents?

The pre-eminence of the National Curriculum Attainment Targets (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and the related assessment regime have meant that in many classrooms

around the country, the focus in MFL pedagogy has been predominantly on linguistic skills. Given the change in terminology in the new curriculum documents, it seemed more appropriate to reframe the focus and title of my inquiry. The new title now became "The Significance of Intercultural Understanding in the Modern Foreign Languages Key Stage 3 Curriculum: the perspectives of policy makers, teachers and pupils" and the aim was to investigate what the three different stakeholders thought about the significance of the inclusion of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum. From a policy perspective, I was interested in investigating the thinking behind this shift and the extent to which the new term of reference coincided with intercultural languages theory.

There were also some practical issues to consider regarding research design and approach. Although I was confident that the research instruments enabled me to gather data from the three different perspectives, an initial analysis of some of the data presented difficulties in relating my findings directly back to the proposed research questions. It became clear that the data I had gathered contained more opinions and attitudes. Therefore, rather than assessing "the potential of MFL to promote and develop intercultural competence", (which would require an Action Research design), the investigation became more interpretive based on perceptions. Furthermore, the data also started to reveal some contrasting responses from pupils of different socio-economic backgrounds, gender and types of school. Similarly, there seemed to be a relationship between teacher perceptions and some of their life experiences. I refined the research questions in order to respond to both the curriculum revision and the type of data that I had started to collect. It seemed more relevant to investigate the following set of questions:

> 1a. What were the key influences on the new emphasis on intercultural understanding in the revised Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum?

1b. To what extent do pedagogical notions of intercultural understanding implicated in curriculum documents and guidance reflect theoretical models of intercultural languages education?

2. To what extent do the perceptions of policy makers regarding the significance of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum coincide with those of teachers and pupils?

3. How might teacher and pupil perceptions about the significance of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum differ according to:

- type of school;

- socio-economic group of the pupil population;

- gender of pupils;

- teacher demographic and biography?

Ultimately, the inquiry developed into an "illuminative evaluation" (Parlett and Hamilton 1977: 10) of how a policy initiative is developed, translated, operationalized and received. The study adopted a predominantly interpretative approach, employing the semi-structured interview as a data collecting tool with policy makers (n =2) and secondary MFL teachers (n=18). A questionnaire survey was used to investigate pupil perceptions (n=765) which was followed up with five pupil group interviews, each with six pupils, to explore emerging themes from the questionnaire in more detail. The group interviews were conducted in five different types of state schools (mixed comprehensive, girls' comprehensive, boys' comprehensive, girls' grammar and boys' grammar). The teacher and pupil participants all came from schools within the North West of England.

The resulting chapters of the thesis have been structured around the refined research questions. Chapter 2 provides the literature review and is divided into four sections: 2.1 deals with theoretical perspectives and empirical research in intercultural languages education; 2.2 analyses and critiques MFL curriculum policy and guidance documents; 2.3 deals with existing research on the teacher perspective on intercultural languages learning, whilst 2.4 draws from a research base both in and outside languages education (since specific literature on the pupil perspective on the cultural dimension in MFL is very limited). In Chapter 3, I discuss my research methodology. Chapter 4 presents and analyse the empirical findings: 4.1 deals with the interviews conducted with policy makers; 4.2 presents and discusses the data from the teacher perspective and 4.3 presents and discusses the pupil data from questionnaire surveys and group interviews. In Chapter 5, I discuss the possible implications of the research findings for future curriculum development. Chapter 6 contains some final reflections on the research journey.

2. The Literature Review

2.1 Intercultural Languages Education: theories and pedagogical models

This chapter presents theories and pedagogical models for intercultural languages education that have been developed in Europe, the U.S and Australia. It traces the development of a language-and-culture pedagogy that in more recent years has shifted from a bicultural to a transnational paradigm (Risager, 2007). The bicultural paradigm tends to take an essentialist view of culture which is static and enclosed whilst the latter recognises cultural complexities and flows and seeks to bridge cultural differences. As I will demonstrate, the intercultural approach strongly advocates close integration of language and culture learning. This chapter not only serves the purpose of providing theoretical perspectives on the issue that is central to the thesis, (i.e. the development of intercultural understanding through the MFL curriculum). It lays the foundations for answering research question 1b: *To what extent do pedagogical notions of intercultural understanding implicated in curriculum documents and guidance reflect theoretical models of intercultural languages education?* which will be explored in depth in section 2.2.

2.1.1 Historical overview

Pedagogical models of intercultural languages education started to emerge in the middle of the 1990s, although models of intercultural competence for international relations and business have existed since the 1950s (Spitzberg and Changnon 2009). As Spitzberg and Changnon (2009) have pointed out, there has been a proliferation of different theories of

intercultural competence in the social sciences over the last two decades. As I am most concerned with languages education, my review will be confined to this area only. Before presenting pedagogical models and theories, I provide an historical outline of the evolution of the intercultural languages paradigm.

Applied linguists have claimed the inseparable relationship between culture and language for many years (Risager, 2006). Language, after all, is an embodiment of culture and in turn is a means through which human beings construct their social world. Language itself is culture thus enabling human beings to know a culture from within (Kramsch, 1993a). Whilst this relationship remains largely uncontested, cultural aspects of languages education have been approached from different perspectives over the years.

In her monograph that traces the history of language and culture pedagogy, Risager (2007) distinguishes between the national and transnational paradigms of language and culture pedagogy. The former is based on a tradition that views language as part of a closed national universe of culture, history, people and mentality. In contrast, the latter recognises that language and culture are affected by geopolitical influences: transnational flows of people, commodities and ideas. Risager (2007) explains that culture pedagogy between the1880s up until the 1960s comprised of studying concrete representations of culture, e.g. literature or travel guides and phrase books for the upper classes who were able to travel abroad and were interested to gain a wider perspective of knowledge of land-and-people.

In the 1960s in the U.S., there was a move to making the cultural content of language teaching more visible. This took place in an era characterised by racial, ethnic and political conflicts, thereby pushing the importance of intercultural communication further up the agenda (Risager, 2007: 33). In the 1970s, culture pedagogy in the U.S. tended to adopt a pragmatic anthropological approach to facilitate intercultural communication for business or

political purposes. Thus, there was a preponderance to study culture with a small 'c', i.e. every day life and norms and values (as opposed to high culture). In the 1970s in Europe, culture pedagogy focused on the study of society and social structures. This was referred to as *Landeskunde* in West Germany, *civilisation* in France and *Background Studies* in the English speaking world. Kramsch (1993b: 399) suggests that the shift from the 'big C ' to 'small c' was also the consequence of the democratisation of language learning which was no longer demarcated for a small, privileged group. Both American and European approaches, however, continued to operate within the national paradigm.

Risager (2007) refers to 1980s as the decade of the "marriage of language and culture". Culture pedagogy became generalised and normalised alongside more specifically linguistic orientated pedagogy. But although this marriage had found broad acceptance, Risager argues that the connection had not yet been realised in practice and that culture and language existed in a dichotomous relationship (p102). Kramsch (2005) explains how social and political power in the international context have impacted on the direction and purpose of foreign language education, and indirectly, on the status of the cultural dimension. The preoccupation with communicative language pedagogy in the 1970s and 80s, which concerned itself with spoken language for real-life communicative situations, arose from the perceived need to "solve real world problems encountered in the economic sphere" and, in Europe, to serve the needs of migrant workers (Kramsch, 2005: 547). During this period, during which the notional-functional pedagogical method triumphed over the study of literature, the concept of cultural dimension became almost an adjunct to learning how to communicate.

In spite of the subordinate status of the cultural dimension in the 1980s, "there were was an evolution [in the UK] of *cultural awareness*' from 'background studies', in order to

realise some of the other aims of language teaching listed in the National Curriculum and other documents, namely the development of positive attitudes towards others and a better understanding of other cultures and one's own" (Byram, 2002: 43). Cultural awareness shifted the emphasis to examining cultural practices and values which were typical of the target language community. This paradigm of teaching culture involved "knowing what people from a given cultural group are likely to do and understanding the cultural values placed upon certain ways of acting or upon certain beliefs" (Crozet et al., 1999a: 9).

In the 1990s, however, critics started to underline the limitations of the cultural awareness and 'culture as practices' approach by arguing that this bilateral orientation views culture as homogeneous and relatively static (Byram, 2002, Crozet et al., 1999b). They contended that learners are potentially led to believe that the population, as a collective group, all act in a similar way, opening up the risk of stereotyping. It is here that we see a proliferation of research that can be categorised in a new transnational paradigm. As summarised by Risager (2007: 137) most of the theorists in the transnational paradigm "deal with intercultural issues and thereby the learning processes that bridge cultural differences".

2.1.2 The European Context

Kramsch (2005: 548) explains that the intercultural approach to modern languages education that started to emerge in Europe in the middle of the 1990s was a response by applied linguists to the "needs for cross-cultural understanding between immigrants and autochones" . These linguists underlined the limitations of the transactional communicative competence when sojourning beyond national borders in Europe and concentrated their focus on the significance of understanding "others".

In the mid 1990s, the Council of Europe commissioned Michael Byram and Geneviève Zarate to draw up socio-cultural competences to support those writing the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), published in 2001 (Council of Europe, 2001). Byram and Zarate's framework differed fundamentally to previous work done in this field in the Council of Europe in one major aspect. They rejected the native or near-native speaker model as the implicit model for the language learner (Byram and Zarate, 1994). In 1994, Byram and Zarate argued for the redefinition of the language learner as the intercultural speaker:

> Whatever the value of this for setting the attainment targets in linguistic competence, to expect learners to model themselves on native speakers in socio-cultural competence is to misunderstand learners' social situation. Native speakers live at the centre of a system of values and beliefs, from which they – ethnocentrically – perceive their own socio-cultural experience and their contact with other cultures. Language learners have a different outside perception of that same culture, from their own – ethnocentric – perspective. Furthermore, when native and non-native speakers interact, each has a perspective on the otherness of the interlocutor, which is integral to the interaction (Byram and Zarate, 1994: 3).

Byram and Zarate (1994: 5) contend that having been socialised by those around them into a given culture and thus acquiring identification with that culture, the language learner cannot, by default, renounce his/ her own cultural norms and identification and take on those of the host country. S/he will need to take on a new social status "that of representative of his country of origin [...], that of newcomer to a community whose conventions and rituals he will have to learn, and that of cultural intermediary between the communities with which he is connected". Socio-cultural competence thus involves the acquisition of the skills needed to manage the relation between the countries of origin and the country(ies) of the target language. An assessment of this competence should therefore take into consideration the ability to manage this relationship.

(i) *Byram and Zarate's 1994 'savoirs model'*

It is from the premise above that Byram and Zarate developed their *savoirs* model for socio-cultural competences. They not only defined these competences, but also laid out learning objectives, which provide teachers with a framework for constructing a curriculum and made suggestions about how these could be assessed. Whilst they acknowledged the challenges of assessing competences that include affective and psychological dimensions within the context of the traditional school curriculum (since these require qualitative assessment and imply a framework of values), they argue that an "assessment of socio-cultural competence would be disconnected from communication situations if it were to be measured only in terms of traditional school-type knowledge. It must measure "knowledge/ knowing that", "skills/knowing how", attitudes and values and the ability to learn" (p7). These are respectively referred to in French as *savoirs, savoir-faire, savoir-être* and *savoir apprendre*. They are explained in some more detail below.

- *Savoirs*: Knowledge of the native and interlocutor's country. This also involves knowledge of the processes through which social identities have been formed.

- *savoir être*: Attitudes which are open to criticism of 'national' values and prepared to expect culture gaps. This involves a willingness to suspend beliefs in one's own meanings and behaviours and to analyse them from a viewpoint of others. Savoir *être* does not come about by simple consequence of knowledge. And without *savoir être*, the skills of *savoir faire* are likely to be value-laden.

- *savoir apprendre*: Skills of discovery which involve the ability to acquire new knowledge of culture or cultural practices. This involves recognising significant

phenomena in foreign environments and the capacity to elicit meanings and connotations in real time.

- *Savoir faire*: skills of integrating *savoir être, savoir apprendre* and *savoirs* in specific situations of bicultural contact. This involves the ability to manage dysfunctions, drawing upon knowledge and skills.

For the sake of comprehensiveness and clarity, Byram and Zarate formulated learning and assessment objectives. For example, learning objectives related to *savoirs* may include acquiring knowledge about national or cultural identity, social diversity, foreign influences or operations of institutions. Byram and Zarate affirmed that "it is impossible to supply a closed list of items of knowledge constituting the entirety of a foreign culture" (p12). Decisions on content and its level of complexity should be based on a preliminary assessment of learners' existing knowledge and needs and should take into account the learners' cognitive ability and stage of development (p.13 and p.19).

Objectives relating to *savoir être* include "openness to other cultures" and the "ability to distance oneself form the ordinary relation to cultural difference" (p9). The authors propose that learners conduct a self assessment here after the experience of an exchange or other contacts. Learning objectives and related assessment opportunities are set out for each of the *savoirs*. These become increasingly explicit in Byram's later work (Byram, 1997). In his 1997 monograph, Byram argues that the curriculum must be planned for each context, taking into account the geo-political context, the learning context and the learners' developmental stages. Although Byram recognised assessment of socio-cultural competence as a complex activity, he considered it paramount that learners should acquire formal recognition of their capacities with certification "which enables them to gain acceptance as sojourners in another society" (Byram, 1997: 2).

In 1997, Byram reiterated the limitations of the native speaker language learning model, stressing that learning should focus on developing the skills needed to become an intercultural speaker with intercultural communicative competence. He combined *savoir apprendre* with *savoir faire* and added *savoir comprendre*. The latter *savoir* involved interpreting and relating aspects of culture to one's own and did not necessarily involve interaction with the interlocutor. Most significantly, Byram added an entirely new *savoir* which politicised the model: *savoir s'engager*.

In adding this new competence related to action, Byram argues for the integration of intercultural competence in foreign languages education within a philosophy of political education or education for citizenship. In so doing, he draws parallels between his *savoirs* model and Gagel's model for *politische Bildung* (political education) (Gagel, 1983). Byram is keen to promote the "development of learners' critical cultural awareness, with respect to their own country and others" (Byram, 1997: 33) and their capability to partake in European integration. Whilst the provision of knowledge of the culture(s) of the target language is a necessary stepping stone – and has indeed been the traditional way of approaching culture in foreign languages teaching – he argues that it should be complemented by focusing on "processes and methods for analysing social processes and their outcomes [that will provide] learners with critical tools" (Byram, 1997: 19).

(iii) Sercu: learner autonomy, constructivist learning and identity formation

Drawing on Byram's (1997) and Byram and Zarate's (1994) savoirs model, Sercu (1998, 2002) stresses the significance of *savoir apprendre* and *savoir comprendre* in their contribution to autonomous and constructivist styles of learning. Sercu (1998) is critical of

culture related tasks in textbooks that require low level of learner involvement as they fail to engage the learner in comparison and do not develop empathy or cultural learning skills. She is equally critical of cultural learning that is teacher-centred and takes a monologist approach. Sercu argues that acquiring intercultural communicative competence should involve a dialogue with (the) foreign culture(s), whereby pupils are actively involved in the processing of information. Thus, learners should be encouraged to construct their own knowledge and language-and-culture courses should include tasks that promote the development of meta-reflection. Sercu (1998, 2002) also stresses that teaching for intercultural communicative competence should also focus on identity formation and the development of personality.

(iv) MFL and citizenship education

Starkey (2002), an English citizenship educationist who worked for the Council of Europe, stresses the political role of languages education. He claims that it is a "site of learning for democratic citizenship" and that there are many opportunities available to languages teachers to contribute this (2002: 29). Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) strives for greater intercultural understanding and positive interaction between diverse cultural groups, which in turn, should contribute towards harmony and sustainability of democracy and peace. EDC promotes anti-racism education and although languages education cannot contribute to antiracism on its own, Starkey argues that it has the advantage of facilitating the opportunity of direct experience of the foreign reality. He claims that creatively produced materials used in the language lesson can address "socially and politically controversial issues" (2002: 13) within target language communities, drawing the learner's attention to intercultural perspectives within societies.

Starkey makes more explicit links between EDC and languages education by comparing Audigier's (2000) classification of the core competencies for democratic

citizenship with the sociocultural competencies and skills in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) (Council of Europe, 2001). Audigier's competencies comprise (1) cognitive competencies, (2) affective competencies and those connected with the choice of values, and (3) those connected with action. The sociocultural competencies in the CEF were informed by Byram and Zarate's *savoirs* model (Byram and Zarate, 1994). In 2005, Osler and Starkey developed the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship, addressing its relevance in global rather than simply European terms (Osler and Starkey, 2005). They argue that the impending forces of globalisation and the consequences the terrorist attacks of September 11th in 2001 have made a cosmopolitan or intercultural stance all the more significant and that the "languages classroom is a key place in which knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for cosmopolitan citizenship can be developed and practised"(p.21).

2.1.3 Intercultural models for language learning beyond Europe

The intercultural paradigm has also attracted the attention of languages educationists in the U.S. and Australia. Whilst political integration and the creation of economic union have resulted in migration within European borders, the U.S and Australia have experienced wide scale migration from different continents, resulting in the creation of complex multicultural societies. As is the case in Europe, the proponents of intercultural languages education in Australia and the U.S. reject the multicultural paradigm that conceptualises society as compromising of a dominant host majority in co-existence with minority communities.

(i) Crozet et al.'s (1999) three pronged vision

Writing in Australia, Crozet et al. (1999b) present a three pronged vision of intercultural language teaching. They pay particular attention to the cultural links in the language itself and are critical of communicative language teaching for its failure to acknowledge the importance of teaching a foreign language as the most overt expression of culture. In the first instance, they stress that intercultural competence must be acquired through the target language itself since a divorce between language and culture would be more likely to take the perspective of the autochone culture which could restrict empathy. Secondly, learners should come to appreciate the links between language and culture and compare those in their first language with the target language. Finally, learning should promote 'intercultural exploration' and involve 'mediation of a third place between two differing cultures' (Crozet et al., 1999b: 13). In this third place, a concept that they have borrowed from Kramsch as we shall see below, one need not surrender one's own boundaries, but be capable of managing encounters that are 'comfortable to all participants'. Within this framework, language education serves the purpose of maintaining or creating harmony and peace (Ibid).

(ii) Kramsch's Notion of a Third Place

Kramsch (1998, 1999), an American applied linguist, also emphasises the need to replace the native speaker norm with the intercultural speaker model. Like Byram and Zarate (1994) and Byram (1997) she rejects the notion of native speaker competence. However, rather than arguing that acquiring native speaker competence is not possible from the standpoint of socio-cultural identity, she claims that the three types of privileges that have been traditionally associated with the native speaker are no longer justifiable, namely "entitlement by birth, right acquired through education, and prerogative of membership in a social community" (1998:19).

A competent linguist with a different mother tongue, for example, may be able to produce more grammatically accurate language or be in a better place to analyse language than one who was simply born into the language. By contrast, the first generation of an immigrant family may never acquire full native proficiency if the home language is different to the mainstream language of the country of residence. Kramsch (1998: 24 and 26) elaborates on the large scale variations in linguistic norms and linguistic competence amongst so-called native speakers and claims that "it is the desire for authenticity that is now making foreign language educators pause and wonder whether a pedagogy of the authentic should not better be replaced by a pedagogy of the appropriate [...] The notion: one native speaker, one language, one national culture, is of course, a fallacy". It is from this standpoint, that she maintains that a pedagogy orientated toward the intercultural speaker who has the ability to knowingly interpret and appropriately adapt to different social contexts is more fitting.

In 1993, Kramsch developed a pedagogical model that concerns itself with dialogue between the spoken or written text with the listener or reader (Kramsch, 1993a) . She lays importance on the need for the learner to understand the cultural context in which a text is both produced and received. For example, a person will produce or interpret a representation of their *own* culture (C1) because of his or her socialisation within that culture (C1'). A *different* culture (C2) is also interpreted by influences within one's own culture. However, this does not necessarily consider how the members of this other culture perceive themselves (C2'). An example from Kramsch's later writing (2003) helps to illustrate this point. The interpretation of an American text (which is a representation of the target language culture: C2) by German learners of American English is likely to be influenced *inter alia* by: their immersion in German culture; the portrayal of the U.S in the German media; the American literature that they read and, until more recently, the presence of the American army in

Germany (C2"). The German image of America is also influenced by how Germans see themselves and has "only partially to do with American reality". The creation of cultural meaning or cross-cultural understanding should occur through dialogic inter-subjectivity in a "third place" (Kramsch, 1993a), whereby the learner is prompted to reflect on how their socialisation affects their perceptions of their own culture and the interpretation of another. In order to realise this, Kramsch proposes a four step approach:

1. Reconstruct the context and production and reception of the text within the foreign culture (C2, C2').

2. Construct with the foreign learners their own context of reception, i.e. find an equivalent phenomenon with its own network of meanings (C1, C1').

3. Examine the way in which C1' and C2' contexts in part determine C1" and C2", i.e. the way each culture views each other.

4. Lay the ground for a dialogue that could lead to change.

(Kramsch, 1993a: 210)

Kramsch's focus is hermeneutic and tends to be at the level of the individual, i.e. understanding oneself in relation to others. She makes less explicit reference to the application of cross-cultural understanding for the sake of political engagement in wider society. She urges against the naive acceptance of "authentic" texts which are not produced for pedagogic reasons, but for the sake of natural communication with the aim of fulfilling a social purpose in the language community in which they were produced. If cultural competence of the language learner is to be realised, the authenticity does not lie in the text itself (as he/she cannot 'read' it from the same socio-cultural perspective of the text producer),

but the uses the speakers and readers make of it. The teacher's task is to give the learner the means of properly authenticating such a text.

(iii) Richards et al.'s (2010) Intercultural Language Learning (IcLL) Framework

A less well known framework for intercultural languages learning has been developed by a group of teacher educators in New Zealand (Richards et al., 2010). Richards et al.'s framework is not original in that it is theoretically underpinned by the work of Byram (1995, 1997), Kramsch (1993), Crozet and Liddicoat 1999 and Elsen and St. John (2006), (all cited in: Richards et al. 2010). The IcLL framework was developed to serve as an observational tool for a research study that investigated the extent to which in-service teachers on a language teaching professional development course incorporated intercultural languages learning in their classes. In addition to being a data collecting tool, however, the IcLL framework also serves as a pedagogical model that can be used to structure and plan learning.

The IcLL framework comprises of five inter-connected domains: (1) make connections, (2) compare and contrast, (3) link culture and language, (4) reflect on own culture through the eyes of others and (5) interact in target language across boundaries. The authors demonstrate how this framework could be applied to a Spanish lesson for beginners on picnics. For example, to address the first domain, the learners could discuss who goes on the picnic, where they go, the food they eat and compare their own experiences with those represented in a picture in a South American country where a teenager, 'Carlos' is enjoying a day out with family and friends. As far as the second domain is concerned, pupils could compare the foods they normally eat on picnics with the food eaten by the South American teenagers. In the third domain, pupils would compare the expression "Buen apetito!" and common brand names for foods/ drinks they consume with the expressions they use before a meal or brand names in their own country. To address the fourth domain, the learners would

be asked to imagine what Carlos may think if he came to visit them in their home country and went on a picnic with them. Finally, for the fifth domain, pupils could make internet contact with Carlos and ask them questions about their school lunch time and the foods they eat.

The beauty of this framework is its user-friendliness and its direct relevance and applicability to language learning for beginner learners of MFL. Furthermore, it is immediately accessible and comprehensible to beginning and experienced teachers. Teachers would greatly benefit from more practical examples like these where theory has been translated into more concrete examples of the beginners' MFL classroom. Moreover, such models may greatly assist the promotion of IU in a practice-driven ITE culture.

2.1.4 Intercultural languages education and critical pedagogy

Guilherme (2002), who advocates critical pedagogy through languages education, takes a more philosophical and theoretical stance. Above all, she emphasizes the political role of foreign language education. She promotes the view that languages education should prepare young people to become critical and committed citizens "capable of establishing personal and professional relationships across cultures in the search for individual and collective improvement and empowerment, at different levels"(Guilherme, 2002: 1). Within the framework of critical pedagogy, the teacher should involve him/herself and others in the modes of inquiry that support freedom, equality and solidarity. An intercultural speaker is able to appreciate

> the different narratives available, by reflecting upon how they articulate, how they are positioned in terms of each other and how their positions affect their perspectives. S/he tries to prevent deep-seated prejudices from influencing her/his judgements of other cultures, for example by not taking an ethnocentric evaluation of them whatever her/his personal response to them may be (Guilherme, 2002: 129).

Guilherme argues that foreign culture education should operate within a multi-perspective framework and consider Human Rights Education and Education for Democratic Citizenship as permanent references. She proposes an interdisciplinary model for teaching/learning foreign cultures that integrates cultural studies, intercultural communication and critical pedagogy. Cultural studies offer perspectives that abolish the division between high and popular culture and provides particular methods of inquiry and analysis. Intercultural communication supports the integration of theory and practice through structured experiential learning in order to facilitate communication and interaction with people from different linguistic / cultural backgrounds. Finally, critical pedagogy promotes strategies that encourage reflection, dialogue, action, difference, dissent and empowerment.

Conclusion

In summary, the review of the literature on intercultural languages theory and models demonstrates that the shift towards the transnational paradigm has been prompted by: European economic and political integration, worldwide migration, disenchantment with policies that favour dominant cultural groups, theoretical criticism of the native speaker and authentic materials approach and the desire to promote languages education as a vehicle for developing critical citizenship and anti-racism education in today's complex post-modern society. This review provides a useful point of reference for the critique of policy and guidance documents that refer to intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum

2.2 Key Stage 3 Curriculum Policy Documents

Having reviewed theoretical perspectives on intercultural languages education in section 2.1,

this section sets out to review and critique the documents that may reveal answers to the first

two research questions:

1a. What were the key influences on the new emphasis on intercultural understanding

in the revised Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum?

1b. To what extent do pedagogical notions of intercultural understanding implicated

in curriculum documents and guidance reflect theoretical models of intercultural

languages education?

In his discussion of educational policy, Ball (1993: 11) has argued that it "is crucial to

recognise that the polices themselves, the texts, are not necessarily closed or complete. The

texts are the product of compromises at various stages [... that] result in a blurring of

meanings within texts". In this section, I investigate the influences on the text and highlight

that competing aims and interests have resulted in a policy that renders the nature and status

of the cultural dimension ambiguous. [1]

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[1] I refer to Ball's more general comments about curriculum policy analysis rather than research that is concerned with language policy in particular. Language policy tends to be concerned more with issues affecting the choice of the dominant language in multilingual societies such as: Whose language is to be taught? Whose linguistic variety constitutes the 'standard'? Shall a particular language be the medium or the object of instruction? GÁNDRA, P. & GÓMEZ, M. 2009. Language Policy in Education. *In:* SYKES, G., SCHNEIDER, B. & PLANK, D. (eds.) *Handbook of Education Policy Research.* New York: Routledge. These are not the issues under consideration in the policy analysis in this chapter. However, Ruiz (1984) cited in: Gándra & Gómez ibid. suggests that one way in which language policy can be conceptualized is in relation to questions around "language- as- resource", i.e. language learning to promote business, commerce and international cooperation. I will refer to Ruiz's "language-as-resource" perspective in my discussion of the Global Dimension in the curriculum.

In section 2.2.1, I provide an overview of the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum reform in 2008 with particular reference to MFL and the appearance of the term intercultural understanding (IU) in the Programme of Study and subsequent curriculum guidance. Section 2.2.2 critiques the statements relating to IU in the Programme of Study (PoS) , arguing that they are open to multiple interpretations that make it difficult to decipher how the teaching and learning of IU differs from its antecedents of "cultural awareness" or "cultural knowledge and contact" (DES/ WO, 1991, DfEE and QCA, 1999, DfES, 2003). In section 2.2.3, I broaden my examination of policy to include a comparison of the language used in the PoS with other curriculum documents. This enables a contextual analysis that considers possible influences on IU policy from macro and meso levels (Taylor et al., 1997). Section 2.2.4 makes an in depth comparison of curriculum documents and guidance with theoretical models of intercultural languages learning. The comparison with theoretical research also enables an exploration of the possible values that underpinned the policy process (Ham and Hill, 1984). Finally, in section 2.2.5, I discuss the implications that the resulting documents may have for action.

2.2.1 The new emphasis on Intercultural Understanding

In 2007, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) conducted a significant revision of the Key Stage 3 Curriculum. The rationale for the changes was based on inspiring and engaging learners with a broader curriculum which would equip and prepare them for adult life in the rapidly changing high-tech post-industrial world. The architects of the curriculum started with broad aims, rather than the individual subject areas, asking the question: What are we trying to achieve? The aims (successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens) were of a holistic nature and by consequence, would demand a greater degree of

cross-curricular attention (QCA, 2007b). Learning was to be organised with whole curriculum dimensions that included, amongst other themes, "identity and cultural diversity" and the "global dimension".

The Programmes of Study (PoS) for individual subjects were also revised. Each of these received an importance statement, outlining "why the subject matters and how it can contribute to the aims" and "key concepts" that identify "the big ideas that underpin the subject". The new MFL PoS for 2008 states: "Learning languages contributes to mutual understanding, a sense of global citizenship" and lists "*intercultural understanding*" as one of the four key concepts underpinning the study of languages (QCA, 2007a). (The other three concepts were Linguistic Competence, Knowledge about Language and Creativity.)

This was the first time that the term *Intercultural Understanding* appeared in English secondary MFL policy. Prior to this, the cultural aspects of MFL education had been referred to as "cultural awareness" or "cultural knowledge and contact" (DES/ WO, 1991, DfEE and QCA, 1999, DfES, 2003). As I have demonstrated, however, language theorists had started referring to the "intercultural" languages education in the middle of the 1990s. Policy in this regard was clearly lagging somewhat behind theoretical research.

In the summer of 2009, the QCDA (now the Qualification, Curriculum and Development Agency) went a step further and proposed that Intercultural Understanding become a National Curriculum Attainment Target with levels of achievement. This proposal was declined in the autumn after a public consultation. However, IU received new impetus in the Renewed Key Stage 3 Framework for Languages in September 2009 where it became a curriculum strand.

In the revised PoS for Key Stage 3, IU is elaborated and broken down into

a.   Appreciating the richness and diversity of other cultures
b.   Recognising that there are different ways of seeing the world, and developing an international outlook.

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines 'appreciate' *inter alia* to mean "to esteem adequate or highly" and "to recognize the full worth of". The use of word 'appreciating' therefore implies that the authors expect pupils to develop positive attitudes about cultural differences. The word 'richness' would also suggest that pupils have something to gain from learning about other cultures. However, the second statement is more ambiguous in this regard. The OED defines 'recognise' as "to treat as valid, as having existence" or as "entitled to consideration". 'Recognising' could therefore imply some sort of acceptance, but it does not necessarily mean that learners should feel positively about a range of cultures. The development of an 'international outlook' may be considered as important to serve utilitarian rather than humanistic goals. In the explanatory notes IU is contextualised:

> Learning a new language provides unique opportunities for pupils to explore national identities and become aware of both similarities and contrasts between different countries including their own (QCA, 2007a).

This explanation seems to refer to the process of acquiring IU, rather than the desirable consequences. "Explore" may refer to the process of interpreting the foreign culture and relating it to one's own that results in explanation and analysis or simply the acquisition of a shallower 'know that' type of knowledge. This ambiguity is further compounded by the phrase "become aware". Are learners to state similarities and differences, explain them or analyse them?

It is therefore unclear how sophisticated or deep the exploration of "national identities" should be. Melde (1987), cited in Byram and Zarate (1994), provides a helpful

way of conceptualising progression in intercultural learning, drawing on theories of cognitive development. Learners should start with cultural matters at the level of the individual or in the private sphere and progress to issues related to the world of public life and socio-political struggles at an appropriate stage in their cognitive development. The PoS, in contrast, does not provide guidance on this matter. In addition, the term "identities" seems conflated with "countries". It is not apparent how these may differ from one another or whether teachers are to focus on differences and similarities related to both of these concepts.

There are further difficulties presented by the phrase "national identities". The complex notion of what constitutes a country's national identity may be understood as an affinity to a "named human community with attachment to a historic homeland, which has a shared history, shared symbols, traditions and practices" (Byram et al., 2009: 4). However, individuals can also have multiple identities with allegiance to different social and or, cultural groups. In describing identities as "national", the writers of the PoS paint a picture of an essentialist notion of identity which have been criticised by Crozet et al. (1999b) and Byram (2002) as viewing culture as homogeneous or static and thus liable in the creation of cultural stereotypes. In the PoS explanatory notes, diversity is described in the following terms:

> Many languages are spoken in more than one country and there may be significant cultural differences between these countries.

Interestingly, there is no mention of the cultural, ethnic or religious diversity within countries. Diversity is explained simply as referring to the different communities in which the target language is spoken.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that the PoS does not mention whether IU related learning is to take place in the target language. Intercultural languages education theory

embraces the integration of both the linguistic and cultural dimension (Sercu et al., 2005). Curriculum guidance for the PoS in a QCA webpage (QCA, 2008a) is also ambiguous here. On the one hand, teachers are encouraged "to root language learning firmly in the cultural context of the target language". Such learning should include looking at "values, beliefs, opinions and attitudes of people who live in countries and communities where the target language is spoken, as well as discussing views about British society". On the other hand, however, it is questionable whether Key Stage 3 learners have the linguistic skills to be able to engage in the study of these complex issues through the foreign language. This initial analysis of the PoS thus reveals that this is a text with a great deal of "blurring of meanings" (Ball, 1993: 11) in which the implications for pedagogy of the cultural dimension are ambiguous. This ambiguity prompts the question whether the reference to IU was perhaps more about articulating politically acceptable discourse than a new pedagogy (Peiser and Jones, 2012). An analysis of other policy texts on other aspects of the curriculum helps to substantiate this point.

2.2.3 The influence of structural factors

(i) Intercultural Understanding in MFL for the sake of community cohesion?

It is worth comparing the language used in the MFL PoS with that found in the Ajegbo Report (DfES, 2007). The latter was commissioned in response to official concerns about violent extremism and terrorism in the wake of race riots in northern English towns in 2001, the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 and the London July bombings in 2005. Its remit was to address the debate surrounding citizenship, national identity and the integration of minorities and to make educational policy recommendations for fostering community cohesion.

The result was the proposal of a new fourth strand to be added to the already existing Citizenship curriculum and to be delivered as a cross-curriculum theme, entitled 'Identity and diversity: living together in the UK'. In order for pupils to learn to live together, they were to be given learning opportunities to "explore their own identities; discuss and question a range of opinions, values and beliefs; engage critically with controversial issues, including national identities" (QCA, 2008c).

Interestingly, this document also refers to "national identities". As Osler (2008: 21) has pointed out: "Educators cannot assume that their students will identify first and foremost with the national community or that they will necessarily see this community as their primary focus of allegiance. The various communities with which young people identify are likely to reflect a range of values and beliefs, both religious and secular." Whilst the Ajegbo Report does not refer to 'intercultural understanding' *per se*, one can immediately draw parallels between the language used in this document and the definitions of IU in the MFL PoS. IU in the MFL curriculum may therefore be an extended arm of the Identity and Diversity strand, serving the community cohesion agenda, rather than an educational concept suited to MFL education in particular.

(ii) The Global dimension

In 2004, the DfES published their vision and strategy for a global dimension in education, skills and children's services in document entitled "Putting the World into World-Class Education" (DfES, 2004). In this document, the Department expressed a clear commitment to developing young people's understanding of the world in which we live. This includes "the values and cultures of different societies; the ways in which we are increasingly dependent upon one another; and the ways in which we all, as global citizens, can influence and shape the changes in the global economy, environment and society of which we are part" (p.1). The document stresses the importance of social and economic well-being in a global society.

Realising Goal 1 of the strategy involves "instilling a global dimension into the learning experiences of all children and young people" through eight cross-curricular concepts: citizenship education, an understanding of social justice, sustainable development, diversity, and a critical understanding of values and perceptions of other parts of the world and global interdependence (p.6). The eight concepts "should permeate every subject of the National Curriculum" (p.7).

By paying tribute to intercultural understanding in the revised KS3 MFL curriculum, policy makers would appear to have incorporated the concepts of "diversity" and a "critical understanding of values and perceptions of other parts of the world" from the global dimension. On balance, the overall tone of the international strategy document is instrumental rather than fundamentally educational. All three goals of the international strategy make reference to the need for economic competitiveness and benefits of overseas trade. The DfES's primary concern would appear to have been the UK's capacity to compete in the global economy. Taylor et al. (1997: 54) have noted how the rhetoric of "global imperatives" now underpins a host of policy prescriptions. They also note that the globalization rhetoric in policy documents tends to pay much more attention to economic rather than cultural issues. The phrase "developing an international outlook" in the MFL PoS also implies an economic emphasis whereby intercultural understanding is considered as an instrumentally important resource (cf. reference to Ruiz (1984) on language policy concerned with "language-as-resource", see p.33, footnote 1).

(iii) Alignment with Key Stage 2 policy: enabling smooth transitions

Although the reference to IU was the first of its kind on MFL secondary policy documents, this term first appeared in the Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002b) and was later used in the Key Stage 2 (primary) Framework for Languages (DfES, 2005). Interestingly, the language

in the latter document is more attentive to affective learning and holistic development of the child than the Key Stage 3 PoS:

> Children develop a greater understanding of their own lives in the context of exploring the lives of others. They learn to look at things from another perspective.
>
> (DfES, 2005: 8)

Nonetheless, one is prompted to question whether the repetition of the term 'intercultural understanding' in Key Stage 3 served the pragmatic goal of yet another aspect of document alignment at a time when policy makers and the National Strategies (a series of non-statutory but very influential practical guidelines developed by the DfES / DCSF designed to improve teaching and learning) were increasingly concerned with the smooth transition and transfer from primary to secondary school (DCSF, 2008, House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2005). There were also concerns from MFL primary specialists working for Local Authorities and in Higher Education that efforts should be made to dovetail the transition between the two age phases (Bolster et al., 2004).

(iv) Alignment with European Policy

There seemed to be an additional impetus for policy alignment from the Council of Europe which in 2008   published a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008). The intention of the White Paper was to create a model for managing and appreciating cultural diversity while promoting social cohesion. It was based on a wide scale consultation amongst member states that revealed a belief that multicultural policy had been found inadequate as it continued to pay tribute to the cultural norms of different groups –minority and majority – which were left to live alongside each other, rather than interact with one another, doing little to encourage dialogue between cultures. "Achieving inclusive societies needed a new approach, and intercultural dialogue was the route to follow" (p. 9).

Such an approach has clear implications for education as the skills necessary for intercultural dialogue are not automatically acquired, but instead, need to be learned. The White Paper asserted that schools "are responsible for guiding and supporting young people in acquiring the tools and developing attitudes necessary for life in society [which includes] introducing respect for human rights as the foundations for managing diversity and stimulating openness to other cultures" (p.30).

This is not the first time that the Council of Europe has recognised the fundamental role of education in encouraging social cohesion and promoting cultural diversity. It has promoted *Education for Democratic Citizenship* which involves "multidisciplinary approaches and actions combining civic and political education with the teaching of history, philosophy, religions, languages, social sciences" (Council of Europe, 2002: 3) since 2002. Interestingly, however, Krzyzanowski and Wodak (2011) argue that there are tensions within the Council of Europe itself regarding the various purposes of languages education. Krzyzanowski and Wodak suggest that the implications of the EU's Lisbon strategy in 2000 on language and multilingualism policy is more concerned with competitiveness in/of the EU economy than the deficiencies of EU democracy, 'European values' or European social cohesion.

Nonetheless, those who wrote the KS3 PoS seem to have observed the shift in terminology from multicultural to intercultural in European policy decisions. The interesting question is whether English policy makers were simply pandering to their colleagues in Europe by adopting acceptable policy rhetoric, or whether there is a genuine will, through MFL education, to set young people up with the knowledge, attitudes and skills for developing harmonious interaction with people from other cultures.

2.2.4 Comparing policy with theory

So far, I have considered possible influences on the incorporation of the IU element of the curriculum from a *structural* perspective. However, in order to probe deeper to find possible values or social theories that underpin policy, this section now investigates more closely to what extent policy coincides with theoretical notions of IU. It begins by exploring the cultural dimension in the forerunner to the 2008 PoS (in the 2003 Key Stage 3 Framework) and then turns its attention to more recent developments that have involved the proposal to make IU a National Curriculum attainment target and a strand in the Revised Key Stage 3 Framework.

(i)   The 2003 Key Stage 3 Modern Foreign Languages Framework

Whilst the cultural dimension of MFL has been present in curriculum policy since the inception of the National Curriculum, experience has shown that it has proven more difficult to teach in practice. The literature alludes to a number of constraining factors: the dominant focus on the target and transactional language (Byram and Risager, 1999, Buttjes, 1990), the absence of definition, description and guidelines regarding actual teaching of 'cultural awareness' (Byram et al., 1995, Morgan, 1995) and the difficulties encountered in teaching National Curriculum cross-curricular themes and dimensions, in particular the European Dimension (Ball and Bowe, 1992, Heater, 1992, Morrell, 1996).

The publication of the Key Stage 3 Modern Foreign Languages Framework (DES, 2003) suggested, however, that the cultural dimension was to be given a new lease of life. Structured in a similar way to the National Literacy Strategy, its contents ambitiously contained 103 objectives grouped in 5 strands: words, sentences, texts (reading and writing), listening and speaking, and *cultural knowledge and contact*. From a positive perspective, the

Key Stage Three Framework put the flesh on the bones which was previously missing regarding cultural objectives. But in spite of the apparent will on the part of policy makers to make the connection between linguistic and cultural aspects of the curriculum more explicit, examination of the cultural knowledge and contact strand reveals some shortcomings regarding their conceptualisation.

For example, the first cultural objective in Years 7, 8 and 9 refers to declarative knowledge (which could be compared with Byram's 1997 *savoirs*). In Year 7, pupils should "Learn some basic *geographical* facts about the country and where its language is spoken" (7C1) (emphasis added). In Year 8 the word geographical is replaced with historical and in Year 9, "geographical" is replaced with "demographic". On each occasion, the objective statement refers to "some basic [..] facts". It is unclear why historical facts are considered more appropriate for learning one year before geographic or demographic ones. If the facts are "basic" on every occasion, how are pupils progressing as far as declarative knowledge is concerned?

Notions of progress also are lacking in the second objective. In fact 7C2 ("learn about some aspects of everyday culture and how these compare with their own") could pose more of a challenge to learners than 8C2 ("learn about some famous people in popular culture and history") or 9C2 ("meet the work of some famous figures in the artistic and cultural life of the country") as they require the skills of comparison and relation (see Byram 1997 on *savoir comprendre*). 8C2 and 9C2 perhaps require a higher level of linguistic competence than 7C2 but they do not necessarily require the critical cultural understanding needed for 7C2.

The C3 objectives are primarily concerned with the use and interpretation of authentic materials. The writers of the Framework did not seem to have envisaged the problematic nature of 'authentic' resources outlined by Kramsch (1993a) who argues that they will not

help pupils to gain a critical understanding of societal attitudes by consequence of their simple 'use' as a learning resource (see p.29). Curiously, the C3 objectives refer to meeting a native speaker only in Y7. There is no mention of such experiential cultural learning (see Byram's *savoir faire*) in the Year 8 or 9 objectives.

The remaining objectives are an eclectic mix that addresses aspects of discourse competence, poems, jokes, stories and songs and the learning of "well-known features of the country of the target language". Interestingly, there is also an objective related to recognition of regional differences. This suggests some indication that the authors were aware of the problematic nature of an essentialist culture. The broader educational potential of these to develop critical cultural awareness are likely to rely on the skills of the teacher in helping learners to unpick these and enable to see view culture in a "third space" (Kramsch, 1993a). There is no mention in the Framework of potential links with citizenship education.

Perhaps the conceptual shortcomings of the objectives and lack of explicit guidance regarding their application are unsurprising given the impetus for the Framework's introduction. Since Ofsted reported on lack of pupil progression in MFL due to their inability to manipulate the language independently (Dobson, 2002) and the New Labour government was increasingly concerned about standards of literacy, it would seem that the authors paid most attention to linguistic structure and form.

In their report on the impact of the MFL Key Stage 3 Strategy, Evans et al. (2009) noted some positive developments regarding teacher attention to cultural context provided by cultural objectives. But parallel to this, they also found that *cultural knowledge and contacts* strand was the one that received the least attention. They also noted that Ofsted (2004, 2008) had found that teaching and learning of cultural awareness received relatively less attention than other areas. In their conclusion, Evans et al. (2009: 128) make an interesting remark with

regard to the future development of cultural objectives, signposting the future policy direction:

> In the case study sample there were some examples of innovative practice in using culture as a resource in language lessons. For this practice to become a more widespread feature of language teaching at KS3, further official encouragement and training, for example via the intercultural strand of the forthcoming revised MFL KS3 Framework, will play an important role.

The MFL Framework (2003) made a bold attempt at giving the cultural dimension greater impetus. It may well have focused teachers' minds on ensuring its coverage as the launch of the framework involved copious auditing from Local Authorities. However, there is extremely limited indication of any shift from cultural awareness to an intercultural paradigm or consideration of the possible contribution of MFL to citizenship education. There is also little attention to notions of progression in declarative knowledge.

So did the new status attributed to *inter*cultural understanding in the 2008 curriculum revision indicate a shift in policy makers' thinking that was in line with intercultural languages theory? The broad statements in the PoS discussed in section 2.2.2 suggest that its authors were still working within the national paradigm (Risager, 2007). The ambiguity within the text makes it unclear whether IU should also include affective learning (see Byram 1997 on *savoir être* and Starkey 2002 on affective competencies) and there is an absence of details regarding the expected depth of awareness of "similarities and contrasts between different countries and their own" (see Byram 1997 on *savoir comprendre* and Kramsch's 1993 notion of 'a third place'). Finally, it is not stated whether IU should be developed in the target language or English (see Risager 2006 and Risager 2007 on the inseparability of foreign language and intercultural learning). Although many of the possible structural influences on the insertion of the term IU complement the rationale for intercultural

pedagogy found in the literature (e.g. citizenship and anti-racism education), there is little policy attention to more specific pedagogical issues. The publication of the proposal to make IU an assessment target (QCDA, 2009a) and the Renewed Key Stage 3 Framework for languages (DCSF, 2009a) provide us with more specific information in order to make a balanced assessment of policy's relationship with theory.

(ii) Intercultural Understanding as an Attainment Target

In 2009, the QCDA proposed that IU become a new Attainment Target in Key Stage 3 with National Curriculum levels of assessment that should "cut across" the four linguistic skills (QCDA, 2009b). These proposals were published for public consultation as part of the Secondary Curriculum Review before laying new statutory orders before parliament. These level descriptions may provide more clarity regarding the interpretation of the PoS statements. But closer scrutiny reveals that they do not shed more light on the precise meaning of intercultural understanding or how it might differ from intercultural competence. This is surprising given that the notion of competence is otherwise widely used in PoSs and assessment criteria.

In spite of arguing that intercultural competence should be assessed in order to recognise its significance, Byram (1997) has stressed that linear scale, criterion referenced assessment is not the most appropriate approach. But conscious of the climate of accountability, he has suggested ways of tracking linear progression of *savoirs* and *savoir comprendre. Savoirs* could be assessed either by "factual knowledge elicited by question and answer" or by considering evidence of "deep learning knowledge elicited by techniques requiring comment and analysis" (Byram, 1997 : 98). Drawing on a model from Shemilt (1984) that assesses historical empathy according to leaps in insight rather than mere accumulation of knowledge, Byram illustrates (1997: 105) how *savoir comprendre* may

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potentially be assessed on a linear scale. In the first publication of the *savoirs* model (Byram and Zarate, 1994), there was discussion of progression related to "degrees of abstraction in the objects and concepts involved, and secondly, the psychological development of the learners" (p.19). But rather than focusing on "leaps of insight" or understanding of increasing complexity of phenomena, the performative verbs used in level descriptions prompt teachers to look for observable outcomes.

At Levels 1 and 2, pupils would appear to be required to scratch the surface (although at level 2 this knowledge is unspecified) of Byram and Zarate's (1994) and Byram's (1997) *savoirs*.

> Level 1: Pupils identify countries and communities where the target language is spoken. They demonstrate awareness of conventions and politeness when speaking to someone.

> Level 2: Pupils show some knowledge about target language countries or communities. They demonstrate awareness of appropriate social conventions when speaking to someone.

Whilst there is a hint of *savoir comprendre* in "They make simple comparisons between life in target language countries or communities and their own" at Level 3, it is unclear whether this involves deeper understanding whereby the learner develops relational knowledge by putting the new information into dialogue with what is already known about his or her own culture. At Level 4, pupils should "show that they understand texts from, or relating to, target language countries or communities." But there is no guidance about the contents of such texts or how these might be used for learning (see Kramsch, 1993a) or how "show understanding" can be observed or assessed. "Make comparisons" from Level 3 has metamorphosed into "identify some similarities and differences" at Level 4. It is unclear how this indicates any leap in insight or deeper understanding.

Similar alterations of phraseology occur across Levels 4-7: "Understand information about aspects" (L4) turns into "understand texts" (L5). "Select [...] different sources" (L6) becomes "independently investigate" at Level 7 and "research" at Level 8. These processes seem rather repetitious; they do not imply the progression of relational knowledge.

It is only at Level 6 that we see a clear aspiration for learners to acquire deeper insights, made explicit by the need to "select [...] different sources" and to "compare with their own experiences". This may involve the beginnings of cultural learning in a "third space" (Kramsch, 1993a). Level 8 suggests an evaluative capacity that requires critical understanding as pupils are required to "present their findings, drawing conclusions and making comparisons" (see Byram 1997 on *savoir s'engager* and Guilherme 2002 on "critical citizens"). But criticality of this nature rests on the assumption that learners will have been successful in developing the necessary research skills to make this possible.

Levels 1-7 are devoid of reference to personal attitudes that demonstrate openness (see Byram and Zarate 1994 and Byram 1997 on *savoir être* and Starkey 2002 on "affective competencies"). They are more related to intellectual rather than affective learning. Yet to acquire intercultural *understanding*, it could be contended that precisely this very type of developmental process should occur. Arguably, it is extremely difficult to assess such a process within a formal educational context. Nevertheless, the ability to include "personal responses" is a criterion for exceptional performance. This might suggest that it is only when learners have a cognitive understanding at the highest level they are able to personally respond to alternative perspectives. Byram and Zarate (1994)and Byram (1997) suggest that the assessment of *savoir être* could be related to pedagogic and extra-curricular processes that may involve a profile of experiential learning and its analysis by the learner as a process of self-assessment. But of course, this type of assessment is at odds with the linear, criterion referenced levels of attainment of the National Curriculum.

My critique relates predominantly to the lack of clarity of the educational processes implied by the verbs. The statements may prompt the teacher to look for observable outcomes rather than considering deeper (hidden) learning. In the quest to make IU more significant by making it an assessable attainment target, those who drew up the level descriptors would appear to have focused on tangible learning activities at the expense of a thorough conceptualisation of progression or attention to empathy.

The consultation report was published in the autumn of 2009 (QCDA, 2009a). Although respondents had indicated some support for the IU attainment target, they generally disagreed with the level descriptions. The IU attainment target was rejected. This short episode reveals the continuing difficulties faced by the (inter)cultural dimension in the MFL curriculum. In spite of a clear attempt to give IU increased status by making it subject to assessment, a sizeable number of MFL practitioners recognised flaws in the assessment criteria, expressed uneasiness with pedagogic responsibility in this field attached solely to MFL and were anxious about diluting linguistic objectives with socio-cultural ones. An attempt to make IU *measurable* did not result in increasing its significance.

(iii)   The Renewed Key Stage 3 Framework for languages and the Intercultural Understanding Strand

In spite of the rejection of IU as an attainment target with identifiable levels, policy makers seemed intent to enhance its status in the MFL curriculum. In September 2009, the DCSF published a *renewed* web-based Key Stage 3 Framework for languages (DCSF, 2009a). As in Key Stage 2, Strand 3 of the Framework is dedicated to IU. The sub-strands are broken down into yearly objectives, e.g. in Year 7 in substrand 3.1 (appreciating cultural diversity), pupils are to "investigate an aspect of life and compare with their own, noting similarities and

differences". In Year 8 in sub-strand 3.2 (recognising different ways of seeing the world), pupils are to "investigate aspirations of young people, recognising perspectives that are both similar to and different from their own".

The refreshing aspect of this framework is the ample exemplification. Whilst these are only suggestions, they provide teachers with clear guidelines about the level of complexity of the *savoirs* and *savoir comprendre* that was hitherto so lacking. There is also a clear intent to integrate IU with linguistic objectives. However, this integration of linguistic and intercultural objectives has very significant resource implications. For example, it is suggested that pupils listen to short interviews with children about aspects of life that are different to those 50 years ago. This is not a typical sound file in Key Stage 3 courses currently on the market. It will be interesting to monitor whether educational publishers will respond to this renewed framework or whether teachers will be expected to develop their own resources.

The learning objectives are overtly cross-referenced with the *Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills* (PLTS) that characterise the revised Key Stage 3 Curriculum (QCA, 2008b). The IU strand seems to lend itself particularly well to independent enquiry and creative thinking, espoused in the PLTS. The exemplification provides useful guidance in helping learners to develop the critical thinking skills needed for comparing, interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*). Interestingly, this 2009 Framework contrasts quite starkly with the findings from LACE (LACE, 2007) report that revealed that MFL curriculum policies across the EU have overwhelmingly emphasised a focus on knowledge and attitudes as opposed to skills.

However, the approach taken would appear to be a cognitive one that relays the acquisition of IU purely to an intellectual process. There are no references to attitudes or

values or the development of openness. One is prompted to consider whether the PLTS represent the cart before the IU horse. Does the development of IU provide a curriculum site for developing the PLTS with the latter as the dominant, instrumental goal? Or are policy makers more concerned with development of understanding that will prompt young people to examine prejudices and become more open to those from other cultures?

It should be mentioned that the renewed framework has not been given much of a fanfare. It was published online without prior warning and has not been accompanied by the face to face training that formed an integral component of previous strategy initiatives of this kind. Informal conversations with colleagues in schools suggest that many MFL departments are unaware of its existence. It is interesting to note that whilst Ofsted's (2011) most recent report on modern languages claims that a feature of outstanding MFL teaching is when "intercultural knowledge and understanding [is] built into the lesson" (p.28), IU was also highlighted as a weakness in around a third of the 30 schools visited that were part of their study in 2010. The schools that demonstrated best practice here recognized the languages department's contribution to Citizenship education.

Conclusion

Ball's (2006) analysis of policy texts is fitting in making some concluding remarks. As I quoted in the introduction to this chapter, he asserts that policies "are not necessarily clear, closed or complete. The texts are the product of compromises at various stages" (p.44). The architects of the revised Key Stage 3 Curriculum attempted to prioritise the over-arching aims of the curriculum over the knowledge that can be found in discrete subjects. The reference to an increased emphasis on IU in the MFL curriculum seems to service many of these horizontal objectives: IU addresses the community cohesion agenda and the international strategy. It provides a vehicle for developing the instrumental Personal, Learning and

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Thinking Skills for the globalised knowledge economy of the 21st century and its appearance as a curriculum strand in Key Stage 3 allows for alignment with the Key Stage 2 Framework and European policy documents. The need to pay lip-service to the above would seem to have overshadowed policy makers' attention to the theoretical models of intercultural languages learning.

The proposal to make IU an attainment target in 2009 can be seen as an attempt to give IU some muscle in an educational climate characterised by measurable outcomes. But as I have demonstrated, the notion of progression was not only conceptually weak but was rejected by MFL teachers. This chapter suggests that the large number of compromises in the current English Key Stage 3 curriculum have resulted in confusing communications about the development of IU and lack of commitment to this kind of education.

2.3 The Teacher Perspective

This section of the literature review aims to investigate existing knowledge about the significance that teachers attach to IU. It addresses an important part of the study's second research question: *To what extent do the perceptions of policy makers regarding the significance of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum coincide with those of teachers and pupils?* (emphasis added). It also sets out to unveil what others have found relating to the teacher perspective in the third research question: *How might teacher (emphasis added) and pupil perceptions about the significance of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum differ according to:*

- *type of school;*

- *socio-economic group of the pupil population;*

* *gender of pupils;*

* *teacher demographic and biography?*

In the first instance, I synthesise research that demonstrates the limitations of initial teacher education in providing intercultural theoretical and philosophical concepts and the sharing of practical ideas for their application in teaching (2.3.1). I then highlight studies that indicate methodological uncertainty, leading to frequent reliance on languages textbooks or a lack of know-how in exploiting cultural resources for IU purposes (2.3.2). Following this, studies are reviewed that illustrate how intercultural practice is affected by contextual factors such as prescribed national curricula and the culture and dynamics of particular schools (2.3.3).

I later turn my attention to research that addresses factors that are more closely related to the teacher as an individual (2.3.4). These include teachers' own intercultural experiences, their personal theories of culture and their educational beliefs. The latter aspect relates to ideas about professional duties, emerging tensions between beliefs and practice and the impact of life experiences. Finally I review a more generic interpretive framework for conceptualising teacher beliefs and related actions (2.3.5) that I will employ to analyse the teacher data in Chapter 4 .

2.3.1 Shortcomings of Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

The European Profile for Language Teacher Education (Kelly et al., 2004) clearly sets an intercultural agenda in its attention to four out of the forty key elements in language teacher education courses. These include "experience of intercultural or multicultural environments", "training in social and cultural values", "training in diversity of languages and cultures" and "training in the importance in teaching and learning about foreign languages and cultures".

However, in spite of these recommendations, the evidence suggests that even when this training does take place, it does not necessarily lead to confident intercultural languages teaching. As Garrido & Álvarez (2006) have indicated, although current language teacher education programmes in both Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and In-Service teacher-training (INSET) are both good at "developing the application of the knowledge of the subject and the management of the teaching and learning process", when it comes to making connections between philosophical and educational theoretical frameworks and pedagogical practice, there are significant weaknesses. By consequence, the "ethical dimension that incorporates meaningful intercultural development" (p171) is prone to neglect. Garrido & Álvarez's points are particularly applicable in the English context where the curriculum for ITE has been largely governed by the standards that are set by the Training and Development Agency (TDA) for Schools rather than philosophical frameworks for education with a theoretical underpinning. Moreover, promoted modes of pedagogical practice expressed in the National Strategies under the Labour government and the Conservative government before it have largely been driven by a social efficiency model (Zeichner and Tabachnik, 2001) which promotes teaching approaches that are considered to be most effective in terms of pupils performance rather than an underlying philosophy.

In addition to highlighting the absence of a philosophical framework, Garrido and Álvarez (2006) point out that teacher trainers' own experience and conceptualisation of languages education do not necessarily correspond to the intercultural model that advocates the development of "generic independent skills that will contribute to [learners'] development and understanding of a target language and culture [and also] help them to reflect on their own" (p164). Finally, it is stressed that language educationalists are challenged by the fact that "we lack consensus on what knowing a language means" (Hedgecock, 2002, 301 cited in

Garrido and Álvarez, 2006, 164). The intercultural model does not necessarily feature in the variety of definitions.

Byram (2008) makes interesting remarks about the nature of the English post-graduate, one year teacher training course which is the typical path of entry into the MFL teaching profession. In employing the metaphor of socialisation into a tribe utilised by Evans (1988), he explains how languages graduates become socialised into the MFL teaching profession during this year:

> In the English education system, they are socialised into the language teaching tribe through a one-year programme of training in teaching after they complete their first degree (BA) as philoligists, or literary critics and historians, or perhaps, in recent times, as French/ German/ Spanish studies experts. During this postgraduate training, they join the tribe of 'teachers' and the sub-group 'language teachers' and in some cases the sub sub-group 'French' or 'German' or 'Spanish' teachers. They lose their primary attachment to the tribe they belonged to in their student years by being introduced to teaching methods, to 'communicative language teaching', to theories and practices of motivation, to the demands of a national curriculum and assessment system [...] The dominant focus in this socialisation is language learning questions of motivation, of acquisition, of fluency and accuracy and so on –and of language teaching with an emphasis on lesson objectives, textbooks, visual aids, computer-aided learning and so on (p.337).

These languages teachers do not become socialised into the 'languages and intercultural competence teacher'. Byram believes that in order to lay the pedagogical foundations for teaching for intercultural competence, teacher trainers need to refer to the disciplines of anthropology, social psychology and sociology. Other advocates of intercultural languages education make similar recommendations.

As outlined in section 2.1.5, Guillherme (2002) recommends that languages education should combine theory and practice through a multidisciplinary approach. She advances the view that foreign language/culture education and corresponding teacher development

programmes should adopt a multi-perspective model that encompasses Cultural Studies, Intercultural Communication and Critical Pedagogy. Drawing on the theoretical conceptualisations of the language teacher for intercultural understanding, Garrido and Álvarez (2006: 169) claim that "teachers have to become familiar with basic insights into ethnography, cultural anthropology, anthropological linguistics, culture learning theory and intercultural communication".

These ambitious ideas, however, present practical challenges. Woodgate-Jones (2009) conducted an empirical study on the beliefs of primary school post-graduate student teachers specialising in MFL about aspects of languages education. She found that the importance of IU received lower rankings compared to linguistic competence by both tutors and students as the course progressed. Although the differences in rankings were marginal, Woodgate-Jones explores possible reasons for this. Referring to Bennett et al. (2003), she argues that some tutors and teachers may feel unprepared because they may never have been taught IU themselves, and therefore may have no model for teaching it. Thus, if ITE is inadequate, teachers fall back on the way they were taught themselves. Woodgate-Jones also comments on Driscoll et al.'s (2004) observations about the lack of awareness among teachers as to the types of resources available and the ways in which they can be used. Although Woodgate-Jones' study is conducted from a primary perspective, these issues may be equally pertinent in the English secondary context as many MFL primary specialists in both schools and ITE originally come from a secondary background.

Nonetheless, we must be careful not to claim that these problems are universal or that all teacher education courses neglect attention to a more ethically orientated pedagogy. For example, Diaz-Greenberg and Nevin (2003) explain how by drawing on methodology from critical pedagogy they provided student teachers in a U.S. university with questions aiming

to reveal their conscious and unconscious beliefs about understanding culture when teaching foreign languages. The students were asked to compare notions of culture taught in their teacher education programme with those they encountered in text books on teaching practice and how culture is taught by other teachers in the classroom. This question process was based on Freire's (1998) notion of *conscientization,* whereby the individual becomes aware of his or her own and competing points of view through a supported dialogic process aimed to stimulate reflexivity. The authors found that the student teachers who engaged with critical pedagogy in their methods classes noticed the limitations of the homogenous cultural depictions of text books and were more likely to "address the complex nature of culture instead of trivialising it" (p.221). This study, however, is limited to an analysis of student teachers' reflections rather than data relating to their actual instructional practice.

Lázár's (2011) case studies of Hungarian pre-service English teachers concerns itself with both reflections and practice. She found that "the theoretical knowledge and the practical teaching skills the trainees were exposed to during seminars on the methodology of intercultural training seemed to a large extent, to influence their personal theories about teaching culture through language. However, their actual practice of teaching [...] did not necessarily change as a result of this one training course" (pp124-125). Lázár argues that university courses on intercultural competence methodology should therefore be developed more systematically, become more frequent and be introduced in the early stages of training.

2.3.2 Methodological uncertainty

Some writers suggest that teachers' lack of attention to the intercultural approach, as suggested by Woodgate-Jones and Lázár, is closely connected to uncertainty around

intercultural teaching methodology. Morgan (2008) found that one of the greatest issues related to intercultural languages learning in Australia was that teachers and teacher educators lacked a shared definition of what this actually meant. Richards et al. (2010) revealed in their study of MFL teachers in New Zealand that teachers were lacking awareness and understanding of intercultural language learning principles and demonstrated extremely limited understanding of these in practice. This was in spite of policy makers' recent attention in New Zealand to intercultural languages learning as a principle underpinning the new MFL curriculum in 2007.

Sercu (2006) claims that the approach to teaching culture in many European countries has indirectly been affected by the dominance of the communicative method: "it seems reasonable to assume that teachers in different countries participating in the research share the conviction that languages should be taught for communication. [...Such] conceptions affect the way teachers teach the language and approach culture teaching" (p.68). Here Sercu is referring to a study that was published a year earlier in a comprehensive volume that presented empirical findings from seven countries on teachers' perspectives of intercultural languages teaching (Sercu et al., 2005). In this volume, the authors deal in much greater detail with language teaching methodology issues. They found that even when teachers did engage in culture teaching, they tended to employ techniques that aimed to enlarge learners' knowledge of the foreign culture. The enlarging of knowledge of the foreign culture can be relayed to the first of Byram's (1997) *savoirs*, but not to *savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire* or *savoir s'engager* (see section 2.1.2), thereby corresponding more to a traditional background type of culture teaching.

Moreover, in their adoption of a more didactic rather than pupil-centred approach, most of the respondents rarely considered pupils' current levels of understanding of foreign

cultures or attitudes to inform their teaching. The authors also found that although teachers were generally familiar with the foreign culture and people associated with the language(s) they teach, they did not have knowledge of the pedagogy needed to prompt critical reflection on the part of pupils about sources of information.

Starkey (2007) and Sercu et al. (2005) found that teachers regularly relied on textbooks to determine the content of cultural learning. Interestingly, Sercu et al. (ibid) also discovered that when teachers were asked to respond to the suitability of cultural resources, the respondents commented on factual inaccuracies rather than their potential for teaching intercultural competence. Once again, this illustrates lack of know-how regarding the use of resources for promoting pupil criticality. However, according to Aleksandrowicz-Pędich (2003), this may also be related to their own lack of knowledge which may be symptomatic of languages teachers' limited stays abroad.

Reliance on the textbook can be problematic given that they "often stereotype the learner as much as the inhabitants of the country studied" (Starkey, 2007: 58). This means that teachers are working with materials that may reinforce "an unproblematic and homogenous national culture or exoticise other cultures" (p.58). Those teachers who rely on these resources and lack the pedagogical skills to encourage criticality amongst students are unlikely to have considered the relevance of shifting away from the cultural awareness to the intercultural approach. In spite of the new emphasis on IU in the English MFL curriculum, many of the latest textbooks for secondary language learning in the UK continue to adopt a cultural awareness approach. (By way of example, the latest Heinemann series claims to address the Renewed Key Stage 3 Framework (see section 2.2.4,iii) but the related online Schemes of Work make no reference to activities to promote IU in spite of its inclusion as one of the Framework' strands (Pearson Education, 2007).)

Sercu et al. (2005) found that specific contexts influenced culture teaching approaches. In addition to macro educational issues (e.g. curricular guidelines, stipulations and attainment targets), these included the pupils with whom one worked and the school in question. Sercu and St. John (2007) also point out that many studies have found a strong connection between the teaching context and practice. These reveal the influence of teachers' perceptions of class size, student motivation and student ability in addition to teachers' perceptions of control over teaching methods or course content and departmental support for innovation (p.45).

Byram et al.'s study (1991) found that pupils' perceptions impacted on approaches to culture teaching (although the authors did not specifically refer to *intercultural* learning). Teachers of higher ability learners, for example, were concerned that the pupils were assured that they were being adequately prepared for examinations (which tested linguistic knowledge). By contrast, some teachers believed that children in lower ability groups were more interested in the culture than in the language as they perceived language learning more difficult. However, more specifically, the authors found that "the process and product of culture teaching and learning in the classroom" could be directly related to teaching style (combination of a particular teacher with a particular class) and pupil perceptions and attitudes (p.370). Pupil perceptions relate here to their knowledge of the foreign language culture whilst their attitudes refer to French people and learning French. Although Byram et al. (1991) were not specifically investigating *intercultural* learning, these are pertinent findings regarding the relevance of the pupil factor in culture learning.

Byram and Risager (1999) also made observations about contextual factors. They remarked that in spite of geo-political changes teachers would appear to be at "some distance from the stimuli of change. [Of greater pertinence is the] effect on the conditions within

which they work: the curricula they are given, the motivation of their learners, the methods they are expected to use" (p.82). Although the reference to IU in the KS3 Revised PoS is likely to be inspired by geo-political changes, curriculum policy has not made it explicit whether teachers should adopt new culture teaching methods. As Byram and Risager argue, the dynamics of the work environment may therefore be more influential with regard to pedagogical decisions than policy documents informed by geo-political influences. Parallel to this, they remarked that whilst languages teachers' perspectives from the inside may include a cultural dimension, and they themselves enjoy and invest times in the aspect of learning and recognise the motivational or pedagogical value, they feel that the world around them has no knowledge of their work on cultural awareness or competence. This may ultimately serve to demotivate some in their cultural endeavours. At the time of publication, the authors claimed that these circumstances were related to an educational policy problem (p.80) that reduced the understanding of contemporary language teaching.

2.3.4 *The experience, knowledge and beliefs of individuals*

In the hitherto discussion, I have explored factors that affect the incorporation of intercultural language learning that arise specifically within the *professional* experience of becoming or being a teacher. In this section, I consider factors relating to the more *personal* experiences and views of teachers as individuals. These include the significance of an extended stay abroad in a target language country and its influence on cultural knowledge and intrinsic motivation to take an intercultural approach; teachers' personal theories of culture; teachers' willingness to politicise their professional duties; and teachers' beliefs about their professional duties.

(i) The extended stay abroad

Whilst some ITE courses for languages teachers in England do include a visit abroad as part of the curriculum, this is not always an essential requirement. Postgraduate student teachers in England are more likely to have gained experience of living abroad during their time as undergraduates and thus, I argue, this period can be classified as a personal rather than a professional experience. This contrasts with ITE for MFL in many other European countries, where a period abroad is an essential (Kelly et al., 2004) if not heavily promoted aspect of the course (Willems, 2002). Undergraduates on honours courses in the UK are required to spend the third year of their degrees in target language speaking country(ies) and therefore will have gained this experience before commencing an ITE course.

Byram et al. (1991), Sercu et al. (2005) and Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. (2003) all found that the extent of teachers' individual cultural knowledge - often influenced by periods they had spent abroad in particular countries- impacted on the extent they were likely to incorporate a cultural dimension into teaching and learning. Ehrenreich (2006) found that the year abroad experienced by those who had posts as foreign language assistants often had an impact on their educational and professional biographies. However, this did not necessarily mean that later, as foreign language teachers, that they presented the target language cultures in a non-essentialist manner. For some individuals, the assistantship experience had very limited impact at all on their professional lives. This suggests perhaps that individuals are influenced by the type of their experiences rather than the length of them. Interestingly, Sercu et al. (2005) found that teachers perceived themselves to be more knowledgeable about topics typically associated with traditional (cultural awareness) culture teaching, for example food and drink, traditions and daily routines. They were less familiar with topics such as international relations. Ehrenreich (2006) found that the student teachers who had been

foreign language assistants felt most knowledgeable about the school systems. Sercu et al. (2005) argue that the area of politics or international relations provide topics that are more suitable for intercultural learning. Whilst this could suggest that these teachers lacked real time experience in a target language country, it could also be the case that they have simply not engaged with more politicised issues. Byram and Risager (1999) found similar lack of attention by teachers to topics conducive for intercultural understanding, e.g. political systems, gender roles, religious life and institutions, environment and 'high' culture.

Nonetheless, Aleksandrowicz-Pędich, et al. (2003) found that when the period of time spent abroad was limited or non-existent, teachers were found to rely much more heavily on written and visual aids rather than their own experience to inform culture teaching.

Furthermore, researchers have found that an extended stay abroad not only increases knowledge of the target language culture, but often developed an intrinsic interest in the way of life of the language speakers. Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. (2003) claimed that the teachers who were keen to incorporate intercultural learning in their teaching were frequently motivated by personal experiences of positive intercultural interpersonal relationships "which seem to be decisive in determining an effective awareness [of intercultural learning] within their own teaching behaviour" (p.25). Starkey (2007) explains that

> Teachers reflect on what motivates them and what they wish to achieve for their students. Typically this is to enable the students to go through a similar experience and find excitement and enjoyment in discovering a new culture. Teachers perhaps vicariously relive the most formative experience of their lives through their students (p.62).

Starkey goes as far to claim that these teachers reminisce about experiences that were "akin to falling in love" (p.61) and in an almost religious sense "feel that they have a mission

to open minds, expand horizons and bring their students the joy of a life-changing discovery" (p.63). Despite the fact that resistance or rejection on the part of learners could often be personally wounding, Starkey found that many teachers were further driven by their personal missions to combat prejudices and stereotyping.

It should be mentioned that Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. (2003) and Starkey (2007) conducted research with teachers with slightly different experiences to those in my own study. Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al.'s study was based on data of teachers of French and English as foreign languages in ten European countries whilst Starkey's research participants were MFL teachers in adult education.

(ii) Teachers' personal theories of culture

Starkey (2007) claims that most teachers still conceptualise culture as belonging to a particular nation without necessarily recognising the diversity amongst the speakers of a language or cultural complexity. He questions whether perhaps "teachers are simply entrapped within structures and traditions, including syllabuses" and adds that "their possible desire to promote a cosmopolitan vision and a lively intercultural model based on complexity rather than nationalism may be stifled by the everyday realities of their context" (p.61). Indirectly, Starkey is implying that without the interference of everyday realities, teachers would have the space to explicitly spell out and activate this "cosmopolitan vision" and that it may resemble intercultural education as conceptualised by theorists.

We know from Byram et al.'s (1995) study on defining and describing 'cultural awareness', however, that teachers' responses were extremely varied. Byram et al. (ibid) categorised teacher responses in four broad groups that included way of life or traditions; institutions, history and structures; norms and morals; and art, literature and high culture.

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Since the revised PoS for Key Stage 3 does not discuss what concept(s) underpin the concept of culture in intercultural understanding, there are reasons to expect that there would be a similar variation of answers if teachers were asked to define appropriate cultural content today. It is questionable whether all teachers would refer to this cosmopolitan vision. Moreover, Lázár (2011: 117) claims that the different life experiences of teachers may inform their "personal theory about the cultural dimension of language teaching".

(iii) Teacher beliefs: professional duties, contradictions and individual factors

Whilst Sercu et al. (2005) found that approximately 80% of teachers were favourably disposed to interculturalising languages teaching, it is worth pondering the reasons given by the 20% who were not. Those teachers claimed that it would reinforce pupils' negative stereotypes, did not believe that these type of attitudes can be acquired in school, let alone in foreign languages classroom and believed it only suitable if there were ethnic minority children in the classroom. Garrido & Álvarez (2006) highlight that assuming a political or ethical role can be a sensitive and uncomfortable task. Such a task not only involves trying to transform learners' attitudes and beliefs but would also include a thorough review of the teacher's own beliefs. It also means that the teacher should "be prepared to embrace the belief that they shouldn't / can't be neutral" (p.169). This comment is indicative of an overt politicization of the role of the teacher which may not be regarded as integral or indeed appropriate part of a teacher's professional identity (Furedi, 2009). Most teachers are prepared to assume responsibility in addressing moral cultivation of their pupils in general, but there are also those who do not necessarily feel the need to involve students in more politicised issues. An intercultural stance may simply be adopted by some teachers for pragmatic rather than political reasons.

Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. (2003) found that in addition to the teachers who considered the benefits of teaching for IU to include acceptance and tolerance, learning how to avoid potential conflicts, a hope for world peace, internationalism and European integration, there were also those who mentioned pragmatic reasons. These included business and tourism, living and working in other countries, coping in multicultural societies and making lessons more relevant, fun and enjoyable (pp19-20). When the same researchers asked teachers of English as a foreign language if they thought intercultural competence should be given more or less emphasis in foreign langage teaching, they found that within the pragmatic category of reasons there was a sub-category which addressed student motivation. An increased emphasis on intercultural education would make lessons more fun and interesting and would increase student motivation by providing real-life situations. Teachers of French mentioned that an emphasis on intercultural learning contextualised language learning, which otherwise was a process that produced knowledge that was not always possible to put into practice.

Evidently, teachers express different reasons for engaging with intercultural languages learning. However, closer examination of espoused beliefs and actual practice suggest that there are sometimes contradictions. Sercu et al. (2005) found that approximately 80% of teachers in the seven countries involved in their study were 'favourably disposed' to teaching for linguistic and intercultural competence. These individuals believed it was possible to integrate both objectives, that it made pupils more tolerant, and that it should be taught to all pupils. But these beliefs were not necessarily translated into practice. The teachers surveyed overwhelmingly ranked the main objective of foreign language teaching to be linguistically orientated and in five out of the seven countries claimed that they spent more than 87% of teaching time to language rather than culture.

Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. (2003) also found that whilst teachers ideologically embraced teaching for IU, their actions did not match their beliefs. Similarly, Byram and Risager (1999) found that whilst 93% of teachers in Denmark and 91.5% of teachers in England disagreed with the idea that "teaching about culture is not the responsibility of the languages teacher" (p.94) only 2.9% of teachers in England and 4.2% of teachers in Denmark thought that the cultural dimension was more important than the linguistic.

Jiménez Raya & Sercu (2007) suggest that meaningful teacher development whilst teachers are in-service has the potential to make such contradictory beliefs explicit, and by consequence, alter practice. The opportunities to do this should happen earlier rather than later in a teacher's career since the longer the experience of the teacher, the more specific routines which lack conscious thought become. Development opportunities that afford time and space for reflection upon their actions such as values clarification exercises, observation activities, self-reflective accounts or action research may prompt teachers to reconsider the purpose of MFL education.

Such contradictions may be the result of contextual factors discussed above. Teachers' beliefs and related actions, however, may also be affected by their individual life experiences, personalities and attitudes. Lázár (2011) suggests that in addition to familiarity with intercultural pedagogy these more personalised factors have an important impact on the extent to which they teach culture through the language. It is these personalised factors to which my attention will now turn.

Kelchtermans's (2009) model focuses on teachers' self-conceptualisations and their related actions in terms of biographical and personal factors combined with their perceptions about what others think about him / her. Although this framework is generic rather than specifically related to intercultural languages teaching, I feel that it is valuable in helping us to understand the relationship between teachers' beliefs and actions in intercultural languages teaching and how these may be affected by biography or personality. I present it in my literature review as I employ it in an adapted form as a tool to interpret and analyse the data from the teacher interviews.

Kelchtermans developed his conceptual model from narrative-biographical research conducted at various stages of teachers' careers. He argues that teachers develop a personal interpretive framework, "a lens through which teachers look at their job, give meaning to it and act in it" (Kelchtermans, 2009: 260). This framework "guides their interpretations and actions in particular situations (context), but at the same time is also modified by and resulting from those meaningful interactions (sense-making) with that context. It is both a condition for and a result of the interaction" (p.261). Kelchtermans stresses the significance of teaching as a both a personal *and* social act, naming the title of his article "Who I am in how I teach is the message". Therefore, we should look to teachers' conceptualisation of themselves in terms of biographical and personal factors in combination with their perceptions about what others think about him / her. In short, this constitutes teachers' *self-understanding*.

The notion of self-understanding is broken down into five individual components: self-image; self-esteem; job motivation; task perception and future perspective. Self-image is based on self-perception and to a large degree, on what others (e.g. pupils, parents,

colleagues, head teachers) mirror back to teachers. Self-esteem is the evaluative component of self-image which is related to the filtered and interpreted feedback. Often, the evaluated feedback of students is most influential here. Job motivation encompasses the motives or drives for people choosing to become a teacher. It might be influenced by task perception or working conditions and, as Kelchtermans (2009: 263) highlights, may develop over time. For example, a secondary school teacher's motivation may initially be grounded in her/his love for a subject discipline, but later be driven by broader educational reasons, related to the more holistic development of young people. Task perception is related to how the teacher conceives his/ her professional programme or the necessary tasks and duties to do a good job. Kelchtermans stresses that this is "not a neutral endeavour [...] but one that implies value-laden choices, moral considerations, moral duties" (Ibid: p.262). Finally, future perspective refers to teachers' expectations about their future career, which highlights the temporal nature of self-understanding.

These five aspects of self-understanding are complemented by a teacher's *subjective educational theory*, i.e. the "personal system of knowledge and beliefs about education that teachers use when performing their job" (Ibid: p.263). This knowledge has been acquired from pre- or in-service training mixed with more personal experiences in applied situations. Thus, subjective educational theory is also drawn from knowing what works well for them as individuals and their students in particular contexts.

Conscious, however, that *self-understanding* and *subjective educational theory* may be understood predominantly in terms of teacher enactment and agency, Kelchtermans stresses that there is an additional "structural characteristic of the profession" (p. 265) over which teachers have little control, *vulnerability*. Teachers are vulnerable as they have little control over externally imposed regulations, quality control systems and constantly changing

policy demands. They can only to a very limited degree prove their effectiveness by claiming that pupils' results directly follow from their actions, and their judgements and decisions can always be challenged or questioned (Ibid, pp265-266). The influence of vulnerability, therefore, must be considered alongside teachers' self-understanding and subjective educational theory in understanding how teachers make sense of their situations.

I will demonstrate in section 3.2.3 how Kelchtermans's model is extremely helpful in explaining teachers' treatment of the cultural dimension. The components of *self-image* and *self-esteem* highlight how biographical and contextual influences affect teachers' perceptions of their professional selves, (e.g. as a transmitter of knowledge, holistic educator etc.) and how the significance they attach to IU is bound up with the images they have of their 'teacher selves'. The components of self-image and self-esteem also demonstrate how approaches to culture teaching are affected by different personalities. Consideration of *job motivation* and *task perception* are illustrative of teachers' educational principles or philosophies which are very important if intercultural language learning assumes an ethical stance. I adapt the meaning of *subjective educational theory* to also include teachers' personal conceptualisations of IU, and finally consider *vulnerability* in order to demonstrate how perceived contextual constraints interfere with teachers' translation of their espoused beliefs.

Conclusion

This review of the literature highlights how a great variety of different factors may affect teachers' thoughts and practice of intercultural languages learning. These include the inadequacies of ITE in making the connection between philosophical frameworks and intercultural teaching practice, methodological uncertainty surrounding the intercultural approach and a number of contextual factors at both the macro and micro levels affecting teachers in their daily professional practice. However, the literature also suggests that there

are influences that are more closely related to teachers as individuals. These include teachers'

own intercultural experiences, educational values and conceptualisations of their roles.

2.4 The Pupil Perspective

While there is abundant literature on intercultural language learning theory and an established body of research on the teacher perspective in intercultural languages education, the literature on the pupil perspective – in particular in secondary schools-on cultural and intercultural aspects of the MFL curriculum is comparatively limited. This chapter critiques the literature from a research base in and outside languages education.

Section 2.4.1 reviews research on learner motivation in MFL. It explains why this is such a pertinent issue in the English context and provides an overview from the broader literature on motivation in second language acquisition (SLA). Recognising that the factors that influence motivation are highly complex as they refer to a variety of "psychological processes that lead us to do certain things" (Long, 2000: 104), the main focus is on the studies that relates to pupil interest and enjoyment in MFL learning and how potentially this may link with a greater emphasis on IU. I then critique the official reports and documents that informed the revision of the KS3 MFL curriculum, paying specific attention to suggested links between motivation and a new emphasis on IU.

Section 2.4.2 discusses the impact that learning languages has on attitudes towards other cultures. It reviews aspects of the work of Byram et al. (1991) that show how factors, both in and outside of school, influence the development of pupil attitudes in this regard. These findings have an important message for MFL educators if they hope to develop IU amongst their pupils. Section 2.4.3 reviews studies from psychology dealing with the significance of learning about "otherness" from the developmental standpoint of the learner. In providing a synthesis of the work of Barrett (2007), section 2.4.3. also considers the social psychological factors that influence children's knowledge, beliefs and feelings about other cultures.

Section 2.4.4 addresses some more specific societal and social factors. Although I had identified these as significant from Barrett's (2007) research and had suspected that these would emerge as a theme from the empirical data, they were reviewed following data analysis, adopting a more inductive, or grounded approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In response to themes emerging from the data analysis, I consider the relationship between gender and openness to other cultures and the influence of local environments, school locale and social class on the relevance young people may attach to an IU curriculum. The chapter concludes with a review of research that indicates that in spite of the impact of varying social and societal factors on pupils' perspectives, young people across the European continent broadly consider that school is the right place to discuss and learn about contrasting cultures (section 2.4.5).

2.4.1   *Motivation in Second Language Acquisition*

(i) The English context

From 2004, it was no longer a statutory requirement to study a modern language at Key Stage 4 (KS4). The Green Paper in 2002 (DfES, 2002a) "14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards" argued that the lack of flexibility in the KS4 framework was sometimes a barrier to student motivation. Thus, the study of a language at KS4 became an entitlement rather than compulsory. The dramatic decreases in the number of KS4 pupils taking a language GCSE took place from 2004 to 2006 revealed that MFL lacked popularity in English schools. In 2001, 78% of pupils took a language at GCSE compared to only 50% in 2006. In 2009, 44% of pupils took at least one language GCSE and in 2010, the percentage decreased to 43% (CILT, 2010).

In 2007, Lawes (2007) reported that the study of foreign languages was no longer compulsory in over 70% of state schools. This decline had knock on effects in post-16 state education. *The Times* (15 May 2010) reported that whilst the independent schools sector accounted for 15 per cent of *all* A-level entries in 2008-09, pupils from private schools took 34 per cent of the modern foreign language exams, and made up almost half of those achieving an A grade (Woolcock, 2010). Here seems to be more evidence that the motivation to study a second language in England is increasingly divided along socio-economic lines.

The drastic decline at Key Stage 4, however, may also suggest that the languages curriculum at Key Stage 3 has failed to provide an interesting or enjoyable experience which in turn, has fallen short to motivate pupils to continue with their study at GCSE level. There were indications, however, that pupils lacked motivation here long before the post 2002 decline. The Nuffield report (2000) confirmed that pupils lacked motivation or direction in their study of MFL. Stables and Wikely (1999: 27) found that in spite of the advent of the GCSE and the compulsory and therefore enhanced status of MFL in Key Stages 3 and 4, there was "no discernible improvement in English pupils' attitudes to MFL since the mid-1980s".

Coleman et al. (2007: 250) have remarked remark that "If students are not obliged to take a subject, the question of whether or not they want to do so becomes paramount. Means of raising and maintaining their interest becomes a matter for intervention on a national scale. In this sense the motivation of KS3 learners is highly relevant to Government policy". The next section provides an overview of some of research on motivation in second languages acquisition. It pays particular attention to motivation in terms of enjoyment and interest.

(ii) The three phases of research in motivation in Second Language Acquisition (SLA)

The SLA body of research can broadly be categorised in three chronological phases. After providing a cursory overview of these, I will discuss the significance of the first phase in helping us to understand greater pupil interest in Spanish than French and German and insights from the second phase that reveal the importance of educational psychology and curriculum factors. My focus of attention in the second phase will turn to "course specific motivational components" (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991) as these indicate how a greater emphasis on IU may potentially generate pupil interest and enjoyment.

Dörnyei (2008) divides the motivation in second language (L2) acquisition research into three phases: the social psychological period (1959-1990); the cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s) and new approaches (since the later 1990s). The first phase of research in motivation in L2 acquisition was dominated by the work of Robert Gardner (1985, cited in: Coleman et al., 2007). Gardner introduced the concepts of *integrative* and *instrumental* motivation. The integrative dimension referred to a sincere and positive interest in the people and cultures which use a different language and the desire to interact with them and become similar to valued members of that community. By contrast, the instrumental orientation was based on the recognition of the practical or pragmatic benefits of learning a new language, i.e. getting a job or a higher salary.

Gardner's work was criticised by many, in particular by Dörnyei (1994) for notable limitations. His theory emerged from a study about the learning of French in Canada and thus it was difficult to extrapolate his theory to other populations due to its highly contextual nature. Secondly, Gardner's social-psychological theory ignored research from educational psychology. This gave way to the second period of research that drew on cognitive theories imported from educational psychology and addressed issues of intrinsic and extrinsic

motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985, cited in: Dörnyei, 1994) efficacy/ self-confidence (e.g. Oxford and Shearin, 1994, Dörnyei, 1994), and situation specific motives associated with the learning (see Crookes and Schmidt, 1991). Finally, the third phase of research is concerned with an interest in motivational change and the relationship between motivation and identity /self (Dörnyei, 2009). Theories and empirical findings from the first and second phases are most helpful in exploring possible relationships between motivation in MFL and a greater emphasis on the cultural dimension. I will discuss these below with particular attention to the actual language studied and course specific components.

(iii)   *Auf Wiedersehen German, Hola Spanish* [2]*: the socio-cultural status of the target language and countries*

Certain statistics suggest that it is not necessarily the curriculum content or pedagogical approach that makes MFL more meaningful and relevant to teenagers but instead, the socio-cultural status of the target language countries and culture. The number of pupils taking GCSE in French or German has been shrinking over the years. By contrast, the number of pupils taking GCSE in Spanish rose by 25% in 2008 compared to 2001 although Spanish entries seemed to slow down in 2009 with a minor increase of 0.5% from 2008. 2010 saw slightly better improvement for Spanish with an increase of 2% on the previous year.

The possible reasons for the increasing popularity of Spanish were discussed in *The Guardian* on 20 January 2010. The newspaper reported that Kathryn Board, CILT's (National Centre for Languages) chief executive, said Spain's reputation as a holiday destination and well-known Spanish-speaking celebrities had boosted numbers of teenagers opting to learn

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[2] headline used by SHEPHERD, J. 2010. Auf Wiedersehen German, Hola Spanish. *The Guardian*, 20.1.10. in her discussion of the rising popularity of Spanish and the decline of German

the language. In the same article, she was quoted as saying: "Far more kids have contact with Spain than with Germany. Spain has a very attractive culture and many role models in films and music, such as Shakira, speak Spanish. It seems a very accessible culture to pupils" (Kathryn Board reported in: Shepherd, 2010).

Although some academics are sceptical about the usefulness of Gardner's theory outside the Canadian context, the concept of the integrative motivation may help us to understand Board's claims. Clément (1980) and Clément and Kruidener (1985) (cited in: Coleman et al., 2007: 247) also found that the target language itself can have a direct impact on motivation. The interest of English teenagers in Spain and Spanish would also concur with claims made by Barrett (2007) (from a social psychological perspective) who argues (from a social psychological perspective) that young people are more likely to engage with information about other nations and national groups if it is relevant to their own motivational needs. Pop music, cinema and holidays are highly likely to belong to the interests of English teenagers.

(iv) The L2 course and the classroom experience

Burstall (1978) and Green (1975), cited in: Coleman et al. (2007), both questioned the relevance of theories of instrumental and integrative motivation in the British modern language classroom. The special status of English as major *lingua franca* undermined the instrumental rationale whilst integrative motivation did not apply to a large proportion of pupils as the majority of them did not have direct experience with the L2 community. Learners' attitudes and motivation seemed much more related to the overall classroom experience. Several studies (see Coleman et al., 2007: 254 for a list of references) have shown that the potential to generate intrinsic motivation increases when learners are provided with varied classroom experiences and when outcomes were made clear.

A study of motivation of students learning English as a modern language at school in Hungary reached similar conclusions. Nikolov (1999) conducted a study relating to children's motivation between the ages of six and fourteen. She found that "the most motivating factors for children between 6 and 14 years of age included positive attitudes towards the learning context and the teacher, intrinsically motivating activities, tasks and materials. They were more motivated by classroom practice than by integrative or instrumental reasons [...] Instrumental motives here emerged around the age of 11-12 but they remained vague and general. No trace of attitudes towards speakers of the target language was identified in the answers to the open questions" (p.49; emphasis added).

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) are also sceptical about Gardner's theory. They believe that the concepts of instrumental and integrative motivation distance themselves from everyday, nontechnical concepts of what it means to be motivated. When teachers say that a student is motivated, they are not usually concerning themselves with the students' reasons for studying, but are observing that the student does study, or at least engage in teacher-desired behaviour in the classroom and possibly outside it (p.480).

The authors stress the importance of "course specific motivational components": the teaching materials, teaching method and learning tasks. Thus we learn that classroom experience, the learning context, intrinsically motivating activities and appropriate tasks and materials are highly likely to stimulate pupil interest and enjoyment. The "course specific motivational components" can be related to curriculum content. The Languages Review's emphasises the need to engage pupils with "meanings that matter" (Dearing and King, 2007: 15). Providing pupils with access to cultural experiences is suggested as one way of generating such engagement. Interestingly, the Languages Review also proposes that the new

GCSE specifications should include the study of culture in order to include "subjects that are of concern and interest to teenagers" (p.39).

Some authors have commented specifically on the lack of stimulating content in the English and Scottish MFL curricula and have suggested that these may be related to pupil motivation. Starkey (2005b) noted that the Ministerial Action Group on Languages found that pupils' "*intrinsic motivation* declines at secondary school when students begin to perceive in it a lack of intellectual stimulation and a lack of deep engagement with their real and emerging adolescent interests" (p.35; original emphasis).

Starkey (ibid) also argues that a reason why students may have a negative attitude to language learning may be that the topics of study for languages are mainly associated with the private sphere. "As such they fail to engage with political issues and lack intellectual stimulation for lively young minds" (p.35). He is particularly critical of the topics on GCSE syllabi which fail to encourage learners to look outside their own personal sphere. He also highlights that the majority of the topics are more likely to appeal to girls than boys, e.g. home life which encompasses describing room furnishings and descriptions of household tasks. Although Starkey discusses GCSE topics, these themes are also addressed lower down the school and could be the source of low motivation in Key Stage 3. Starkey suggests that "A logical response to negativity and low motivation may well be consciously to introduce the public sphere and give a citizenship dimension to the topic" (p.36). This would seem to link specifically with topics that may encourage the development of IU.

In their study of the decline of languages uptake in secondary schools in Scotland, McPake et al. (1999) also unveiled the limitations of confining the curriculum to the private sphere. The pupils participating in the study expressed criticism of topics such as school and hobbies. They expressed much greater interest in learning about the country in which the

language they were learning is spoken. The pupils interviewed were of the opinion that it was unlikely that they would talk about themselves in terms of hobbies, school etc. in the future. They seemed to have an image of how they would use languages in the future as adults. "When asked to say in their own words what they liked best about language learning, the two most frequently cited benefits were the opportunity to communicate with foreigners, and the chance to *learn about other countries and other cultures*" (p.53; emphasis added).

McPake et al. (1999) suggest that the students' interest in the cultural context of the language they are studying (and their dislike of rote learning) imply that they are dissatisfied with what might be termed a 'mechanistic' approach to language learning. Fisher (2001) reported similar findings regarding pupil interest in cultural topics. In a pupil questionnaire completed by 117 Year 11 pupils in three English comprehensives, 72% of the pupils agreed with the statement 'I enjoy finding about the culture and people of a different country'. When asked later in the questionnaire to say what would have made their GCSE course better, a number of respondents mentioned more cultural input. It seems that a much greater cultural dimension to their studies would have better motivated pupils.

(v) SLA motivation and learner specific factors

Many studies have found girls to be more motivated to learn MFL than boys. In seeking to explain why girls have consistently outperform boys in MLF GCSE and A level examinations, Clark and Trafford (1996), Moys (1996) and Callaghan (1998) (all cited in: Williams et al., 2004) point to a variety of factors, including the comparative absence of male MFL teachers and the dominance of female biased topics in the syllabus. Barton (1997) tries to explain the differences in achievement by highlighting contrasting experiences at home, differences in communication styles, peer pressure, lesson content, the teacher and pupils' attitudes to different languages. Stables and Wikely (1999) found boys' attitudes to MFL

more negative than girls and other authors (see Bacon and Finneman (1992); Gardner and Lambert (1972); both cited in: Williams et al., 2004) suggest that males show less integrative motivation than females. Williams et al. (2004) found that girls expressed a higher degree of liking MFL and a greater desire to learn MFL as well as more integrative motivation than boys. They also found that pupils thought that it was not 'cool' for boys to like languages.

Oxford and Shearin (1994) showed that some students' language learning motivation might be based on a need for achievement, while others' motivation might stem from a fear of failure. Motivation will only be high if expectancy of success is high, in addition to the value students place on the success. If one of these values is low, motivation will be negatively affected. Students must also believe that the outcome is at least equal to the input (effort) if motivation is to remain strong. In this way, language learning motivation is influenced by self-efficacy. Dörnyei (1994) also refers to the theory of attribution, stressing causal links with past failures or successes and the learner's perceptions of self-efficacy theory and need for achievement.

(vi) Meanings that matter

The authors of the Languages Review (Dearing & King, 2007), which examined what could be done to encourage 14- 16 year olds to study GCSE or other language courses, noted that "motivating learners is a key challenge for language teachers in secondary schools" (p.11). Amongst the four conditions suggested to motivate learners, Dearing and King stressed the relevance of providing "engaging curricular content (including links with the real world in which the language is spoken)" (p.11). Furthermore, they attested that "It is widely held, and we believe rightly, that [the curriculum content] is not at a cognitive level that is stimulating to teenagers" (p.15). The Languages Review argued that the new languages curriculum for Key Stage 3 should provide "the scope for teachers to teach in contexts that engage the

interest of teenagers. It gives teachers the opportunity to motivate learning [...] The kind of content will motivate learners – those 'meanings that matter'" (p.15).

It was anticipated that the revised KS3 MFL curriculum which placed "a greater emphasis on intercultural understanding" and "root[ed] language learning firmly in the cultural context of the target language", would "refresh and renew" the curriculum (QCA, 2008). The cultural context would also lend itself well to links with other subjects in cross-curricular projects which were strongly encouraged across the whole KS3 curriculum experience.

Whilst the increased emphasis on the cultural context and relevant themes were not the only aspects of the MFL curriculum addressed in the 2008 revision, they probably belonged to the most significant alterations. By placing an increased emphasis on IU, it seems that the writers of the revised MFL KS3 curriculum have pinned many of their hopes on improved motivation by providing new course content.

2.4.2   MFL learning and pupils' attitudes to other cultures

The Nuffield Review (2000) claimed that "successful language learning fosters tolerance and respect [and that] learning a new language can give the learner insights into how other people think, and engender respect for other cultures and ways of life" (p.30). However, the work of Byram et al. (1991) indicates how factors, both in and outside of school, may influence pupil attitudes in this regard. It would be naïve, therefore, to make an assumption that language learning, by default, can accomplish this on its own.

Byram et al. (1991) conducted a mixed methods study at the end of the 1980s into cultural studies and language learning in two secondary schools in the North East of England.

The fundamental purpose of their research was to investigate the effect that language teaching has on pupils' views of other cultures, and how this relates to the effects of other factors in their environments. In order to gain a wider picture on pupils' perceptions and attitudes about other cultures, data was also gathered from pupils in eight feeder primary schools.

A survey was employed to gather statistical data on pupils' levels of ethnocentricity and their experiences of 'foreign' people. Pupils were interviewed about their attitudes to the French people and their knowledge of the culture and French lessons were observed. Finally, the researchers conducted informal interviews with MFL teachers about their teaching of culture.

The researchers did not find any associational statistical evidence from the survey that indicated a significant association between learning French and attitude change. The absence of a relationship between the two factors was also established from the interviews. Thus, "the weight of evidence seems to be that *external factors* affect pupils' attitudes more than does learning French in school" (p.380; emphasis added).

This is not to say that there is a total absence of impact of learning French on pupils' perceptions and attitudes. The qualitative data revealed that pupil perceptions and attitudes can be influenced by differential experience of different school classes. The association of a particular school class with perceptions and attitudes was also found to be statistically significant. But "though this remains fundamental, non-school factors are also very important" (p.369).

The background variables of gender and socio-economic class were found to be statistically significant. Indeed, "gender was found to be one of the variables most frequently

associated with the variance of attitudinal scores" (p.166). According to the statistics, pupils' socio-economic status was associated with their views of the French (though not to a significant extent with their views of the Germans). As far as what may be perceived as 'obvious' factors, (e.g. the experience of other countries, family language learning experience or acquaintance with relations of other linguistic backgrounds or nationalities) are concerned, the statistical data showed that these do not necessarily enhance views of other peoples. Instead, pupils' views of other peoples "must be considered as part of a matrix of factors" (p.189) e.g. history or geography lessons, TV and films, visits to France and the views of parents and other adults and siblings. In their conclusion, Byram et al. (1991) remark:

> In our view, the effect of language teaching on pupils' views is, in short, disappointing. Despite the fact that teachers and educational policy makers subscribe to the belief that foreign language teaching should encourage positive attitudes and further pupils' understanding of cultures rather than their own, and despite the genuine efforts of teachers in our study to realise these aims, the outcome seems to be no more than an acquisition of separate and largely de-contextualised information which does not amount to an understanding of or insight into other people's way of living and thinking (p.380).

In spite of expressing their disappointment with this finding, the authors remark that they are not surprised. Teachers face other pressures and concerns which results in lower priority attached to cultural matters which by consequence are often dealt with in a haphazard or unstructured manner. In their recommendations, they argue that "there must be a greater awareness and acknowledgement of existing pupil perceptions and attitudes and the power of extra-school influences [...] This would then lead to recognition of the possibility and indeed the necessity of using pupils' views as an integral part of the ideal model" (p.384).

Any MFL curriculum, therefore, that aims to develop IU amongst pupils, would be presumptuous to assume that it will be an inevitable outcome without due consideration of influences on young people that are external to the school. In fact, such influences may also

have a bearing on how open pupils are to learning about other cultures as part of the school curriculum.

2.4.2   The psychology of children's responses to other cultures

(i)   The link between age and the understanding of interpersonal relationships

Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (1999) draw attention to the significance of a young person's stage in development with regard to their ability to take a position outside a two-person interaction and to view the interaction from a third person's perspective. Using a developmental model for interpersonal understanding formulated by Selman (1980) they explain how "the maturing individual is thought to progress in understanding the feelings, attitudes and opinions of others" (p.59). According to Selman, the understanding of the reciprocal nature of interpersonal relationships (stage 3: mutual role taking) emerges between the ages of ten and fifteen (p.60). It is also at this stage of development that young people are able to gain a better understanding of mutual respect and tolerance.

This is an important insight in the consideration of planning an intercultural MFL curriculum. Pupils in Key Stage 3 fall precisely into this third stage of development and may, or may not yet, have the maturity to be able to decentre and critically evaluate different cultural perspectives. Selman's model has rather serious implications regarding the suitability of the IU in the primary MFL curriculum. The majority of children of primary school age, according to his model, are not yet mature enough to fulfil the aspirations of the Key Stage 2 Framework, namely to "develop a greater understanding of their own lives in the context of exploring the lives of others [...] or learn to look at things from another perspective" (DfES, 2005).

Cushner (2008) also argues that middle childhood represents "the critical period to begin addressing international and intercultural socialization" (p164). He employs Piaget's four stage cognitive development theory (Piaget and Inhelder 1969, cited in: Cushner , 2008) to illustrate how in moving to the third stage of concrete operations (between the ages of 8 and 12), children begin the process of decentring. According to Piaget's age bracket for the third stage of development, intercultural learning *would be* suitable for primary education.

Interestingly, Byram (1997) also considered the 'developmental' factor to be a necessary stage in planning a curriculum for intercultural communicative competence, stressing the need to analyse the "cognitive and affective development of the learners" (p.79). The teacher should take nothing for granted. He advises that with young learners there is a need to start with the concrete and work up to the abstract.

Research from developmental psychology thus suggests that Key Stage 3 may be an ideal time for engaging pupils with learning concerning IU. However, Barrett's (2007) work suggests that developmental psychology on its own is inadequate in helping us to understand how young people will respond to learning about the 'other'. It is also necessary to take perspectives offered by social psychology into account.

(ii) Children's knowledge, beliefs and feelings about nations and national groups

Barrett (2007) provides us with a meta analysis of studies from developmental psychology that aims to illustrate that knowledge, beliefs and feelings about nations and national groups are much more than a function of age. As a starting point, he refers to Piaget and Weil's 1951 study that assessed Swiss children's understanding of their own and other countries by employing Piagetian stage theory of cognitive development. Although the results broadly aligned with Piaget's theory of child development, Barrett underlines limitations of this

study. Firstly, it did not present quantitative data about how many children gave each type of response which are said to be characteristic of each age (p.35) and secondly, it was conducted within only one country. Referring to numerous other studies, Barrett indicates that children's geographical knowledge and attitudes to foreign countries vary not only as a function of age, but also as a function of gender (Barrett 1996); social class (Jahoda , 1962 and Wiegand, 1991); nationality (Jahoda and Woerdenbagch , 1982); ethnicity (Wiegand, 1991) and geographical location within their own country (Bourchier et al., 1996).

In an attempt to analyse the reasons for these differences, Barrett considered the influences of travel, formal teaching, mass media and incidental factors. For example, older and middle class children tend to have more travel experience that may result in less stereotypical views. Varying curricula in different countries will mean that children have different experiences of formal geographical teaching and exposure to the mass media and its representations of other countries will also be greatly variable.

Barrett also reviews studies that investigate children's pride in their own countries. According to Piagetian theory, this would start at the age of seven. However, Barrett found variation here across and within individual countries. He also found variability across countries with regard to children's utilization and affect of state and national emblems. These varied not only as a function of age, but also of language group and gender. The author suggests that social factors such as schooling, media and family are likely to have a strong impact on pride and knowledge and utilization of national emblems.

It becomes apparent that as the number and scale of the studies increase, the theories that relate purely to cognitive development become less credible. This is particularly true where the author reports on the CHOONGE and NERID projects.

In collaboration with international colleagues, Barrett compares existing studies with two cross national comparative studies (CHOONGE : Children's Beliefs and feelings about Their Own and Other National Groups in Europe and NERID: The Development of National, Ethno-linguistic and Religious Identity in Children and Adolescents Living the New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union).

The respective projects involved the collection of data from over 4000 children and adolescents, aged 6,9, 12 and 15 years old, living in ten different national contexts: England, Scotland, Catalonia, the Basque Country, southern Spain, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan (Barrett, 2007). The children were involved in two different tasks: a trait attribution task and interviews to measure affect.

The findings revealed that social identity theory (Tajfel, 1978, cited in: Barrett, 2007) and self-categorization theory (Oakes, Haslam & Turner, 1994, cited in: Barrett 2007), which have been used to explain adults' attitudes to the 'other', are limited in their application to children. Drawing on developmental theory, Nesdale et al. (2003), (cited in: Barrett 2007: 276), for example, created social identity *development* theory (SIDT) to explain children's racial and ethnic attitudes. According to SIDT, one would expect children around the age of 4 years of age to show preferences for the in-group but not yet have developed prejudices for the out-group. At the age of 7, the focus shifts from the in-group to the out-group where the child begins to actively dislike the out-group. It is only at this age that one would expect prejudices to emerge. The data generated by the children in the CHOONGE and NERID studies, however, revealed great variability with the attribution of both positive and negative traits to the in-group when related to age which was not in accordance with SIDT. Moreover, the attribution of traits to out-groups was equally as varied. In exclaiming that these results were "bewilderingly diverse", Barrett advocates that in order to better understand the

perceptions of young people in such matters, it is necessary to take into account the impact of their particular experience of *social* issues. Thus, he proposes a "Societal-Social -Cognitive-Motivational Framework" (SSCMT) which takes the following factors into account:

1. *Societal factors* - in particular the influence of the norms and values espoused by school and the mass media;

2. *Social factors* - in particular the influence of language (spoken in the home and the language of education) and parents (discourse and practices in relationship to other nations; exposure to information / attitudes about nations/ states; constraints they make regarding media; access they grant to particular settings; parenting culture). Barrett also refers to the influence of social class and ethnicity which may influence the range of children's personal experiences of other countries and contacts with other cultures in addition to gender, geographical location and teachers and peer groups;

3. *Cognitive factors* - young people's ability to attend to, process and retain types of information;

4. *Motivational factors* - Cognitive processes are influenced by "affective valence and salience of information available" (p285). Young people are more likely to engage with information about other nations and national groups if it is relevant to their own motivational needs.

Barrett concludes that "societal, social, cognitive and motivational factors *all* play a role in influencing children's knowledge, beliefs and feelings about countries, nations, states and the people who belong to different national and state groups [...] Any theory that neglects to include all of these factors within its purview will not be able to explain the full range of evidence that it now available concerning children's development in this domain" (pp286 -

287). He is careful to stress, however, that the balance of these influences will vary from country to country and from social group to social group within a country. Barrett's framework conceptualizes the developing child as being situated within an "ecological niche that itself constantly changes as the child grows older" (p.287). It is therefore necessary to look at the "child-in-the-environment" (p.288).

Although intercultural languages education is not discussed in Barrett's work, his SSCMT framework may have significant messages for pedagogy in this field. The consideration of societal, social, cognitive and motivational factors that influence young people's knowledge, beliefs and feelings about other cultures may serve as a foundation on which to develop a curriculum that is appropriate and fitting to different groups of pupils and different school environments. A teacher may need to provide tasks that help pupils to critically but sensitively evaluate the societal views represented in their own schools and media. He /she will need to deal sensitively with views and attitudes that relate to young people's socialisation at home, in the community and school. The teacher should consider the cognitive capacity of the pupils to deal with more or less abstract concepts and finally select materials and themes that they believe will be of interest to their pupils. Careful consideration of Barrett's four factors could be of great importance in developing an intercultural languages curriculum that it is significant to pupils.

2.4.4 *Societal and social factors*

As we have learnt, children's knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about other cultures are likely to be heavily influenced by societal and social factors. As signposted on p.73, this final section of the literature review was conducted following my data analysis which by adopting

a grounded theory approach, enabled a more specific focus of relevant societal and social factors. An analysis of the data from pupils in this study suggests that this seems to particularly be the case with regard to pupil gender and social class.

(i) Gender

Pederson's (1997) study investigated the relationships that may exist between gender and early adolescents' levels of intercultural sensitivity (ICS) using a modified version of Hammer's (1999) Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) complemented by open-ended interviews. A short form of Bems' (1991) Sex Role inventory (cited in: Pederson, 1997) was employed in an attempt to identify four types of 'sex-typed' individuals – masculine, feminine, androgynous (having both masculine and feminine characteristics) and undifferentiated. The sample comprised of 7th graders in the U.S.

The findings revealed that the pupils in the androgynous group (n=22) reported statistically significant greater levels of intercultural sensitivity (ICS) than the other three groups of students (n=79). The children classified as androgynous "all expressed an eagerness and openness to learning about the 'other' [...] Three of the four students talked about their intercultural friendships [and all seemed to have] flexible and curious attitudes about learning and interacting with those who are culturally different" (p.13).

Similarly, Holm et al. (2009) have found a relationship between gender and ICS. Their study examined the ICS of 549 Finnish 12-16 year olds using Bennett's 1993 Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and found a statistically significant gender-related difference in the responses. Females reported more positive attitudes towards people coming from other cultures.

Research in the field of religious education and the European Dimension has also indicated a relationship between gender and openness to 'the other'. Ter Avest et al. (2010) investigated Dutch teenagers' perceptions about the role of religious education in school. They found that girls agreed significantly stronger than boys with the statement that at school, they learn "to have respect for everyone, whatever their religion," and that learning about different religions at school "helps us live together". They also found some difference in boys' and girls' opinions on what would help people to live together in peace. For girls it was more important to know about each other's religions (p.388).

Convery et al.'s (1997) study on pupils' perceptions of Europe (conducted in six EU countries) also revealed a gender differential. Overall, girls seemed more open to the idea of European unity than boys: "The most striking feature of the overall pattern of responses to the questionnaire is that on all issues except for health education, more females than males think that decisions should be made at an EC rather than a national level" (p.11). The authors remark that the "more positive attitude of youth, with greater open-mindedness and acceptance of new ideas for the future, seems to express itself more readily through the attitudes of young women. This is a reality which planners and promoters of the European dimension in schools should do well to bear in mind" (p.11).

These studies would support the notion that there is a potential relationship between gender and young people's attitudes to other cultures. Bearing this in mind, girls seem likely to be more disposed to learning that aims to develop IU than boys. Interestingly, two of these research papers also find a relationship with young people's local environment or social class.

(ii) Pupils' local environments, school locale and social class

Pederson (1997) was not only interested in the potential relationship between gender and ICS but also the influence of pupils' experience of intercultural contacts. For this reason, she chose school classes from three schools in three different school districts. Her quantitative and qualitative data analysis revealed an association between ICS levels and the extent of pupils' intercultural relationships. Children who reported that they had more friends that were of different cultural / ethnic background than themselves, and who enjoyed talking with people who were culturally different from themselves, displayed higher levels of ICS.

Interestingly, not all of the young people who fell into this category lived in urban areas. Although the urban children interacted daily with people from different cultures, some were suspicious of other groups as they socialised mostly within their own circles, or they had some direct experience of conflict or even violence with inter group encounters. By contrast, some of the pupils who came from rural areas with little contact with ethnic groups expressed a positive interest and genuine curiosity in making intercultural contacts. These pupils also scored highly on the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). This would explain why an analysis of variance of mean IDI score by location did *not* indicate a statistically significant difference between rural and urban subsamples.

There was, however, a statistically significant difference between rural and suburban samples. In contrast to the urban students who might be fearful or suspicious of other cultures because of their close proximity to ethnic minorities, Pederson claims that the suburban students tended to hold a much more pragmatic view, simply accepting that the world was becoming a more multicultural place. It is suggested that the suburban school ethos also has a more positive influence on developing ICS. Pederson found that the suburban school was the only one of the three that promoted intercultural relationships in the written and hidden

curriculum. Thus "intercultural contact may be *a necessary but not sufficient factor* which encourages high levels of ICS" (p.18; emphasis added). It would have been interesting to know more about the social and ethnic backgrounds of the pupils in the suburban school in order to assess possible influences, but this information is not provided.

Pykett's research (2009) is helpful in considering the links between school locale and the relevance pupils attach to developing an international outlook. Whilst Pykett deals in more depth with issues relating to local and national citizenship, her observations about pupils' constructions of their global citizen identities are pertinent to this study. Pykett argues that there is a disconnect between the development of Citizenship Education and consideration of the socio-economic locale of the school:

> Whilst education policies such as the introduction of Citizenship Education presume a 'flat' space onto which a uniform national curriculum can be applied, they are in fact implemented in educational spaces which are already characterised by difference (p.808).

In her field notes on a Citizenship lesson in 'Ferngrove' school in which pupils discussed the Registrar-General's definition of 'social class', Pykett noted that pupils attributed 'travel through the world' to the middle class. In their list of attributes about working class, the pupils included 'more interested in local issues rather than the wider world'.

We learn that 'Ferngrove' has below average GCSE scores and above average numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. 53% of its pupils were from ethnic minorities and the school had high numbers of pupils with English as an additional language. We see here that cultural diversity within a school does not necessarily stimulate interest in

international issues. Social background would appear to be more influential in shaping pupils' perceptions of relevance of international issues.

In direct contrast to the circumstances reported at 'Ferngrove' school, Saviddes (2008) makes apparent how pupils attending European schools have a very different outlook on the European Dimension. In these intergovernmental elite schools with diverse European populations, young people have opportunities to socialize and interact with people from other countries –but from the same socio-economic background - on a daily basis both in and outside the classroom. Moreover, they understand the benefits of intercultural communicative competence vis-à-vis foreign languages as they are able to put their foreign language learning to good use. As one child remarked, "it's great that we learn a second language, 'cause we can communicate with them in their language" (p.315). The mix of nationalities in history, geography and economics classes also prompts pupils to consider issues from different national perspectives, enabling a broader world view. It should not come as a surprise, however, that pupils of parents with international elite careers have what appear to be completely different attitudes towards foreign languages and cultures which are not comparable with those of most ordinary pupils, regardless of their social backgrounds.

We learn from Convery and Kerr's research (2005) that the social background of the pupil population not only influences the *pupil* constructions of their citizen identities in the international context but also *teachers'* attitudes about the identities they think their pupils can develop. In their exploration of practitioners' attitudes to the European dimension, the authors found that there was "a clear link between the socioeconomic status of pupils' local communities and the teachers' willingness to develop a European dimension in their teaching" (p.28).

Convery et al. (1997) found a relationship between social class and the ways in which pupils think about Europe. Those whose parents were unemployed were more likely to see *national* government as responsible for policy decision-making. On 11 out of the 14 items on their questionnaire pupils with unemployed parents registered the lowest European score.

In summary, the locale of the school (and pupils' homes), pupils' social class or the type of school they attend may all have a strong bearing on the relevance they attach to an IU orientated curriculum. Whilst one may expect young people from a culturally diverse environment to have greater intercultural sensitivity than their peers from culturally homogeneous communities, we learn from Pederson (1997) that this is not always the case, especially if pupils have direct experience of social tensions between different ethnic groups. Thus, whilst the development of IU in the curriculum is likely to be relevant to pupils who live in multicultural urban environments, this may be a controversial or challenging experience. By the same token, one cannot assume that pupils from rural backgrounds will be disinterested in intercultural education.

Pykett (2009), Convery and Kerr (2005) and Convery et al. (1997) suggest that both pupils and teachers in schools located in socially deprived areas perceive it to be more difficult to mentally and physically overcome geographic and social boundaries. The development of European or global citizenship, therefore, is less likely to be relevant to these pupils' daily lives. By contrast, pupils who attend elite European schools are very conscious of the benefits of cosmopolitan citizenship and have opportunities to take advantage of this on a daily basis.

Nonetheless, we should be wary of claiming a causal relationship between young people's interest in learning about other cultures and their social background. The findings of the REDCo project (**Religion in education. A contribution to dialogue or a factor of conflict in transforming societies in European countries**), indicate that in spite of greatly varied social experiences, young people broadly believe that school is the right place for learning about other cultures and worldviews. Moreover, students expressed the opinion that they wanted learning to take place in a safe classroom environment where there are agreed procedures for expression and discussion (Jackson, 2008). "They want teachers to combine expertise in the study of religions and social and cultural issues with the expertise of facilitators of discussion and exchange, where students can draw on their own knowledge and expertise as well as that of the teacher" (Jackson, 2011).

Convery et al. (1997) also reported a genuine interest in learning about Europe from teenagers across different EU countries. The survey respondents (n=1300) came from a whole range of different schools from a variety of social and geographical areas. In all of the countries participating in the study, the young people expressed an interest in the topic of the European Dimension and had a reasonable grasp of the issues they saw to be important. The participants also reported that they would like to further enhance their knowledge and find ways to interpret more fully the knowledge they gained which was principally from the media. Whilst they felt that they gain some understanding at school, it was inconsistent, incoherent and more often more concerned with geographical or historical facts rather than political or cultural analysis or an opportunity for them to express their own opinions. The positive comments about learning about Europe far outnumbered the negative ones. There seemed to be a "hunger for information and understanding" (p.7).

These findings suggest that it would be inappropriate to claim social deprivation as a barrier to the development of a curriculum that promotes IU. It may take more effort on the part of teachers, but they should also be encouraged by young people's enthusiasm for this type of learning which they wish to occur in a school environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have considered literature that relates to the significance pupils may attach to IU in the MFL curriculum from four broad perspectives:

1. Are they likely to find the MFL curriculum more interesting by consequence of a greater emphasis on IU?

2. What do we know about the relationship between the development of positive attitudes to other cultures and the learning of languages?

3. What does developmental psychology tell us about the appropriateness of intercultural learning in Key Stage 3? How is this complemented by related research in social psychology?

4. How may gender, local environments, school locale and social class influence the pupil perspective?

The literature review suggests that a greater focus on IU in MFL has the potential to generate intrinsic motivation that is often lacking in the English experience. More explicit attention to the cultural contexts of the target language may provide pupils with more stimulating course content. However, the research also shows that motivation in SLA is complex and may be dependent on a number of other factors. Thus, it would be naïve to assume that a change in content alone will solve all motivation issues. We have also learnt that the haphazard

teaching and learning of the cultural dimensions that is oblivious to the influences and biases on pupils' ideas and attitudes that exist outside school, is unlikely to be successful in developing pupils' IU. Teachers cannot afford to ignore the impact of socio-cultural attitudes in their attempt to promote openness to other cultures.

Developmental theory would suggest that Key Stage 3 is an appropriate phase for teaching and learning about otherness as pupils will have reached a stage where they are able to appreciate different points of view. However, Barrett suggests that it is extremely important to consider the environment in which the young person grows up and the ways in which this is likely to influence perceptions and attitudes. These environmental factors are independent of age. Gender, socioeconomic background, local environment and the school context may have considerable influence on pupils' 'starting points' for an IU curriculum. Nonetheless, young people's enthusiasm and curiosity for this type of learning should be harnessed rather than using social factors as a potential barrier.

3. Methodology

Introduction

My study sets out to respond to three broad groups of questions. The first group relates to the macro context: What was the reason for changing the term "cultural awareness" (the term of reference for the cultural dimension in previous MFL policy documents) to "intercultural understanding" in the revised Key Stage 3 MFL Programme of Study (QCA, 2007a). More specifically, what were the pedagogical or political drivers for this shift in terminology? Does the term "intercultural understanding" reflect a shift in pedagogical thinking about the teaching and learning about 'otherness' that is found in theoretical models of intercultural languages learning?

My second set of questions relate to micro level issues concerning the translation, enactment and reception of this policy change. How do MFL teachers interpret "intercultural understanding" and do they consider this to be different from "cultural awareness"? Do they have the expertise, skills and will to engage with *inter*cultural learning? How do pupils feel about learning about other cultures? Do they think that an emphasis on intercultural understanding makes the MFL curriculum more interesting, valuable or relevant? To what extent do teacher and pupil perspectives coincide with those of policy makers at the macro level?

Finally, I am interested in discovering whether the intercultural understanding curriculum may be translated and received differently, depending on the type of school, socio-economic group of the pupil population or teacher demographic. How might sociological factors such as these mediate intercultural teaching and learning? How may

contextual factors of the school be conducive or constrictive to a greater focus on intercultural understanding?

These questions can be operationalized in the following more specific research questions:

1a. What were the key influences on the new emphasis on intercultural understanding in the revised Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum?

1b. To what extent do pedagogical notions of intercultural understanding implicated in curriculum documents and guidance reflect theoretical models of intercultural languages education?

2. To what extent do the perceptions of policy makers regarding the significance of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum coincide with those of teachers and pupils?

3. How might teacher and pupil perceptions about the significance of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum differ according to:

- type of school;

- socio-economic group of the pupil population;

- gender of pupils;

- teacher demographic and biography?

The research seeks to gain an understanding of the complexities surrounding this policy initiative by studying the perceptions of various stakeholders. It therefore adopts a predominantly interpretative approach.

The aims of the study are:

- to explore the perspectives of the stakeholders (policy makers, teachers and pupils) about the importance of intercultural understanding in the Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum

- to explore policy maker and teacher perceptions about related good practice and challenges

- to explore pupils' perceptions about learning about other cultures in school

- to analyse how, in the views of stakeholders, the new policy is being translated into practice.

In a critical exploration of this curriculum policy development, I endeavour to provide an 'illuminative evaluation'. As Parlett and Hamilton (1977: 10) explain, an evaluation of this nature involves discovering "how [curriculum policy] operates; how it is influenced by the various school situations in which it is applied; what those directly concerned regard as its advantages and disadvantages". The thesis concerns itself with the perspectives of those directly involved in the Key Stage 3 MFL learning process and contrasts these with emerging policy rationale.

3.1 Ontological Positioning

I adopt in the main an interpretative approach as I want to research the meanings that teachers and pupils *bring to* and *make of* developing IU through MFL learning. I am interested in how human experiences, frames of reference (Gibson and Brown, 2009) and contextual factors (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) influence perceptions and how these may vary according to

individuals or groups. Interviews with policy makers provide a complementary perspective to the ones above. I am interested in how the represented standpoints of those involved in writing policy texts compare with the meanings expressed by teachers and pupils.

The study attempts to construct what Denzin and Lincoln (2003) refer to as a bricolage "a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" which metaphorically speaking, resembles the stitching together of a patchwork quilt (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003: 5). Kincheloe (2005) discusses bricolage as multidisciplinary research using eclectic processes in order to try to understand the complexity of the social world. I acknowledge that in the assembly of the quilt, I as the researcher, play an interactive part in the decisions I make about which parts to include and that these decisions are influenced by my own interpretations and potential biases. As Peshkin (2000) remarks, the process of analysis presents "numerous occasions for interpolating and extrapolating, judgement-making and assuming, doubting and affirming" (p.5). In the introduction to the thesis, I set out my personal interest and history related to the area of investigation. I am aware that by consequence of personal and positive intercultural experiences as a modern languages undergraduate living abroad, as a former secondary teacher of modern languages and in my current role as a teacher educator, I am not a disinterested researcher. On the contrary, I am also one of the stakeholders and have opinions about the value of intercultural learning through MFL education.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003) along with many other proponents of the interpretive paradigm emphasize the social constructivist nature of qualitative research, rejecting notions of an external, objective reality. They argue that human beings construct their own subjective reality and thus the researcher can only study human beings' representations of social worlds which in the interpretation process subsequently become intertwined with the viewpoints of

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the researcher. Whilst I appreciate these arguments, I have throughout the research process struggled somewhat with the notion of social constructivism in its purer form. On a personal level, I have faith in the ability of many human beings to think rationally about their experiences and to express their thoughts through language that is comprehensible to a listener or reader. I feel that through dialogue and interpretation, it is possible to achieve a degree of intersubjective consensus, that is a shared understanding of ideas.

Many social constructivists lay emphasis on the multiplicity of truths whereby the interpretation of the reader of the research is considered equally as valid as the perceptions of the participants in their own social worlds and the arguments made by the researcher (e.g. Peshkin, 2000, Smith, 1984). In an interpretive study, it is the researcher's task to present "unity in difference" or qualitative "coherence" (Sparkes, 1992) of these multiple truths. Whilst I find the latter task unproblematic, I find the relativistic implications of manifold and often competing realities more contentious. My problem here is that the notion of multiple realities shies away from judgements and decision making which are consequently of limited benefit for future development. I believe that the researcher has the responsibility of drawing together different perspectives and reaching conclusions, thereby resulting in knowledge creation.

I do not claim that the knowledge that I create is an external, objective truth. However, in the spirit of the liberal philosophy of education, I prefer to regard knowledge as the process involving searching for the 'right reason' but at the same time acknowledge that it is not an 'unchallenged given' (Halstead, 2005). My own philosophy of enhancement of teaching and learning is based on a belief in making rational and informed decisions based on the best information we have. This also involves the willingness to revise one's beliefs as new evidence, circumstances and experiences come to light. In the world of education, I feel

that it is important that we give credit to 'best-estimate(s)-of trustworthiness' (Bassey, 2001) that are achieved by providing thick description (Geertz, 1975) and placing a degree of faith in intersubjective consensus. My research does not purport to make positivistic claims about cause and effect that can be directly extrapolated to other situations. However, I support Bassey's (1999, 2001) notion of the possibility and value of "fuzzy generalizations", a term which he coined in response to his disheartenment with the mismatch between the proliferation of educational research and its limited impact on policy and practice. Whilst some other proponents of case study research (e.g. Yin, 2003) claim that case studies can be used for explanatory purposes and are indeed generalizable, Bassey explains that a fuzzy generalisation makes "no absolute claim to knowledge, but hedges its claim with uncertainties. It arises when the empirical finding of a piece of research, such as ... In *this* case it *has been* found that ... is turned into a qualified general statement like this: In *some* cases it *may be* found that ..." (Bassey, 1999: 12). Bassey explains that fuzzy generalizations are "neither likely to be true in every case, nor likely to be untrue in every case: [they are] something that may be true" (p.10). Referring to the work of Schofield (1990: 226) Bassey argues that if information is presented in a trustworthy manner, through thick description, the user of the research may be able to relate "the fit between the situation studied and others to which one might be interested in applying the concepts and conclusions of that studied". Thus, although there is no statistical measure of 'may', thereby precluding the making of scientific generalizations, competent research gives "a careful description of variables so that others [...] might consider whether to act in the same way" (Bassey, 2001: 11).

In some respects, Bassey's work overlaps with Dewey's pragmatism as presented by Biesta (2010). Dewey preferred to refer to the outcomes of inquiry as "warranted assertions" instead of truth. Whilst such assertions are only warranted in relation to the particular

situation in which they were produced, it does not mean that the conclusions from one situation cannot be useful for other situations (Biesta, 2010: 111). Similarly, Kvale (2007) refers to "pragmatic knowledge", that is moving from questions of objectivity and validity of knowledge to the quality and value of the knowledge produced. Like Dewey and Kvale, I respect the concept of pragmatism and would summarise my position as 'pragmatically interpretive'.

3.2 Research approach

In many respects, the study takes a case study *approach*. Indeed Bassey attributed his notion of fuzzy generalisation to investigations of singularity that typically involve case studies. However, it is important to note that this study does not focus on one particular case, but multi-sited cases (Eisenhardt, 2002, Schofield, 2002). It scrutinises perspectives in different types of schools, aiming to reflect a diversity of settings in order to glean an understanding of an *outside* concern (i.e. a concern that is intrinsic to the case). Stake (1995) has referred to case studies with an outside concern as *instrumental* case studies. My 'outside concerns' have been presented in the introduction to this chapter and as I have demonstrated, informed the formulation of the research questions.

As I explained in Chapter 1, the research adopts a flexible design. Whilst I had a relatively clear plan regarding the participant sample and survey methods, the study involved an interactive and iterative process between the literature and the data analysis (Huberman and Miles, 2002). The direction of the research was also influenced by developments in the policy context and practical considerations. Ultimately, this resulted in the refinement of both

my title and research questions. This process of refinement was also discussed in the introduction (See Chapter 1).

The study of pupils' perspectives in particular, takes a grounded, inductive approach (Charmaz, 2005, Charmaz, 2008, Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Here, I attempt to seek a theory that emerges from the data rather than imposing an established framework on the research. The emerging theory is not scientific, i.e. one which meets the criteria of simplicity and elegance, but the theory the pupils hold about the issues with which I am concerned. Whilst such theories are often confused and internally inconsistent, they are the theories which guide people's actions. The rationale behind the inductive approach is related to an absence of research and theory (with the exception of Byram et al., 1991) on the pupils' attitudes and beliefs about learning about other cultures through MFL in particular. However, following data collection and preliminary analysis, I discovered Barrett's (2007) monograph in which he reviews and theorises about empirical research related to children's knowledge, feelings and beliefs about other nations and national groups. I compared Barrett's theoretical model on children's perspectives with my own emerging theory in the latter stages of analysis. In contrast to Glaser and Strauss' (1967) very prescriptive strategies for collecting, analysing and comparing data the study adopted a modified, less rigid approach in the identification of themes, data comparison and further collection of data.

By emphasizing the focus on the empirical nature of the data, Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) implicated an external reality that assumed a neutral observer without personally preconceived ideas or knowledge of theory. Some scholars (see Charmaz, 2008), however, have "sought to loosen key grounded theory strategies from their positivist foundation evident in both Glaser's and Strauss and Corbin's versions of the method" (Charmaz, 2008: 469). Charmaz advocates that a grounded theory approach can also

use "prior knowledge and disciplinary perspective to sensitize them to conceptual issues at the beginning and seek new theoretical interpretations as they interrogate their data and emerging analysis" (p.472). Like Charmaz, I acknowledge that I am not a *tabula rasa*; my own *a priori* knowledge is informed by ideas I have developed in my professional experience as an MFL teacher and to an extent, by the literature I reviewed on motivation in second language acquisition prior to data collection.

The research with teachers and policy makers, by comparison, was informed by a more deductive approach whereby a thorough review of the literature and policy documents and guidance preceded data collection. Nonetheless, even here, this process was not entirely linear but, instead involved movement between data analysis and the interrogation of the literature.

3.3 Research Methods

The data collection methods are presented in relation to the three participant groups. They comprise of semi-structured interviews for teachers (n=18) and policy makers (n=2) (with a basic questionnaire for the former group to collect demographic information) and a questionnaire survey (n=765) and group interviews for pupils (n=5).

3.3.1 Interviews with teachers

The interview method was chosen as I wanted to investigate the meaning that all concerned gave to the significance of IU in the MFL curriculum. I was interested in their perceptions which are most commonly expressed through language. The interview has been recognised

by Kvale (2007) as helpful since knowledge is often generated between humans through conversations. However, it is here that we must be aware that the knowledge is generated by the interviewer / researcher as well as those being interviewed. Citing Laing (1967), Cohen et al. (2007) point out that the interview is not exclusively subjective or objective but intersubjective; it provides interviewers and interviewees with opportunities "to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard the situations form their own point of view" (p.349). Whilst this is potentially a great advantage for conducting a study from a social perspective, it is also possible that in the process of analysis the interpretations of the statements of the interviewee are influenced by the biases of the researcher. I hope that as a former MFL teacher with experience in similar schools that I have the situational knowledge to understand the views and experiences of teachers, thereby facilitating mutual understanding. Nonetheless, I am conscious of the fact that disclosing to the teachers my former occupation did not necessarily encourage them to unreservedly reveal their honest views. I realised that in order to gain their trust it was essential to do all I could to establish and maintain a positive and respectful relationship with them (Connelly and Clandenin, 1990).

Although many case studies take an ethnographic observational approach, in order to find out what happens in a naturalistic setting, this opportunity was not available to me due to logistical issues and time constraints. And as Robson (2006) explains , the interview is an effective substitute for ethnographic research:

The human use of language is fascinating both as a use of behaviour in its own right, and for the virtually unique window that it opens on what lies behind our actions. Observing behaviour is clearly a useful enquiry technique, but asking people directly about what is going on is an obvious short cut in seeking answers to research questions (p.272).

For the teachers, I adopted a semi-structured interview style. The topics and issues to be covered were specified in advance in outline form (see appendix 4), but the sequence and working of questions were decided during the course of the interview. This provided me with greater flexibility and freedom. Such an interview style also provided the opportunity, where appropriate, to probe for more detail, the chance to clear up any misunderstandings and to establish a rapport (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

In the teacher interviews, I drew on elements of narrative inquiry (Connelly and Clandenin, 1990), asking them to explore episodes where they had focused on IU and to talk about personal experiences that may inform their beliefs about its importance. In this way, the narrative provided a structure for conveying human experience. Connelly and Clandenin (1990) remark in their work on curriculum that they view teachers' narratives as metaphors for teaching-learning relationships (p.3). If the teacher narratives are plausible and adequate, they have the added advantage of presenting vicarious experiences that may resonate with experiences of the reader of the research. The stories also "function as arguments in which we learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community as lived" (Connelly and Clandenin, 1990: 8). Similarly, Conle (2000: 52) emphasises that narrative inquiry can draw attention to the meaning that actions and intentions have for the protagonist.

Interview schedule for teachers: The pre-determined areas for exploration in the interviews with teachers (see appendix 4) came from some of the themes that I had uncovered in the literature: the tensions involved in delivering the linguistic as well as the cultural dimension of the MFL curriculum; the relationship between teacher beliefs, their perceived skills and reported pedagogical practice; their perceptions about the relationship between cultural learning and pupil motivation; and possible examples of the shift from a cultural

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awareness to an intercultural approach. Teachers were also asked about intercultural learning opportunities linked to school visits abroad.

As the research progressed, I realised that the personal significance that teachers attached to IU was central to the study. Some of the earlier interviews focused more on opportunities and constraints for developing this curriculum which did not necessarily enable me to delve deeper into teacher attitudes and beliefs. Thus, I followed up a second round of interviews with a small number of teachers with some related drilling down questions. In later interviews, these themes were included on the schedule (see appendix 4).

3.3.2   Interviews with policy makers

The interviews with policy makers served a rather different agenda to the one with teachers. In contrast to gleaning an understanding of the personal meanings and experiences of individuals, I wanted to investigate the driving forces behind the policy texts, i.e. the structural influences at the macro level. Nonetheless, I was conscious of the problematic nature of interviewing people in elite and powerful positions.

Whilst Ball (1994: 109) has written about the complexities of interpreting interviews with policy makers, he has also supplied a useful schema for their interpretation. Accordingly, accounts in such interviews can be understood in at least three different ways. Firstly, as 'real stories', "as accounts of what happened, who said what, whose voices were important. The foci here are the key events, people and practicalities. Second, the interpretations can be considered as discourse, which in its reiterated form provide the justifications and 'why' principles that inform policy. Finally, the data can be understood as representative of interests of the State in structural terms, such as the "'needs' of capital and civil society".

All three types of interpretation are helpful in this study. The first may uncover who was consulted in the decision making process and how it unfolded. The second may provide an understanding of the underlying political rationale whilst the third may reveal more instrumental concerns. The intention of the study is to compare these policy perspectives with those of the people who are directly involved in the teaching and learning process. By employing this three-dimensional analysis, I hope to provide a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in developing IU through MFL.

Interview schedules for policy makers: The questions for policy makers (for schedule, see appendices 9a and 9b) were based on the information gaps I had established by consequence of a critique of curriculum policy and guidance documents that I had conducted in the early stages of the literature review. I was interested in finding out

- the main influences on curriculum design or change and who or what influences these;

- why there had been a particular decision to place greater emphasis on "intercultural understanding" for the first time in the 2008 NC revision;

- whether they thought that teachers had the skills, knowledge and willingness to develop IU;

- how they thought IU would be treated by teachers given the current assessment regime.

3.3.3 Mixed methods for hearing the pupil voice: a questionnaire survey and group interviews

Cullingford makes important points regarding a rationale for data collected from children. He argues that pupils are articulate and honest enough to make an analysis of their experiences,

showing consistent judgement and evidence for what they say. "Their views deserve to be taken into account because they know, better than anyone, which teaching styles are successful, which techniques of learning bring the best out of them, and what the ethos of the school consists of" (Cullingford, 1991: 2). Similarly, Scott argues that the "best people to provide information on the child's perspective, actions and attitudes are children themselves" (Scott, 1997: 232).

The data from pupils was collecting by employing mixed methods, using a questionnaire survey combined with pupil group interviews. The pupils who participated in the study were all in Year 9 (age 13-14). It was felt that this was the best age group to target as they were the ones who had most experience of Key Stage 3 language learning and therefore would provide the most practically informed opinions. This mixed methods approach for collecting pupil data was decided upon primarily for pragmatic reasons. Given that it has become increasingly difficult to interview young people due to constraints relating to ethical approval and consent by consequence of 'child protection' issues, it would have been extremely challenging to conduct a substantial number of 1-1 interviews with pupils. Instead, I used a survey which enabled me to reach a wide target population (Morrison, 1993) that would not have been possible with interviews. This mixed methods approach also provided the opportunity for methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978) whereby data collected using two different tools could be compared for convergence.

The survey employed a combination of closed questions relating to demographics, multiple choice questions to seek descriptive information about pupils' experiences of other cultures outside school and Likert Scale questions to collect data relating to attitudes and opinions. As Morrison (1993) has pointed out, Likert Scale questions enable the researcher to build in a degree of sensitivity and differentiation in response and by the same token, they

combine the opportunity for flexible responses with the ability to determine frequencies and associations. From a usability perspective, van Laerhoven et al. (2004) found that both older and younger children prefer Likert Scale questions to a Visual Analogue Scale and thus find it easier to complete surveys adopting this type of format.

Borgers et al. (2000) have stressed that methodological knowledge on how to survey children is scarce. They therefore discuss the experiences of adult participants in answering survey questions. This involves the interpretation of the question, retrieving relevant information from memory, 'computing' an answer, formatting the answer (e.g. choosing the appropriate response category), evaluation of the answer (e.g. editing due to social desirability) and communicating the final answer. Borgers et al. (2000) also stress that not only are these issues equally applicable to children, but that they can be magnified if a question is complex or if it relies on information being retrieved from memory. However, based on the their experience of employing surveys in other studies and a Piagetian developmental theory, Scott (1997) and Borgers et al. (2000) point out that a standardized questionnaire similar to those used for adults *can* be used for young people in the 11-15 age group.

Given that the questionnaire was completed in a classroom, it was necessary to be aware of the potential context effects on the answers and the influence of classmates. Children in this age group can be very context sensitive and have their own norms (Borgers et al., 2000). Lack of motivation, boredom and low reading ability can negatively influence the data quality and non response rate (Scott, 1997). Thus, it is recommended to pay special attention to question construction and thorough pre-testing of questionnaires.

The pupil survey was followed up with five group interviews with pupils from Year 9, which provided the opportunity to "elicit a greater, more in-depth understanding of

perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences from multiple points of view" (Vaughn et al., 1996: 16). Whilst group interviews can be used for exploratory reasons, they can also be employed in a portfolio of measures to triangulate data. In this study, they were not only used to seek deeper insights than those that could be provided through the survey, but to discover whether some of the findings from the questionnaires could be confirmed in another data source. Hall and Howard (2008) have also argued that mixed methods facilitate an effect that is greater than the sum of the parts. Here, the concept of "greater" means "more" rather than "superior" since the sum of both quantitative and qualitative research encapsulates multiple perspectives on one subject (p.254).

Before moving on, I would like to make a semantic and operational distinction between the term 'group interview' and 'focus groups'. Although a focus group method is often used in the world of academic research, it is more commonly used in the world of marketing or policy making, connoting images of financial profit for those who commission the research or clarification of the views of the voters. For obvious reasons, these are not the aims of this study. From a methods point of view, 'focus group' interviews tend to involve relatively limited steering by the interviewer; instead the attention is drawn to the interaction within the group and the participants are given more freedom with the discussion (Cohen et al., 2007). If this were to happen, there may not be enough relevant data to analyse for the purposes of answering the research questions. I therefore employed techniques which are associated with both group interviews and focus groups as there are also many benefits related to the latter. In many respects, the group interviews resembled the semi-structured individual interviews in purpose and method. However, as Vaughn et al. (1996: 14) highlight in their reference to the work of Hess (1968) the group interview had the additional advantages of:

1. synergism –   a wider bank of data emerges through group interaction

2. snowballing –   statements from one respondent initiate a chain of reaction of

additional comments

3. stimulation –   group discussion generates excitement about a topic

4. security –   group provides comfort and encourages candid responses

5. spontaneity –   because participants are not required to answer every question,

their responses are more spontaneous and genuine.

Lewis (1992) has also outlined the benefits of group interviews in educational research. They

help to reveal consensus views, may generate richer responses by allowing participants to

challenge one another's views, and they can verify research ideas or data gained through

other methods. Moreover, group consensus findings may be more significant than individual

views in terms of the likely effects on classroom behaviour as group interviews proved

insight into group norms. Denscombe (1998), (cited in: Payne, 2007: 99) argues that one of

the disadvantages of groups is that speakers interrupt one another and speak simultaneously.

Denscombe is also wary of the fact that extrovert pupils can dominate. However, as Lewis

(1992) points out, the classroom environment is strongly influenced by children with stronger

views. Therefore, the views expressed in group interviews are very relevant in terms of

implications for practice.

Most writers emphasise the influence of the skills of the interviewer on the quality of

the data in steering the flow of the discussion, maximising opportunities for all present to

speak, putting participants at ease and responding sensitively to the group dynamics. I hoped

that by consequence of my extended experience as a secondary school teacher, I had

developed some of the skills and expertise to manage the group interviews and to speak to the

pupils in appropriate language. With this experience, I also tried to put less confident pupils at ease and set about encouraging all members of the groups to contribute to the discussion. At the start of the interviews, however, I introduced myself as a researcher with my first name rather than as a teacher or lecturer. In this way, I hoped to put the pupils at ease and to stress that they, the pupils, were not being assessed in any way.

Development of the pupil questionnaire: Aside from the research on motivation in second language acquisition, I found very scant literature to inform the construction of the pupil questionnaire. Thus, it was written on the basis of professional experience from 11 years as a secondary MFL teacher and two years as a teacher educator with responsibilities in this field. The choice of language and format of the questionnaire was informed by my professional knowledge as a former secondary school teacher and was refined following a pilot in three schools that were not used in the main study.

The purpose of the pilot was to discover whether pupils coped with the demands of the task and whether it was able to hold their interest sufficiently to motivate them to answer the questions. As Borgers et al. (2000) remark, these are both important considerations in maximising the quality of data obtainable from questionnaires involving children. The pilot revealed that the pupils had generally coped with the demands of the task, thereby confirming the feasibility of the data collecting instrument (Borgers et al., 2000, Robson, 2006). One of the teachers who had administered the questionnaire commented that there were

> no real problems; some of our pupils needed a little help because of low reading skills in one group. Pupils seemed to take task on quite seriously and were keen to make sure they understood what you wanted and how they should convey their answer. I wasn't sure how it would go down but they were very cooperative.

After the data had been collected from the refined questionnaire, I found an example of one that had been used for pupils in a previous study -thanks to a discussion with Michael Byram - that he and his colleagues had used at the end of the 1980s (Byram et al., 1991). It was reassuring to find that the questions that they had posed broadly aligned with the types of questions in my own survey. Above all, I was interested in investigating some of the social factors and experiences that may influence pupils' opinions and attitudes to (learning about) other cultures. The questionnaire (see appendix 5) asked questions to explore

- a possible relationship between pupils' experiences of other countries and their attitudes to people who lived there (questions 7,8,11,12,16);

- how these experiences may affect their attitude to language learning (questions 15 and 17);

- how confident pupils felt about interacting with people from other countries/cultures (questions 18 and 26);

- pupils' perceived knowledge about target language cultures (question 27, items 1-4)

- how much they thought they learnt about other cultures in MFL lessons (question 27, items 5-9);

- whether they would like to spend more time on cultural learning (question 27, item 15);

- whether they would like to live abroad in the future (question 27, item 16).

The questions that asked for opinions were mostly constructed around a five point Likert Scale. The responses were able to be cross-tabulated with demographic information relating to gender and school type attended.

The pupil group interview schedule: The choice of questions was informed by my desire to gather more detailed data relating to reasons for the types of opinions expressed in the questionnaire and to elicit richer description of pupils' experiences that may help to explain their opinions. The schedule was constructed around the following themes: motivation / enjoyment in language learning, pupils' experiences and opinions about learning about other cultures in MFL, their contacts with other cultures (outside school), and their views on the importance of developing intercultural understanding (see appendix 6).

3.4 Participant Sample

With the exception of one pupil group interview, the data from teachers and pupils was collected from secondary schools in one Local Authority (LA) in the North West of England. The LA in question has 22 state secondary schools, including six grammar schools and one state special school, (the others being comprehensive schools). Eleven of these schools are single sex and four are denominational (all Roman Catholic). There are great socio-economic contrasts within the LA with both high levels of deprivation and affluence. A comparison of Ofsted reports across the schools reveals that the proportion of children entitled to free school meals (FSM) in the grammar schools is significantly lower than those in the comprehensives. In the grammar schools few children, or a number significantly below the national average, are entitled to FSM, whereas in the comprehensives, the proportion is mostly well above the national average. The OFSTED reports and census statistics reveal that the population of the LA is largely White British with a disproportionate low amount of ethnic groups compared to some parts of the UK.

Despite the ethnically homogenous population, the variety of secondary schools and the socio-economic contrasts in the LA provided a site with variation, diversity and richness (Cohen et al., 2007) that enabled me to acquire a purposive sample (Morrison, 1993) that was roughly representative of the schools in the LA. Given that the research was predominantly interpretative, exact proportional representation was not intended. I was more interested in teachers' and pupils' experiences in a range of different contexts. Parallel to this, the LA provided an opportunity sample (Cohen et al., 2007) as it is a geographical area in which I, in my professional role as a past MFL teacher in one of its schools and currently as a teacher educator, have many contacts. The data for analysis was collected over a fifteen month period (May 2008 – July 2009) in fourteen schools and comprised of

- eighteen teacher interviews

- 765 pupil questionnaires

- five pupil group interviews with six pupils in each group.

An overview of the participant sample can be found in Table 3.1 below. In addition, data was collected from a select purposive sample at the national level from officials with specific knowledge (Ball, 1990) involving three interviews: two interviews with a curriculum adviser from the Qualifications, Curriculum and Development Agency (QCDA and one with the Director of the Languages Company, an organisation that at the time of interview worked with the Department for Education, formerly the DCSF, to deliver the National Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002b). These details are provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1 *Participant Sample from Schools*

	School	Type of school	Teacher interviews	Pupil questionnaires (excluding void questionnaires)	Pupil group interviews
1	A	Special	1	N.A.	N.A.
2	B	Girls' comprehensive	1	34	N.A.
3	C	Boys' comprehensive	1	76	1
4	D	Boys' grammar, church	2	67	No
5	E	Boys' grammar	3	110	1
6	F	Mixed comprehensive, church	1	77	No
7	G	Mixed comprehensive	1	40	No
8	H	Girls' grammar, church	1	110	No
9	I	Girls' comprehensive	1	76	No
10	J	Mixed comprehensive	1	42	1
11	K	Girls' grammar	2 (1 Native Speaker)	72	1
12	L	Mixed comprehensive	1	0	No
13	M	Mixed comprehensive	2 (1 native speaker)	62	No
14	N	Girls' comprehensive	0	0	1
Total			18	765	5

Table 3.2 *Participant Sample from Policy Making Organisations*

Policy maker interviews	
QCDA	2 (with same person, but with different content)
The Languages Company	1

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The major ethical considerations relating to the project concerned informed consent of the research participants (with special attention here to pupils), anonymity (particularly with regard to the select sample), respect for the dignity of all involved and the minimization of the bureaucratic burden imposed on already existing workloads. It was naturally important that those who participated in the research did so knowingly without duress or pressure to co-operate. It was thus imperative to seek their voluntary, informed consent. The principle of informed consent arises from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination and therefore also implicates their right to refusal (Cohen et al., 2007: 52) . Diener and Crandall (1978, cited in: Cohen et al., 2007) refer to four principles of informed consent. These include: competence (the maturity to comprehend what is asked of them), voluntarism (participation is a decision based on free choice), access to information about the study, and comprehension about the nature of the research project. I will base my discussion of the procedures followed for co-opting participants / respondents around these four principles.

The policy makers were initially contacted by email. It was useful that in this communication I was able to mention the names of mutual colleagues who had suggested that they (the policy makers) may able to help me. This was a strategy adopted with the aim of gaining access to influential individuals and establishing positive, trusting relationships between them and myself. The policy makers were subsequently sent more details in a participant information form and were provided with a participant consent form (see appendix 7). Immediately prior to the interviews, there were additional opportunities to seek clarification.

The teachers were initially invited to participate in a local authority briefing meeting for MFL Heads of Department at the authority's teacher development centre (September

2007). I had approached the advisory teacher and asked him if I could be given a slot to talk to the attendees. In this meeting, I outlined the anticipated project and explained the type of commitment participation would entail. This meeting provided a forum for me as a researcher to gauge interest in the participation in the project. Following the granting of ethical approval from my university ethics committee, the teachers who had expressed interest were approached once more and were asked if they would be prepared to be interviewed, able to distribute and administer a questionnaire to pupils and / or to select consenting pupils who might participate in group interviews at a later stage. Participation could involve any one or a combination of the above possibilities. Where the teacher response was positive, a letter was sent to their Head Teachers (see appendix 1) providing details of the research project, the procedures, a copy of the pupil questionnaire and interview schedules for both teachers and pupils. Head Teachers were also provided with consent forms in order to act in *loco parentis* for the pupils. This issue (i.e. consent of children) will be addressed in more detail below. This procedure was a bottom-up process of gaining access, thereby enabling consent to be sought from as broad a basis as possible, i.e. heads of department were contacted before Head Teachers in order to maximise the potential for the rights of the former group to be respected. The consent forms for both teachers and policy makers (see appendices 3 and 7) asked if they would like to see a copy of the interview transcript, providing the opportunity for member checking of accuracy (respondent validation) (Cohen et al., 2007: 134).

These respective steps embraced three out of the four of Diener and Crandall's (1978) four principles of informed consent. Given that the members of the above groups were all professionals, the principle of competence is not entirely relevant. However, this is a principle that deserves special attention when doing research with young people.

Seeking the informed consent of children is a much more complex matter than that of adults. Jones and Stanley (2008) highlight the inherent difficulties in their reference to Wiles et al. (2005). Gaining access to young people can be complicated as "children under the age of sixteen in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are not automatically presumed to be legally competent" (Wiles et al. 2005: 20, cited in Jones and Stanley 2008: 33). Fine and Sandstrom (1988) have stressed that children are not on equal terms with adults. Thus, there should be two stages in seeking consent from minors: gaining permission from adults in a guardian role (which was done by following the protocol of *loco parentis* as outlined above) and the provision of explanations and answering questions for the young people involved.

Cullingford (2002) has highlighted, however, inherent contradictions involved in seeking informed consent with respect to *loco parentis* from children. On the one hand, this principle assumes that children are vulnerable or powerless yet on the other, the underlying premise of doing research with children assumes that they have rights and voices to be heard. From an ethical perspective, I was ultimately more concerned with latter point. The decision to involve pupils was based on my desire to illuminate policy development with the perspectives of those very people for whom it is targeted. As Cullingford (2002: 14) points out, "The gap between the voice of the pupils and the imposition of policies is huge". According to the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) seeking the viewpoints of pupils should always have the best interests of the child as the primary consideration (cf. Article 3 of the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child).

The pupils were provided with their participant information sheets written in appropriate language for their age and were able to ask their MFL teachers for additional clarification if required. In accordance with the conditions for my research stipulated by the

Liverpool John Moores University research ethics committee, the pupils were told by their teachers that there was no obligation to complete the questionnaire. However, the completion of the questionnaire was understood to have indicated their consent as it is improbable that a young person completes a questionnaire unknowingly (Cohen et al., 2007). With reference to Sieber (1992) and Wiles et al. (2005), Jones and Stanley (2008: 33) point out that parental permission may be waived when the research will not have adverse effects on the children or when a child can be judged to understand what participation in the research project involves.

The last survey question asked pupils to indicate whether they would be interested in participating in a group interview; this was a way of seeking consent directly from pupils rather than from their seniors. I therefore adopted a differentiated approach for the survey and interview. In one school, the head of department also decided to send a letter to home to parents / guardians with a consent slip to seek permission for their children to participate. In the same school, the Head of Department was present during the group interview in order to satisfy school concerns around child protection. Here we see that an understanding of informed consent for children can vary greatly (Jones and Stanley, 2008) and in this case depended on the policy of the school. If the pupils did express an interest, they filled in their names on the survey. These were not recorded in any way, however, on any data base. Prior to the group interviews, the pupils were given another opportunity to ask questions. They were informed that their comments would not be assessed or judged and would remain confidential. I as the researcher-interviewer have undergone a Criminal Records Bureau check.

3.5.2 Confidentiality and Privacy

The teacher interview transcripts were stored securely in password protected computer files which were coded with letters to represent the school. In the presentation of the research findings, the teachers are referred to with pseudonyms. One of the policy makers – who acted in a consultative role rather than for a government agency *per se* - was happy to be acknowledged by name and role whilst the other one (an employee of the QCDA) wished to be referred to with a generic job title. The survey data was stored on an SPSS password protected file without any reference to pupil names.

3.5.3 Values in research and respect for all

The discussion so far has related primarily to procedural ethics. However, ethical consideration can also involve moral dilemmas. In the case of this study, these surfaced in the process of data analysis. As Robson (2006) has pointed out, research is not value free. Values inform the analysis and interpretation in social science research. As a researcher who is supportive of the development of intercultural understanding, I acknowledge that I am likely to be intuitively more critical of those who are less enthusiastic. Similarly, my knowledge of intercultural languages theory is likely to lead to criticism of policy lacking a sound theoretical or pedagogical basis. Such criticism is potentially in tension with the respect I wish to pay to the human beings who have agreed to participate in the research. I hope in part to reconcile this dilemma by paying attention to the context and conditions in which the participants are located rather than concentrating on individual personalities.

My analysis will ultimately involve an evaluative aspect of policy formation and the conditions that enhance good practice in intercultural languages teaching. The findings are

likely to reveal some shortcomings but I hope that these might inform future curriculum development, enabling ethical attention to the "costs/benefits ratio" (Francfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992, cited in: Cohen et al., 2007: 51) , i.e. the balance between criticality of judgement and the advantages of the evaluation.

3.6 Analysis

The individual and group interviews were transcribed in full and the initial analysis process of individual interviews began as soon as each transcription was completed. In the first instance, this involved the writing of analytic memos which in turn, had some bearing on the initial set of themes. These early themes were also shaped by other factors: the research questions, discussion points in the interview schedules, and in the case of the teachers, some themes from the literature. At the outset, this resulted in an abundance of themes where it was difficult to elucidate interrelationships.

By using NVivo software as a data storage and retrieval system, I was able to see how much data I had to support particular themes. However, the process of judging the 'keyness' of the data was not only informed by the quantity of data for each theme but also in terms of its perceived pertinence to the research questions. The latter type of judgement occurred during a process of "meaning condensation" (Kvale, 2007: 107) whereby I attempted in my own written words to interpret statements made by the participants as simply as possible according to my own understanding. This simplification process through writing was an integral part of the analysis process. The overall analytic procedure, however, involved "a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data [...] and the analysis of the data that [I was] producing" (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 86).

As far as the pupil data was concerned, I also compared themes from the qualitative data with patterns in the quantitative data. The quantitative data had been inputted into a statistical software package for social sciences (SPSS) which allowed me to explore relationships (using cross-tabulation and tests for statistical significance) between gender, types of school attended and attitudes about language learning and other cultures. The survey also yielded data on school type attended and pupils' exposure to other cultures. In the quantitative analysis, the school type variable was also employed as a proxy for the socio-economic background. For example, the pupils attending grammar schools were likely to come from more privileged backgrounds than their peers in the comprehensives as the proportion of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) in all of the grammar schools in the sample (according to their Ofsted reports) was well *below* the national average. The converse was true for all but one of the comprehensive schools (i.e. the proportion eligible for FSM was well *above* the national average). This was also reflected in Ofsted reports which included frequent reference to comprehensive school pupils coming from geographical areas of extreme social disadvantage. This, in broad terms, enabled the exploration of possible relationships between social class, exposure to other cultures and attitudes to (learning about) other cultures. Aside from enabling methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978), the comparison of qualitative with quantitative data meant that the data analysis involved a bricolage approach (see p.103 for a full discussion of this). The employment of a variety of strategies helped me, as the bricoleur, to look beyond a one-dimensionality (p.326). To some extent, I also applied the concept of bricolage to the teacher interviews as the analysis here adopted elements of narrative inquiry.

Although the construction of data collection tools with teachers was principally influenced by an established body of research (i.e. taking a theoretical or deductive approach),

themes also emerged that had not yet been explored in the original literature review. In a similar way, the analysis of the policy maker interviews prompted me to investigate aspects of education policy that were not explored in the initial review. The review of the literature presented in Chapter 2 integrate the literature explored both pre and post data analysis. As is frequently the case in inductive studies (Braun and Clarke, 2006), sub sets of questions can also evolve from the analysis process itself. As far as the pupil perspective is concerned, the study initially set out to investigate the significance pupils attached to IU in MFL as a function of gender, school type attended and socio-economic background. Later the following set of sub questions emerged:

- Do pupils perceive that their current experience of (inter)cultural aspects of MFL curriculum makes MFL learning more interesting / enjoyable? Would a greater emphasis be welcomed?

- Do they consider the acquisition of IU beneficial to their (future) lives outside school?

- Do pupils think it is important to develop openness to other cultures through their school education?

3.7 *Quality issues: reliability, trustworthiness and reflexivity*

Qualitative inquiry has faced challenging questions about its validity and reliability given that it rejects essentialist notions of epistemology. Lincoln and Guba (1985: 299) suggest that in naturalistic research the term 'dependability' is more appropriate than 'reliability' as the latter is typically demonstrated by replication which assumes the existence of an external reality. I too dismiss the notion of replication for this study given the contextual and situational

particularities. The sample was ethnically homogenous and the data collected from the individual and group interviews came from a relatively small number of participants who all attended schools within the same geographical area within a particular time frame. Furthermore, although the pupil questionnaire sample was large and wide-ranging, the teachers selected the pupils for the group interviews. Whilst the teachers were asked to select pupils on the basis of providing a cross-section form their classes, they may have been selected for other reasons. I am also conscious that I used the information about entitlement to free school meals as a proxy which makes generalisations about the socio-economic status of the pupil population difficult.

Creswell and Miller (2000) explain that social scientists have responded to challenges about reliability and validity in a variety of ways. These include special attention to methods for ensuring procedural validity, the dismissal of the term validity and its replacement with alternative expressions such as 'trustworthiness' or 'plausibility', and the acknowledgment of the role and influence of the researcher in the process of analysis (reflexivity). In my study, I seek to establish trustworthiness or dependability through methodological and data triangulation, looking for convergence among different sources of information to inform analysis and conclusions. I hope also to enhance the credibility of the research by leaving an audit trail (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 319). Here the term audit is based metaphorically on the fiscal audit where an auditor is called in to authenticate the accounts of the business, checking the process by which the accounts were kept and examining the product. In this methodology chapter I have sketched the pathway of the research process that should serve as a reference point or sign-posted journey for the research process.

Providing "thick description" (Geertz, 1975) with detailed accounts is another means through which I hope to make the research credible. Through teacher narrative and pupil

interview analysis, I try to present "vicarious experiences" (Connelly and Clandenin 1990; Stake 1995), so that an external person may feel that s/he is able to identify with the experiences of the participants. As previously mentioned, however, I do not purport to make broad generalizations or to stress inherent truthfulness. Instead, I hope to present a "best-estimate- of- trustworthiness" (Bassey, 2001) where an external person may be able to relate the findings to similar circumstances. In this way, I am not inferring that the research is valid in terms of measurement, generalization or control of variables (Hammersley, 2008) and therefore am happier in adopting terms such as 'trustworthy' or 'plausible'.

Finally, throughout this chapter I have acknowledged the interwoven role I play as a human being in the construction of meanings throughout the research. By bearing this in mind throughout the thesis, I hope to engage in reflexivity. As Nightingale and Cromby (1999: 228) point out, reflexivity urges us "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research."

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. The policy maker perspective

Three interviews were conducted with policy makers responsible for the MFL curriculum.

Two of these were carried out with a curriculum adviser at the Qualifications and Curriculum

Develop Agency (QCDA) with expertise in MFL in May 2008 and August 2009 respectively.

A third interview took place with Lid King, the National Director for Languages, in August

2009 who worked from 2003-2011 on behalf of the Department for Education with the

responsibility of helping to deliver the National Languages Strategy (DfES 2002). As

explained in the methodology chapter, the data from the interviews complement the critique

of policy documents conducted in the literature review in section 2.2 in order to respond to

the first part of research question 1:

What were the key influences on the new emphasis on intercultural understanding in the

revised Key Stage 3 MFL curriculum?

The analysis of policy maker interviews also aims to address research question 2:

To what extent do the perceptions of policy makers regarding the significance of intercultural

understanding in the MFL curriculum coincide with those of teachers and pupils?

As outlined in the methodology chapter on p.111, I employ Ball's (1994) schema for

analysing comments made by government officials about curriculum policy drivers.

According to Ball, such interviews can be interpreted from at least three different

perspectives: They can tell us about (1) the key events, people and practicalities, (2) the

justifications provided for policy, and (3) what the data tell us about the interests of the State

relating to the " 'needs' of capital and civil society" (p.109). This schema is employed as an analysis tool in section 4.1.1.

Section 4.1.2 deals with the more intricate details of pedagogy. Do policy makers differentiate between the teaching and learning of intercultural understanding and cultural awareness and to what extent do policy makers' conceptualisations of IU mirror theoretical frameworks? How did policy makers conceptualise the assessment of IU in the proposed (but ultimately rejected) attainment target (see 2.2.4)?

4.1.1   Policy drivers

(i)   The key events, people and practicalities

The National Director for Languages indicated that the first reference to Intercultural Understanding in education policy documents was made in the Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002b). The Languages Strategy was written as a direct response to the issues raised in the Nuffield Inquiry (see 2.4.1). King explained that there had not been a great debate surrounding the choice of terminology:

It was almost a kind of accepted, ' that's obvious', which is the way things tend to work in policy areas.

The *'centre piece'* of the Languages Strategy had been the introduction of languages into primary schools which in turn, promoted the writing of the Key Stage 2 Framework. At this time, Lid King was the director of CILT (National Centre for Languages). Although *"various people from Higher Education"* and *"lots of boards and committees"* were involved in the writing of the Key Stage 2 Framework, he explained that he and colleagues

from CILT had done the large part of the writing. Together, they had decided that one of the five strands of the KS2 Framework should be IU.

King clarified that one of the reasons for the inclusion of IU as one of the strands was based on the premise that it was unrealistic to expect primary aged pupils to become operationally competent in a foreign language. Moreover, the instrumental rationale that was so popular at the beginning of the 90s was no longer so convincing. There had to be an additional rationale to

> *justify investing a whole load of resource of various kinds into the educational system [...] And that was something to do with the intercultural: helping kids to see who they were, where they lived, how that related to people who speak other languages.*

In 2009, the QCDA Curriculum Adviser explained that when the Key Stage 3 curriculum was revised in 2008 that they

> *chose to use this term [IU] both to emphasise continuity from the KS2 Framework and to highlight what was thought by all to be an important but often overlooked aspect of language learning in secondary schools. The initiative came from QCDA in consultation with the many teachers, advisers and key players who contributed to the thinking behind the review of the secondary curriculum [...] The choice of terminology was a deliberate decision to show the way in which Key Stage 3 follows from Key Stage 2.*

The insertion of the term IU in KS3 thus seems to have serviced the pragmatic need for curriculum alignment between the two age phases. The QCDA curriculum adviser could not (when asked specifically) provide a reason for the inclusion of IU in the KS2 Framework which suggests the absence of a common vision across policy making decisions.

So as far as 'real stories' are concerned about *who* decided upon the term, *when* and *how* it happened, there seems to have been a policy making domino effect, initially triggered

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by the Nuffield Inquiry (2000). The Nuffield Report resulted in the commissioning of the

Languages Strategy (DfES, 2002b) whose main concern was the introduction of languages in

primary schools. As the instrumental rationale for language learning was no longer justifiable

and the term IU had already been used in the Languages Strategy, colleagues at CILT felt that

this area of learning provided alternative legitimacy for languages in primary schools. In

addition to this, however, the National Director explained:

> *A lot of it has emerged – again I will go back to the primary, a lot of it has come out*
> *of the experience of teachers and what they are trying to do. You articulate that – you*
> *put it perhaps into a more comprehensive form.*

The term IU seems to have then found its way onto the KS3 Programme of Study in order to

align the curriculum across the age phases.

(ii) Policy justifications and the needs of the state

Parallel to the series of events above, there seem to be a number of other factors that

informed the reference to IU in the KS3 Programme of Study. I will interpret these as the

justifications for policy that in their reiterated form result in discourse (Ball, 1994). In many

cases the justifications provided by the policy makers also overlap with what Ball has

referred to as the 'structural needs of the state'. A prime example here is the then

government's concern with Citizenship education as a response to worries about social

cohesion.

> *The significant recent waves of new immigrants heightened people's concern that*
> *MFL teachers should lead the way in getting young people not only to know about*
> *other cultures but also to use that opportunity to reflect on the changing nature of the*
> *population in this country. There is considerable potential for links with Citizenship*
> *here.*

(QCDA Curriculum Adviser 2008)

Additionally, the government wanted the curriculum to serve the more instrumental purpose of addressing economic competition heightened by globalisation.

> *Was there anything coming from government at the time that you felt was basically affirming what you were doing? Or asking for that kind of message within the framework?* (Interviewer)

> *I guess the main thing is what I mentioned earlier – the social cohesion type message and the International Strategy as well – the two of them together.*

> (National Director for Languages)

As discussed in 2.2.3, the International Strategy was articulated in a document entitled "Putting the World into World-Class Education" (DfES, 2004) whose predominant focus was on the nation's economic capability.

Attention to IU also provided a curriculum site for promoting critical thinking advocated by the Personal, Learning and Thinking skills (QCA, 2008b) in the KS3 curriculum. In response to a question that I posed about potential controversy surrounding a curriculum that may be considered to be orientated around morals or values, the QCDA curriculum adviser explained that it was

> *... about developing a way of thinking as well as just knowing some things about another culture. But in terms of its longer term educational value, it was about being open minded, being objective, being reflective, trying to see things from another perspective, which might be quite difficult.*

> (QCDA Curriculum Adviser 2009)

These comments infer that IU is therefore more about understanding from a cognitive rather than an affective perspective. From an MFL specific perspective, the new emphasis on IU was also a direct reaction to seemingly inadequate attention from teachers to the cultural

dimension. In fact in 2009, the QCDA curriculum adviser explained that the proposal to make

IU a National Curriculum Attainment Target had come about

> *because whilst many teachers do think about this and do consciously plan in*
> *opportunities in children's learning for them to think about the cultural dimension*
> *and the comparison between different cultures, it's not something that necessarily*
> *happens everywhere.*

This knowledge is likely to have come from reports by Ofsted (2004, 2008) and Evans et al.

(2009) commissioned by the DCSF (see p.45). Attention to IU through an increased focus on

the cultural context of the target language was also a way of responding to issues surrounding

pupil motivation:

> *We also know that that initial interest quickly wears off and to sustain it, you've got to*
> *show that there are connections with really interesting content. What I think is*
> *important is that if you set language assessment in contexts, that seem to relate to*
> *things that young people feel are important and interesting, their motivation will rise.*
> *And that in turn will also benefit their ability and their willingness to acquire the*
> *language that will them enable them to discuss and talk about more demanding things*
> *in the foreign language. It's not a direct process. But I think it's an important one.*

(QCDA Curriculum Adviser 2008)

4.1.2   Pedagogical Issues

(i)   Research or theoretical basis for IU?

The comments from both the Director for Languages and the QCDA adviser made it clear

that the decision to change the phrase cultural awareness to intercultural understanding was

not underpinned by theoretical research:

We didn't spend very long wondering about it to be honest. I can't say that we spent five years researching possibilities [...]I hesitate a bit, because from your perspective, you might imagine that these things are very carefully worked out and decided. But they are not actually. It seemed right to everybody, is what I would say. It just seemed to be something that struck a chord.

(National Director for Languages)

Whilst he did make reference to the theoretical work of Byram in another stage in the interview, he did not discuss links between this research and Key Stage 2 or 3 MFL policy formation *per se*. The QCDA curriculum adviser explained in 2009 that when he and his team were working on the conceptualisation of the levels in the proposed IU attainment target, he had not had

a particular research resource made evident to [him] that would have helped with this; it was done on an intuitive basis.

The lack of attention to a theoretical underpinning is particularly telling in comments made about the differences between cultural awareness (CA) and intercultural understanding (IU). The remarks below strengthen my assessment in the literature review that the notions of IU and CA are blurred. Here they are even presented as synonymous:

Intercultural understanding is something which has always been there, but in a sense, has been a kind of neglected area in some respects. I mean language teachers will always say, yes of course I teach them about cultural elements of countries and communities where the language is spoken. But I think sometimes that has almost been a kind of process of osmosis [...] I think learners actually need to be pointed much more firmly [...] Developing cultural awareness was always there. We've called it intercultural understanding.

(QCDA Curriculum Adviser with expertise in MFL, August 2009)

In the earlier drafts of Key Stage 3 rewrite, it was still more cultural than intercultural [...] I think that it is something which still needs to develop, because I

think for a lot of people, probably the difference is not clear [...] I mean some people regard intercultural understanding as what French people have for breakfast.

(National Director for Languages, August 2009)

These remarks lead us to believe that the cultural dimension has simply been repackaged with a new, more fashionable term of reference. It has not been reconceptualised. Nevertheless, the QCDA curriculum adviser seems to aspire to languages education that encourages pupils to consider perspectives that lead to critical cultural awareness and decentring (see Byram (1997) *savoir s'engager* and *savoir être*):

> *Learning languages is about opening up the world to young people's minds and making them aware that they can learn so much from other people in other countries. And what we do in our country isn't necessarily the best way of doing things. And maybe we should think differently about the way we do things.*

This contrasts with the utilitarian, instrumental focus on MFL that has dominated the last two decades. But experience has shown that although the 1991 original NC documents (DES/ WO, 1991) expressed similar aims, it is easy to neglect them. It is questionable whether MFL teachers will have noticed the change in terminology for the cultural dimension.

(ii) Conceptualising the assessment of IU

The decision behind the 2009 proposal (QCDA, 2009b) to make IU an attainment target in its own right suggested that policy makers were quite serious about giving more prominence to this aspect of the curriculum. From another perspective, it seems that in a climate obsessed by assessment for accountability, a system of criterion based assessment that would be monitored was considered the only way forward for encouraging teachers to pay more attention to this.

Ironically however, in the first interview with the QCDA adviser in 2008, he had remarked that

> *one of the reasons why culture, for example, has never actually featured in the level descriptions is that you can't actually say that's level 4 cultural awareness, or attempt to establish some kind of content that related to culture that says: you do this in Year 8 and you do that in Year 9.*

Yet one year later, we witnessed a U-turn in this thinking. In section 2.2.4, I demonstrated how the in the quest to make IU more significant by making it an assessable attainment target, those who drew up the level descriptions would appear to have focused on tangible and observable learning activities at the expense of a thorough conceptualisation of progression whereby the latter would involve a leap in insight. These arguments made in the literature review are bolstered by the adviser's revelation that the level descriptions were based on criteria that were being trialled for *Assessing Pupil Progress (APP)*, a QCDA initiative that places emphasis on detailed formative assessment of items of pupils' work (DCSF, 2009b). We seem to have an initiative here that focused on the means of a process rather than the end result, i.e. developing openness to other cultures.

The adviser explained that pupils were to assume *"greater independence"* as they progressed up the levels:

> *If we look at level 4 upwards I would pick out the key verbs: identify, describe. So identify, if you like, is a more passive thing. Describe is actually putting the emphasis on the learner; compare which is not just describe a phenomenon, but actually compare it with something in another culture.*

The 'performative' verbs that focus on outcomes and products shift the attention away from the process of developing IU. This suggests that the writers had not considered IU in terms of

a moral or values based education but instead, were more concerned with skills. This point receives further credence in examination of the Renewed Key Stage 3 Framework for Languages (DCSF, 2009a) which was published on the internet in the month following this interview. The learning objectives of the IU strand in the Framework are overtly cross-referenced with the Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (QCA, 2008b) (see 2.2.4).

In an earlier citation from the QCDA adviser we saw that one of the reasons for introducing IU as an attainment target was to point learners much more firmly to this area of learning. Implicit in this message, however, is the notion that teachers are (only) likely to pay attention to IU if it has assessment currency. It seems that less attention has been paid to the pedagogical skills that teachers may need here than the pressure required to persuade them to deal with it.

The National Director, however, provided a contrasting perspective which acknowledges that teacher agency in this regard is much more complex:

> *Teachers need time to think, review, to reflect and they don't often get enough time. Now we have put in place something that is going to help that happen. Whether enough teachers take up the opportunity, or are able to take up the opportunity is another thing.*

In fact as far as he was concerned, he was *'mystified'* about the proposal that IU become an Attainment Target.

Conclusion

The data suggest therefore, that there had been limited thinking related to a rationale for a change in terminology for the cultural dimension. This bolsters the analyses in section 2.2.3. The choice of words seems to have been influenced by the by *over-arching* policy goals (e.g.

social cohesion, economic capability, the development of PLTS and the alignment of the KS2 and KS3 curricula). The decision to place a *'greater emphasis'* (QCA 2008) on IU was apparently prompted by Ofsted and Evans et al.'s (2009) findings about limited teacher attention combined with aspirations to improve learners' motivation. Attention to these issues of targets and outcomes, however, has been addressed at the expense of attention to the process of intercultural languages pedagogy in curriculum planning. In spite of some policy aspirations to address the more holistic aims of IU, current thinking on assessment that is based on observable, measurable and cognitive learning outcomes means that affective learning that develops openness to other cultures has been neglected.

4.2 The teacher perspective

Introduction

In this section, I present and analyse the findings related to teacher perceptions about the significance of IU in the MFL curriculum. It seeks to respond to research question 3:

How might teacher perceptions about the significance of IU in the MFL curriculum differ according to

- *the type of school,*

- *socio-economic group of the pupil population,*

- *gender of pupils,*

- *teacher demographic or biographies?*

The data are presented and analysed in three sections. The first section (4.2.1) relates to perceptions that are influenced by the school context. Here I investigate the impact of micro level factors with particular attention to the pupils with whom teachers work and the pressures in the school environment. The second section (4.2.2) deals with perceptions that are more closely related to teachers as individuals: how they conceptualise and interpret IU, the relationship they have with the target language culture and whether or not they feel that their professional remit extends beyond the teaching of language. Whilst both categories are influential in their own right, I argue that in order to better understand the teacher perspective, we need to consider the interplay of both contextual and teacher specific factors. This argument is further developed in 4.2.3, where I employ Kelchtermans's framework (2009) to highlight the influence of teachers' interests, personalities and life experiences in intercultural languages teaching.

In order to protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms are used, followed by codes denoting their role and school type in which they work (HoD = head of department; t= MFL teacher; gg = girls' grammar; bg = boys' grammar; mc = mixed comprehensive; gc = girls' comprehensive; bc = boys' comprehensive; ss= special school).

A caveat: Whilst most of the interview questions referred to the term *intercultural understanding*, (cf. *cultural awareness*, or simply learning about the target language cultures), it seems that IU was most commonly understood in a broader sense, i.e. anything that involved the cultural dimension in MFL education. Thus, in the presentation and analysis of the data, I refer to cultural rather than intercultural learning where this seems to have occurred.

4.2.1   The school context

(i)   The pupil factor

Many teachers feel that cultural learning can make MFL lessons more interesting as it provides lesson variety. This seems especially true when pupils show less enthusiasm for learning languages. The cultural dimension serves a pragmatic goal of stimulating general engagement. Several teachers talk about the advantages of a break from practising linguistic skills that are commonly linked to a course book or considered by pupils as 'harder' work. Janice, a head of department in a mixed comprehensive school, is not sure whether pupils are interested in cultural learning *per se* or whether it provides some respite from more regular activities.

> *I know they do enjoy it but I wonder if it is because when you are talking about culture, they're not writing, and they're not listening to a tape.* (Janice, HoD mc)

Dave feels that cultural learning may appeal more to the interests of boys that are less well catered for in MFL textbooks:

> *We don't really cater for that [boys' interests] very well, or at least our resources don't cater for it very well. I think they would rather talk about other things and then they would be better motivated.* (Dave, HoD bg)

Angela explains how the cultural dimension is a way of including the less academic pupils:

> *Pupils who might be reluctant to get involved putting their hands up or even sometimes bubbling over more and saying, miss, I remember that or I want to talk about this from when I went on holiday. So you've got kids who are a bit more animated than they usually are and you've got some of the kids who are behind some of the more able. [They] come forward because they've not got this constraint of I'm going to get this right or wrong. There's no right or wrong answer [with cultural learning], really. It's just learning together.* (Angela, HoD gc)

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It is worth noting that these teachers tend to separate linguistic and cultural learning, thereby implying that the former takes place in English. This is at odds with intercultural languages learning theory that promotes the intertwining of both dimensions. When cultural learning serves more pragmatic goals, it seems to be a strategy for encouraging general engagement of pupils who may otherwise be less interested in MFL, e.g. those who are linguistically less able or those who seem less inspired by textbook topics or linguistic learning.

Nonetheless, we learn that not all teachers consider the motivational potential of the cultural dimension to be straightforward. Some feel that IU can be more challenging to integrate if pupils lack maturity. Kerry (t bg) thought that more serious cultural learning was better suited to A Level students *"because they've worked on the language skills to be able to cope with that. And they can cope with the contrast [of cultures] as well."* Ana also feels that it is easier to deal with in the 6th form:

> *With them [the sixth formers] being more mature – you can talk about more different aspects of Spanish life, I suppose – compared to lower down the school, where, I suppose, you have to be a little bit more careful.* (Ana, t gg)

With the exception of Ana, it is interesting to note that the teachers who mention immaturity work in boys' schools. They explained that pupils respond negatively to or poke fun at cultural differences. In fact, Kerry and Dave were to some extent discouraged by such responses to pursue further intercultural learning. Thus, whilst some teachers may think that IU related learning serves as a motivational tool for boys, it is possible that others are reluctant to engage with it as they are uncomfortable with negative pupil responses. Alison illustrates, however, how in spite of an initially negative attitude of the boys to another culture, her maturity and confidence may help to overcome such challenges:

I don't know whether because it's boys or because it's W.. (reference to the local area). Initially, I think it's almost a reaction of racism if they see a black face, they've got to talk about it because you know, we don't have a great ethnic mix, in W.., particularly in [our school] we don't. So it tends to be a sort of ignorant racist reaction. But, once they've actually got into the task whatever it might be, and they become genuinely more interested and are less likely to show off and make silly comments really. (Alison, HoD bc)

We have learnt so far that teachers' treatment of the cultural dimension may be influenced by the pupil factor in relation to language learning ability, motivation in MFL, gender and maturity. In addition to this, some teachers imply that there is a relationship between the socio-economic group of the pupil population and the way in which they deal with cultural learning. For example, we learn that teachers consider their IU jobs more difficult if pupils' socialisation has been more insular, if they have been exposed to prejudiced attitudes, or if they come from less privileged backgrounds. Sarah remarks how it is a real challenge to break down stereotypical images of the French and Germans that are prevalent in the pupils' communities.

It's just the usual remarks about Germans and the French. They all smell and they drink too much. And you do still get those kinds of comments. You know when you first get them in Y7, you say 'Who can tell me anything you know about Germany?' And they respond: 'The war.' 'And can you tell me any famous German people you know about?' 'Hitler'... And these are the stereotypes and the things that they know first and foremost before they know anything positive. It takes quite a lot turning that around. (Sarah, HoD mc)

Furthermore, Sarah explains that the pupils in her school who come from less privileged backgrounds would be scared to participate in exchanges with French or German schools.

They're quite happy to go away and stay with us and for us to look after them but I know from talking to the children that they wouldn't be interested in staying with other people's families ... They're frightened. They would be terribly scared. I also don't think that their parents would want them to either. (Sarah, HoD mc)

Interestingly, however, Sarah suggests that she and colleagues may even reinforce the pupils' fears: thus pupils' socialisation can not only make the teacher's IU job more difficult, but may be regarded by teachers as a barrier to intercultural education.

> *And we sort of say, 'well would you like to have a foreign person come and stay in your family with you?' 'Oh I don't know.' 'How would you like to go and stay for a week in another family that you haven't met before?' 'Oh I wouldn't like that and my mum wouldn't let me.' And I think that there is this natural fear.*

Michelle explains how she needs to 'fight' against prejudiced attitudes that pupils hear at home. She indirectly implies that pupils from a different (possibly middle class) background would not receive such messages from their parents.

> *There are some pupils that get a lot of intercultural understanding from their family life and a lot of our pupils just don't. I also have found, particularly with older pupils, that sometimes they get messages from home that are really xenophobic. And you're trying to combat that.* (Michelle, t mc)

Whilst the teachers who mention such attitudes seem to consider it their duty to act as a counterpoint, their use of vocabulary (*turn around, combat, fighting*) all imply that this requires considerable effort and tenacity. Interestingly, Susan, a Head of Department in a girls' grammar school with a predominantly middle class intake, remarks that she can *"rejoice in the fact that we can largely celebrate other cultures."* She explains that her current experience contrasts with those she has had elsewhere. Susan feels that the more tolerant attitudes of her pupils are related to their socio-economic status and the positive attitudes of their parents to other European cultures. However, in spite of her IU job being easier than it is perhaps for other colleagues, it is interesting to note that she does not refer to cultural learning as a motivational tool.

Motivation, I think, comes from success in the subject above all. I think a feeling of achieving is usually the most important factor underlying it. (Susan, HoD gg)

We learn, however, that teachers are influenced by socio-cultural attitudes that are not only related to socio-economic background but also those related to particular countries. Teachers of German, for example, seem to perceive it to be more difficult to develop IU than teachers of Spanish. Alison explains how pupils in her school still associate German culture with the Nazis:

Possibly with the German, there's more of an issue with the German because the kids are almost still screwed up about the war, aren't they? We've still got that sort of Heil-Hitler mentality. They draw swastikas on their books and things. (Alison, HoD bc)

Laura, who is Head of Department and a German specialist in a girls' grammar school, explains that they have had a themed Hispanic culture week but she is having difficulty in deciding what activities she would incorporate into a German culture week. Although she makes her remarks partly in jest, she is evidently challenged in deciding what aspects of German culture would appeal to pupils.

I think the pressure's on now for a German week. But I'm not quite sure on yodelling and thigh slapping! (Laura, HoD gg)

Angela also believes that the cultural dimension is easier for Spanish teachers:

It's easier for a Spanish teacher to find things that are going to link in and motivate pupils so for example, the big kind of surge in Hispanic films [...] The popularity of Latin music and the dancing and things like that [...] But it's harder to find things that kids want to be associated with in terms of German. (Angela, HoD gc)

Nonetheless, in spite of sociocultural barriers that may make it more challenging for teachers to develop pupils' IU, it is the *lack* of experience of other cultures in pupils' communities or deep seated historical prejudices which some teachers believe are all the more reason for focusing on learning that develops IU:

> *I think it's very valuable for them to know that people in other cultures and places are different to them. They do different things every day to them and lead a very different life to them. I think that helps them realise that people in their own society are different to them and also to have a far more respectful view of people who are different to them [...] So I think that's one of the most valuable things about them learning a foreign language.* (Dave, HoD bg)

> *I think that it is very important they are constantly reminded that they are just a little blob in our world and that things are going on all over the world at different times.* (Doreen, t ss)

(ii) Pressures of school league tables and accountability

Many teachers explain that the cultures of their schools which have a heavy emphasis on improving pupils' scores in public examinations may inhibit them from developing IU. They are therefore more concerned with linguistic skills as these, as opposed to IU, are tested, measured and are represented as outputs in school league tables, providing a basis for measuring a teachers' effectiveness. In spite of acknowledging the importance of IU, Alison explains that the development of IU lacks school league table or Ofsted currency where schools are rated according to GCSE achievements of their pupils.

> *At the end of the day, we're not judged on intercultural understanding, are we? Well, Ofsted don't judge us, the league tables don't make any reference to intercultural understanding so.. I think we're all desperate to get good GCSE results so a lot of the more important stuff goes out of the window really.* (Alison, HoD mc)

Angela talks about a guilt feeling she experiences in deviating from measurable linguistic skills. Her fears seem related to the profile of achievement of the MFL department compared to other subjects in the school. She also seems to fear senior colleagues who audit curriculum content for measurable outputs:

> *From a teacher's point of view, I always enjoy those lessons but I do always feel that we're taking a tangent off what we should be doing and almost feel a little but guilty spending 15-20 minutes talking about that when you know you've got to get through other things [...] We've got to ensure that we've covered certain grammar points to enable kids to reach those higher levels and they don't look bad comparably ... So if somebody came in to see your lesson and said let me see the Scheme of Work, and 'How come you're talking about that because it's not on your Scheme of Work because it's not written in Key Stage 3.' ... So you think well I have to justify teaching it and what's it going to gain.* (Angela HoD, gc)

In spite of talking about positive reasons for promoting IU in other parts of their interviews, Janice and Kerry acknowledge that in practice, it is quite low down on their priorities. Janice is worried about the survival of her MFL department:

> *It depends on how it is presented and whether it comes in the syllabus. Are we looking at teaching culture that is going to be questioned in the exam? This all boils down to exams I'm afraid. That's the way it is. You know, we're fighting to keep our department alive and it's through good exam results. It depends whether spending more time on culture is worth it if it is not going to be examined [...] We're linguists and we're trying to teach them language which is what they are being examined in.* (Janice, HoD mc)

Kerry questions the long term gain of cultural learning, implying that it does not result in measurable pupil outputs:

> *I think that there are certain things in communicative skills that I value a little bit more* [than IU] *at the moment. If there's a punctual involvement of that then yes, then that's great. But I don't think that I want to tailor my lessons round that kind of element because it's got a short life span. It's interesting but it's not, I don't know.* (Kerry, t bg)

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With the exception of the special school, in which teacher effectiveness is not judged in relation to the academic achievement of the pupils, there was no apparent relationship between school type, pupil demographic and the perceived pressures of examination results. The climate of accountability in the state sector seems to pervade all school types. However, there seems to be a relationship between teachers' perceptions about the *strength* of these pressures and teachers' personalities and educational beliefs. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in section 4.2.3.

The findings related to contextual factors such as the pupils with whom one works and the organisational culture of the school are concurrent with existing research on teachers' treatment of the cultural dimension (Sercu et al., 2005, Sercu and St. John, 2007). In accordance with the findings of Byram et al. (1991) and Byram and Risager (1999), this study reveals a strong influence of pupil perceptions, attitudes and motivation on teachers' practice. However, whilst existing studies refer to the pupil factor in fairly general terms, I have identified much more specific pupil factors such as gender, maturity, linguistic ability or social background. These variables may be more or less prevalent depending on the school type or pupil population.

Byram and Risager (1999)and Sercu et al. (2005) also refer to contextual influences on teachers' intercultural practice related to curricular guidelines and stipulations, pedagogical methods and assessment. Sercu and St. John (2007) discuss the impact of teacher perceptions of their autonomy. The findings from this study expose an intense climate of accountability in which teachers are expected to deliver satisfactory exam results in order to maintain a respectable position in the school league tables. As we have seen, this point is frequently cited as a reason for paying less attention to the cultural dimension. The development of IU may become a lesser priority for the simple reason that it is not reflected in pupils' grades. Like Aleksandrowicz-Pędich et al. (2003), Byram and Risager (1999),

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Jiménez Raya & Sercu (2007) & Sercu et al.(2005) I have found that while the majority of teachers express the view that the development of IU is important, linguistic learning is almost always the priority in practice. This contradiction between beliefs and practice may well be the result of contextual influences but, as I will argue in section 4.2.3, seems also consequential of a weaker teacher belief in its importance.

4.2.2   Teachers as individuals

(i) Conceptualisation and interpretation of IU

The most significant finding to emerge from teachers' conceptualisation and interpretation of IU is the variation in responses. This implies that the term has not yet acquired a shared meaning amongst languages teachers. In the absence of a commonly understood definition, different individuals have their own personal understanding of the cultural dimension which may, or may not, overlap with intercultural languages theory. So although culture learning theory and MFL curriculum policy have shifted away from cultural awareness (CA) to an intercultural approach, many teachers do not make this distinction. Broadly speaking, however, IU is interpreted by the participants as encompassing one or two of the following three aspects: knowledge of daily practices, festivals and history, awareness of a variety of different lifestyles around the world and insights into contrasting cultural belief systems.

Alison refers to the acquisition of cultural knowledge about everyday practices and processes, referring to culture of the 'small c variety'. IU involved knowing …

> *why people in different cultures do things differently, so, whether that be linguistically or whether that be the food they eat, the music they listen to or the clothes that they wear. So I think understanding comes from the knowledge. So the amount of knowledge they have of other cultures affects their understanding.* (Alison, t mc)

Michelle (t mc) associates the development of IU with learning about Christmas or food in the target language country. Theorists have referred to this type of knowledge as the four Fs (food, festival, fashion, and folklore) (see Sleeter and Grant, 2002) or three Ss (saris, samosas and steel bands) approach (see Troyna, 1987), arguing that they exoticise culture. Whilst Mark is critical of superficial knowledge, he is a great supporter of academic knowledge. He is critical of multicultural education, regarding it as superficial:

> *Well I think that they need that knowledge in order to be able to understand other cultures. I think it's far too easy [...] I use the word background [...] The cultural thing in my mind, it suggests everyone gathering in a room and sampling bits of food and all this kind of stuff, ok? To my mind background has a slightly, please don't head- but me when I say it, background has a little bit of a more academic feel to it.* (Mark, HoD mc)

Whilst the term 'background' in MFL education is understood to be a general body of knowledge about the country that could also include aspects of daily lifestyles or festivals (see Risager, 2007), Mark has a preference for historical knowledge about the target language communities. Here we see how the focus area might represent the individual interests of the teacher. Several teachers think that pupils should become aware of the variety of lifestyles around the world that may differ to their own in order to overcome parochialism. This seems particularly true in the case of native speaker teachers:

> *You are trying to open their mind to an outside world. Because some of them are very limited. They live in W.. K.. and some of them do not see beyond W.. K..* (Ana t, gg)

> *Interculturalism to me is showing the pupils that there is somewhere, and there are other people outside their immediate surroundings.* (Martine, t mc)

Kirsty refers to contrasting belief systems, stressing that it is important for pupils to realise that differences do not mean right or wrong:

It's about understanding about other cultures, their beliefs, their ideologies, having respect for other cultures and the way that they do things which I think is really important [...] And I think the more you can tap into things like food, the belief systems, you can demonstrate to pupils that might be different but that doesn't necessarily make it wrong. (Kirsty, t mc)

In line with the findings of Byram et al. (1995) who conducted a study on teachers' definitions of cultural awareness and Morgan (2008) who asked teachers to define intercultural competence, the definitions and interpretations of IU are greatly varied and in fact, idiosyncratic. More commonly, teachers adopt a cultural awareness (CA) approach whereby the teacher is the source of knowledge. On the one hand, the dominance of the CA approach may be explained by the absence of an established intercultural methodology with a common understanding (Garrido and Álvarez, 2006, Morgan, 2008, Richards et al., 2010, Sercu et al., 2005). Similarly, the preponderance of the CA approach would lend support to the points made by Guilherme (2002), Garrido and Álvarez (2006) and Byram (2008) who all highlight the inadequacies of pre- and in-service teacher education in linking intercultural philosophy theory with language teaching.

It is interesting to note, however, how the various interpretations of culture often seem related to personal cultural experiences or interests. It is questionable whether such experiences or interests would become less influential on teachers' practice even if they were more familiar with intercultural theory and pedagogy. Martine as a native speaker wants to show her pupils how "people think in France" whilst Mark is more interested in cultural "background" that resonates with his interest in history. Such findings resonate with Lázár's (2011) claim that teachers' personal theory of culture is often related to their backgrounds and life experiences. Starkey (2007) and Sercu et al. (2005) suggest that when teachers lack pedagogical know-how in teaching the cultural dimension, they rely on textbooks to do the

job for them. As I will demonstrate with supporting data in section 4.2.3, the findings suggest that the extent of teachers' reliance on the textbook may also be related to more factors that are more closely related to teachers as individuals. These may include an absence of interest in areas of culture that lie outside the typical text book remit or even an indication of the teacher's willingness or reluctance to take risks or innovate with alternative materials. When teachers do choose topics outside the textbook, they seem to reflect personal interests.

(ii) The relationship between the target language culture and the MFL teacher

Whilst several teachers felt that cultural learning was simply part and parcel of the subject discipline, some of the data suggest that there is often a personal relationship between the MFL teacher and the target language culture. They have developed an emotional attachment to the target language culture(s) and are motivated to share this enjoyment. This finding resonates with Starkey's (2007) research which found that some teachers try to "vicariously relive" their own cultural experiences through their pupils (p.62). On the school visit to Spain, Janice takes her pupils to the Alhambra in Granada to *"get away from the costas"*. She is keen for her pupils to develop an interest like her own in the historical rather than the seaside touristic aspect of Spain. Similarly, on a school trip to Germany, Sarah wanted her pupils to retrace the footsteps that she had taken on her year abroad as an undergraduate. Both Janice and Sarah hope that the intercultural experiences that have been formative for them will also be advantageous for their pupils. Sarah points out:

> *And I had lived there before so I knew the town really, really well. So we'll go here and we'll go there and this is where I used to do this [...] And one of things, I wanted them to actually travel properly so we flew into Brussels and took the train to Aachen and had to change in Liege and it instilled what you might call a sort of Wanderlust and they just loved the whole idea of travel and getting there by themselves and finding their own way. (Sarah, HoD mc)*

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As native speakers, Martine and Ana have a special relationship with the target language culture, but this is with their own heritage rather than with another. Both seem partly motivated to promote IU in order to receive some affirmative feedback about their own cultures from their pupils. There seems to be an emotional investment in order to receive an emotional return.

> *And I suppose that I am proud where I come from and I am proud of my culture and I miss it to a certain extent. And that is why I am so keen to pass it on and share it [...] It is to show the pupils that French is not just a subject, that it is obviously related to the country and related to a certain culture, it is related to people, real people, and to me.* (Martine, t mc)

> *If somebody said to me I like it [learning Spanish] because it is easy but I'm not interested in the culture, I think that that would upset me.* (Ana, t gg)

Whilst this seems especially applicable to native speakers, Ana also thought this was true about her British colleague:

> *[She] does Spanish because she loves the language, but she loves the country. And she loves the people as well. So you encourage, you want to share that love with everybody else.*

(iii)Teachers' conceptualisations of their professional roles

Some teachers felt that the development of IU fitted well with their broader professional duties that extended beyond the teaching of foreign languages. As Alison (HoD bc) explained, *"Every teacher has a role to develop the knowledge of their children and part of that role is questioning inequality, questioning the pupils' attitudes towards people of different cultures."* Interestingly, Alison related MFL activities which involved IU (looking at the daily routine of a child in Burkina Faso and taking them on a school trip) to a *"parenting"* or *"adult advisory role"* which she saw as different to her role as an MFL teacher. Doreen felt

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that it was necessary to pay attention to IU in order to prepare pupils for adult life in that they became aware that difference should not lead to conflict:

> *Yes, it is, we're trying to prepare them for the outside world – that there are going to be people who they get on with instantly, that there are going to be people who basically they don't like. But if you don't like someone there is no need to be nasty or violent or to make a holy show if it. If there are people you don't like then we avoid them. But there is a whole a world out there and you are going to meet lots of situations but as long as you approach people in the correct manner, they will treat you as you treat them.* (Doreen, t ss)

In contrast to the teachers who viewed their professional roles in these holistic terms, Gary and John (who both taught in the same school) seemed motivated to develop IU for extrinsic reasons, e.g. responding to the part of the OFSTED report that discussed scant attention to community cohesion or the prospect of receiving an International Schools Award. They seem less driven by an individual philosophy:

> *I think that was something that was pointed out by the OFSTED inspection that there is more that we could do as a school in terms of intercultural understanding in the world.* (Gary, HoD bg)

> *I know we're trying to* [include more IU related activities] *now, especially with us going for the International Schools Award. We're trying to build in an awareness of it.* (John, t bg)

Thus, teachers' enthusiasm for developing IU may be related to the way in which they conceptualise their educational role. Some may consider the development of IU as belonging to their broader educational duties, some may see it to be a worthy 'project' for instrumental reasons, whilst others may be more focused on academic learning.

Summary

In order to understand the significance that teachers attach to IU, it is not only necessary to consider contextual factors but also the influence of factors that are more closely related to teachers as individuals. In contrast to other studies (with the exception of Lázár, 2011 and Starkey, 2007), my findings illustrate an intrinsic relationship between MFL teachers' interests, values, personalities and life experiences and their treatment of the cultural dimension. I further develop this argument in section 4.2.3 by mapping the narratives of five of the teacher participants with an adapted version of Kelchtermans's (2009) conceptual framework.

4.2.3 The interplay between contextual and teacher specific factors

Kelchtermans's 2009 framework ("Who I am in how I teach is the message") was first presented in the literature review on the teacher perspective at the end of section 2.3. To recap, his model was developed from narrative-biographical research with teachers at various stages of their careers. The resulting framework serves as a tool for helping us to understand how teachers interpret and act in particular situations and how they make sense of and modify their behaviour by consequence of meaningful interactions. Kelchtermans emphasises how teachers' conceptualisation of themselves are influenced by biographical and personal factors in combination with their perceptions about what others think about him / her. The framework includes three main parts: *self-understanding* (with components of self-image, self-esteem, job motivation, task perception and future perspective) *subjective educational theory* and *vulnerability*.

By considering the data in relation to *self-image* and *self-esteem* we can analyse teachers' self-perceptions in terms of biographical and contextual influences and explore how

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these may be mediated by different personalities or emotional responses. The exploration of *job motivation* and *task perception* enables us to consider teachers' educational values and beliefs. I have omitted *future perspective* from my adapted framework as this does not correspond to any of the data but have extended the notion of *subjective educational theory* (which I will sometimes abbreviate as *SET*) from the "personal system of knowledge and beliefs about education that teachers use when performing their job" (Kelchtermans, 2009: 263) to include teachers' individual interpretations of the term IU, i.e. What does / should IU look like in terms of teaching and learning? In broadening this definition of SET, I am also able to investigate relationships between personal experiences, interests and treatment of the cultural dimension. Finally, I show that although the teaching of IU may be adversely affected by teachers' *vulnerability*, the extent of their susceptibility to this may also be influenced by personality or educational beliefs.

I acknowledge that Kelchtermans is not alone in arguing that teachers' lives are central to the study of curriculum and schooling (see MacLure, 2001, Goodson, 1991, MacLure et al., 1990, Ball and Goodson, 1985) and that other authors have also conceptualised teacher identities, attitudes and practice by examining context and biography. However, in contrast to other researchers who take a more thematic approach, Kelchtermans's work results in a conceptual framework that can then be re-applied as an analytical tool for further data analysis.

In this section, I present five teacher cameos and map these with the components (highlighted in bold) from my adapted version of Kelchtermans's (2009) framework. The cameos illustrate themes that are particular to each individual: emotional mission, imparting historical knowledge, contextual priorities, pastoral emphasis and playing by the book. The relationship between the narratives and the framework are also encapsulated in Figure 4.1. I

then demonstrate how the framework may also be applied to the findings from the wider teacher sample.

1 Martine's approach: an emotional mission

(Teacher of French in a 11-16 mixed comprehensive school with pupils coming from areas with high levels of deprivation)

Martine is a native French speaker who claims that a large part of her **motivation** to come into teaching was to open children's minds to other cultures. She considers it to be part of her job (**task perception**) to challenge student biases that are informed by their own particular cultural perspectives. She wants young people to learn that there are different parts of the world outside their local environments. The development of IU therefore directly complements her motivation for becoming a teacher. She is deeply proud of her own culture and wants to share this with her pupils. Positive feedback about this from her pupils is rewarding and self-affirming. This contributes to her **self-esteem** as a French national in another country.

However, Martine's actions are not only driven by her task perception. She is guided by her **subjective educational theory (SET)** based on experience of works well in the classroom. She has discovered that providing up to date examples of French culture through the internet is a way of generating intrinsic motivation for French culture and language. Her **SET** is informed by her knowledge about her pupils' interests, their (limited) experiences of different countries and their varying levels of cognitive development. She recognises the importance of

> pitching it to the right level. And I think that's something very important too. Something that is quite real to them. Something that is relevant to their culture too. I think it's then easy for them to make the connection.

Martine integrates up to date footage from YouTube, French pop songs and clips from the French news into her lessons. Although her choice of cultural topics is sometimes related to the MFL syllabus or textbook content, she does not limit herself to these. She has a firm belief in her own pedagogical abilities to develop IU and is prepared to experiment with different aspects of the target language culture in various media.

> *I think the beauty of it all is talking about culture and foreign culture is that you are not limited to anything, you can talk about any subject, you can just open up a website and say 'have a look at what is on the front page of the French newspapers today.'*

Martine seems able to translate a personal agenda into pedagogy that is appropriate for her pupils. Her choice of learning activities enables pupils to access target language cultures from a more insider perspective. This may help them to empathise and consider things from a less ethnocentric perspective which in turn, contributes to IU. It is questionable whether Martine is familiar with intercultural pedagogy. It is probably the case that she takes such an approach because of her personal background. We see a strong relationship here between her subjective educational theory and her biography, illustrating the relationship between personal experiences and treatment of the cultural dimension. She wants to show and share with them "how it is perceived in France".

Whilst she acknowledges that there is a possibility that students and, or colleagues, may challenge her decision to deviate from the syllabus – thus hinting at **potential vulnerability** of her judgements- she has confidence in her ability to stimulate the interest of her students and feels secure about translating her beliefs into practice.

> *I really genuinely think that there are no limits apart from the ones you set yourself as a teacher, you know things that you think, maybe, I should not talk about that. I think that those limitations are really teacher related, rather than pupil related. I think that the kids will be open to very much anything.*

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Martine is a French national in a foreign land who is on an emotional mission. She not only wants to share her love for her native country but also to be understood and accepted by her pupils. Her self-understanding and subjective educational theory overlap. Her interpretation of IU is about generating empathy and openness to the 'other'.

2 Mark's approach: imparting historical knowledge

(Head of MFL Department and teacher of German and French in a 11-16 mixed comprehensive school with pupils coming from areas with high levels of deprivation)

Mark's **task perception** involves the transmission of cultural knowledge rather than the generation of empathy. This knowledge exists as a clearly defined body outside the teacher self, although Mark's acquisition of the knowledge he transmits and the pedagogical style he adopts are parts of his biography. Mark places great importance on the acquisition of cultural knowledge of a historical nature which he calls 'background' and teaches mostly in English. He is critical of aspects of multicultural education that he perceives as superficial, wishing to maintain an academic feel. He believes that young people should acquire knowledge not only about other cultures but also about their own.

He is a raconteur who takes pleasure in telling fascinating or shocking stories in order to capture his pupils' attention. This is a teaching style that appealed to him as a pupil and seems to have become part of his own teacher identity (**self-image**). He recalls how one particular story *"always stuck with me, things like that, they just stick with you. So it's basically that"*. His culture teaching is also informed by his personal interest in history which he developed as a young person. He does not mention the attitudinal dimension of IU. When he was asked in his interview whether knowledge was the same as understanding, he

expressed the opinion that understanding was not possible without knowledge.

Well I think that they need knowledge in order to be able to understand other cultures. I think it's far too easy. What worries me is that people embrace other cultures or sub-cultural things without being aware of the depth of their own culture in this country.

Given that Mark is concerned with imparting knowledge, his **subjective educational theory** of IU relates to an academic learning process rather than one that also includes affect. Although Mark does not say so explicitly, it is reasonable to deduce that his **motivation** for becoming a teacher is related to his desire to communicate his own academic knowledge where he is the centre of attention.

He incorporates historical figures or famous landmarks from the target language culture in various elements of language work, e.g. when teaching how to say their names or when talking about favourite things:

Mein Lieblingsfach ist Geschichte. Mein Lieblingsdichter ist Heine or Walther von der Vogelweide. (My favourite subject is history. My favourite poet is Heine or Walther von der Vogelweide.)

He would then tell the pupils about the history related to these people. In a similar vein, he linked 'background work' with weather and geography:

Let me think for you. What was I doing this afternoon? I was doing weather with Y9 and there was a particular page in the book with German towns, weather, weather, weather [...] And they had rain in Cologne. So I said yes, Cologne, it can be variable the weather. Mind you the worst rain, I've seen in Germany is in Muenster [...] And so I went on the Internet in the final 6 minutes of the lesson. And I got the home webpage for Muenster and from that came odds and ends of things I know about Muenster. Now if you know Muenster there's a certain church in Muenster called Sankt Lamberts church. And they have cages up there right up on the tower. And in these cages there were once the bodies of people who had been executed, the original

cages and the kids were fascinated by this and I showed them to them. And I hope this is answering your question, how that came up. That came up from teaching the weather and rain in Muenster.

Of course, it is also possible that Mark enjoys the role of a dramatic raconteur as it suits his personality. His story indicates how an individual teacher's actions can be influenced not only by a very personal interest but also perhaps, by character. In spite of his strong interest in cultural background and his enthusiasm for incorporating this into languages lessons, he does not do this as regularly as he might wish. This is because he thinks his senior managers would be critical of learning that did not contribute to measurable achievement. Unlike Martine, he *does* see limits for cultural learning.

If I was standing here doing a lesson on Walther or whatever, and one of the senior staff walked past, they would be more than likely to say "What the hell's going on here?" Does that answer your question?

His concerns about criticism about this type of learning from senior management illustrate his **vulnerability**. Whilst Mark feels that this type of learning appeals to the interests of pupils, he seems conscious of the need to save face with a different **self-image** in front of managers. We also observe Mark's concern with **image** in his comments about the MFL trip abroad which is "good for the department". By the same token, the success of the MFL trip affirms his **self-esteem** as a curriculum manager.

Mark has a very different interpretation of IU compared to Martine. He is not driven by motivation to foster empathy for different cultures. Instead, his philosophy of teaching is related to supplying students with knowledge. More commonly, this embraces elements of cultural history. He is less concerned with aspects of everyday life and more interested in 'high culture'. However, like Martine, Mark also seems influenced by biographical experience, taking inspiration from his own education. Although he expresses great

enthusiasm for cultural learning, he is sometimes discouraged by fear of judgement by senior managers. It is very important to him that he and his department are perceived positively by others in the school.

3 Kerry's approach – contextual priorities

(Head of Spanish and teacher of French in a high achieving boys' grammar school with pupils coming from an affluent catchment area)

Kerry's **task perception** seems influenced more by her environment than an individual philosophy. Although she is passionate about Spanish culture on a personal level by consequence of biographical experiences, she has come to place it low down on her teaching priorities: *"The cultural element is positive but it always comes towards the bottom of what I am looking for in lessons."* The reasons are twofold: pressures to deliver measurable results in her grammar school environment and negative pupil reactions to aspects of Spanish culture which she has introduced both in the classroom and on the school trip.

Kerry contrasts her current academic school environment with the community comprehensive in her previous job:

> *Well it's interesting that you ask me that because in a school like this, it's not as common as it would be in other schools, maybe [...] In my previous job in a comprehensive, in a community comp, I did a lot more cultural introductions. So I taught basically Spanish for where you live, this is a very low ability group, and I live in, just working on the word level, just level 1, level 2 if they could and then I showed a longer video about Spanish houses and people who live in those houses from the BBC. And that just caught their attention a little bit more, as a kind of end of lesson activity [...] Whereas in this school, I don't feel that I need the support here, culturally. It's about results.*

Her actions seem not only to be influenced by the demands on academic achievement but also by her personal disappointment with some of her pupils' responses to some of the

material or experiences that she has shared with them. She had shown some footage of a short

film of the Holy Week procession in Spain.

> *I've got some footage of my own that shows the processions [...] you'll show it as part of an Easter lesson, you'll use kind of religious celebrations to get things across and they'll go "Oh no Klu Klux clan" and you'll try to get them to do some observation but the reaction's kind of quite ... You know it's a shock.*

Kerry thinks that the reaction of her pupils is related to their immaturity. She is thus sceptical

of continuing with this kind of learning with pupils in Key Stage 3.

> *If they are younger, unless it is comedy, they will almost react in a kind of suspicious way to it and question it a lot more and say but why? It's the kind of thing where they will talk at the screen where if I put it on the interactive whiteboard they'll say but look at that and they'll point and react. But it won't always be "Wow, I'm really enjoying watching this cultural element." It's more of a suspicious kind of reaction whereas the older they get the more exposure they have the more kind of positive about it they are.*

She had suffered similar disappointment when trying to introduce her pupils to typical

Spanish food on a school trip.

> *I've lived in Spain so I know that there is a thing called Menu which is about 10 Euros for a 3 course meal and it is good home-cooked food. And they get these all over the place. And the best place to get these things are where there are building sites because of builders .... So it came to lunchtime and I thought right, I want to take my group to experience Menu ... On the whole the reaction was – what's all this weird stuff? And I was utterly, obviously disappointed, because my expectations were too high of them.*

In spite of her expression of personal passion about Spanish culture, the disappointment she

has experienced through pupils' reactions has left her sceptical about its inclusion on the

curriculum.

> *I just think I'm looking for a better reaction. I'm looking to get a pleasing reaction, or*

at least not a wholly negative one.

Here we notice her **vulnerability** to the performativity agenda (Ball, 2003) and her own disappointment and hurt. This vulnerability is inextricably connected to her **self-esteem.** Results enable her in tangible terms to illustrate the impact of her teaching and thus demonstrate that she is 'effective'. Moreover, she is very concerned that she carries favour with her pupils. She seems to experience negative reactions to French or Spanish culture as personal rejection. The significance that Kerry attaches to IU through MFL seems therefore to be very much governed by her need to preserve her **self-esteem** and **image**. Interestingly, the examples she provides of attention to IU in the pastoral context do not threaten her self-esteem or image and therefore are unproblematic. She explains how she had dealt easily with a pupil who had claimed that all Germans were Nazis and a boy who had said that he hated Spaniards because they were all rude. She seems more comfortable with developing IU in a pastoral context. In this role, she does not perceive the pressures of results or lay herself vulnerable to pupils' reactions to a culture that she loves.

Although the examples of cultural learning that she has delivered suggest that she conceptualises IU in a way that has strong connections with intercultural theory, she has not yet found a way of translating these into more positive experiences for pupils. This suggests inherent tensions in Kerry's **subjective educational theory**. She would like to provide pupils with insider cultural perspectives which she herself has come to appreciate through personal experience but has not yet found ways in which to do this successfully.

4 Kirsty's approach – a pastoral emphasis

(French teacher in a 11-16 mixed comprehensive school with pupils coming from areas with high levels of deprivation)

Kirsty feels that it is her part of her job to help pupils to respect other cultures. She wants pupils to realise that cultural difference does not mean that there are cultural rights and wrongs. She is highly conscious of her pupils' insular environment and is very keen to extend their horizons. Her **task perception** and **job motivation** seem heavily influenced by this personal philosophy in combination with her contextual experience.

> *We get very few pupils from other cultures so there can be a real lack of understanding because a lot of our pupils haven't even been out of B... And considering we're a mile away from the tunnel and they've never been to L... So they're the kind of pupils that we're dealing with. A lot of them have never even set foot out of B...*

Kirsty's **subjective educational theory** of IU prioritises the development of an awareness of a wider world from a pastoral perspective. She considers IU as an important part of pupils' *general* development rather than something that comes specifically with MFL education.

> *Tomorrow my main focus in my registration is what's happening in the States at the moment. And the fact that we've got the first black president and why shouldn't he be president? Because I'm always trying to get across to them that everybody is allowed to be different. And just because somebody is different, that doesn't make them a bad person.*

Whilst Kirsty also says that she tries to develop IU within the MFL curriculum, so far it seems this has involved food tasting. She has plans to develop the curriculum to look at regional differences within France but this does not yet seem to be embedded in practice. However, it became noticeable that whilst Kirsty frequently tried to develop elements of IU in form time, this was a less frequent occurrence in MFL lessons. Cultural learning took place only after other areas had been covered:

I was really, really struggling to find them something to do for their homework. Because basically they had done everything they needed to do on what they were doing. I'd already done the extension stuff and I couldn't stretch them so I though what shall I get them to do? I thought right, 5 towns in France, where are they on the map? And they're like, every lesson, is it today we're going to be learning about Paris, Is it today we're going to start doing about this? "No, we just need to get this bit of work done first."

It is possible, however, that her **subjective educational theory** of IU in the MFL curriculum is influenced by other variables. There are indications that her lack of attention to the integration of IU elements in languages lessons has perhaps less to do with a lack of willingness. She has spent very limited time in France and admits that she lacks confidence in her knowledge about areas of French life.

And that's one of the things that I find difficult because my experience of France is only when I went over during my degree. And I wasn't in a school [...] So I've got no experience of French schools. So I often, when we get to French schools, I know the basics that I've read in books and I always talk to the assistant to get information. But because I haven't experienced it, I find it quite difficult.

However, her SET is also informed by her perceptions of her pupils. She explains that developing understanding of how people live in other countries is more demanding for pupils who are slower in their cognitive development and who lead very insular lives. She notes that 60% of the students in her school have a reading age under nine and therefore the development of IU through the MFL curriculum is somewhat challenging for both teacher and pupils.

So it's quite difficult for them. It's difficult for them to grasp concepts. So something you think seems really obvious isn't. And sometimes it is because I've got an 8 year old, it is almost like having to talk to an 8 year old.

We can therefore surmise that whilst Kirsty's **job motivation** embraces a moral role that supports the development of IU in pastoral education, she seems more challenged in incorporating this into her practice as an MFL teacher. Her **task perception** leans more to the pastoral side than that of a teacher of languages. She is less focused on her **self-image** or **self-esteem** related to her identity as a modern languages teacher; she is more concerned about her contribution to the pupils' holistic educational development. Kirsty does not comment on the pressures of results or negative pupil responses to cultural learning. This is possibly due to the relatively limited attention that IU has received in her MFL lessons. The fact that that the pastoral curriculum is not assessed may be a reason why she does not express **vulnerability** about any of her IU teaching.

5 Sandra's approach – playing by the book

(Head of MFL Department in a girls' 11-18 comprehensive school and teacher of French in an affluent catchment area)

Sandra does not express strong personal opinions about the development of IU in either pastoral or MFL education. She views cultural learning to be useful for pragmatic reasons. Nonetheless, she has paid more attention to the cultural dimension of late because the Key Stage 3 Framework (DfES, 2003) had given her 'permission' to do so. Sandra addresses cultural learning in English rather than the target language, again because the Framework permits this. She seems to perceive her task as directly relating to curriculum policy. The externally prescribed curriculum content rather than her personal values and beliefs about modern languages and their relationship with IU or personal experiences seem more influential on her **task perception**.

In contrast to the other four teachers, Sandra is less inclined to independently seek out

cultural issues that reflect her personal interests. She is happier to rely on textbooks to determine content. In fact, her 'culture job' has been made by a variety of new publications. Moreover, she perceives the cultural dimension as more accessible as the books deal with this in English rather than the target language.

> *A lot of it comes from teaching materials and I've got a lot of it here to show you. First of all a new text book that differs from the old text book, in that the old text books that were only a few years old, were all in French. You know everything went to teaching in the target language. And we've noticed now that the new text books actually start with a section in English. And it starts with a mini test and a mini quiz about where France is. And if you notice that's a lot of English for a French text book.*

Thus part of Sandra's **subjective educational theory** of IU is that is distinct from language learning. We do not know whether she has tried to integrate culture with linguistic learning but we have learnt that she is more willing to embrace cultural topics if they are in English. This approach does not complement intercultural language learning theory which strongly argues for the integration of the two.

She most commonly uses the textbook at the end of a topic when a class is not yet ready to move on to the next topic. She feels that they also provide materials for engaging less able pupils when they reach a ceiling with linguistic learning. Finally, the books provide a resource from which to set pupils work if a teacher is absent.

> *You're giving back test results or you're doing speaking tests, or you're just changing from one topic to another, or you're showing a video or a DVD and you just want a little filler. Or with lower ability pupils in Y9 [...] And I don't mean to sound patronising, but just finding the level [...] And for instance, if we're ever absent ourselves, touch wood we're all healthy, when we're off doing oral tests, speaking tests or listening tests where we have to be out of the classroom.*

The timing of such learning suggests that in spite of her enthusiasm for the new resources, it may not be one of her curriculum priorities. She is sceptical that a focus on IU would

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improve the curriculum experience for pupils, expressing her satisfaction with the current curriculum content.

Sandra does not reveal much about her personal experiences of engagement with French culture. She is a more private person who seems happier to detach her private from her professional self. She is not sure that the pupils would be interested in her personal experiences either.

> *You know, they [the pupils] don't want your life story but little bits of what goes on in France.*

Similarly, probably due to her more private personality, we glean little explicit information about her perceived **image** or **self-esteem**. From the data we have, it seems likely that it is important to her that she is seen by others to 'play by the book'. Nonetheless, she does not seem to have picked up on the detail about IU in the *new* Key Stage 3 Programme of Study (PoS) for MFL (DCSF, 2009a). She is still working from the 2003 Framework. This is perhaps understandable given that in contrast to the launch of the Key Stage 3 Framework, there was an absence of related subject specific INSET and auditing to ensure it was in place. Thus, in the absence of scrutiny in this area, Sandra, like many other colleagues, does not feel obliged to respond.

Sandra does not express the view that she feels **vulnerable** to the pressures of 'quality control'. However, she seems to derive confidence in complying with curriculum regulations. Granted, Sandra's attention to more culturally oriented teaching resources may benefit her students in terms of learning more about lifestyles in target language countries than Kirsty's learners. However, it is questionable whether learning of this kind can embrace an attitudinal dimension that enables students to understand and empathise rather than simply becoming more aware of cultural differences.

Figure 4.1 *Individual teacher narratives mapped against adapted Kelchtermans's (2009) framework*

Kelchtermans's 2009 Framework (adapted)	Martine: emotional mission	Mark: imparting historical knowledge	Kerry: contextual priorities	Kirsty: pastoral emphasis	Sandra: playing by the book
Self – understanding: self-image and self-esteem	-Native speaker French teacher who is an ambassador of French culture -Self-esteem bolstered by positive feedback from pupils about French culture	-Transmitter of academic knowledge - Raconteur of episodes from target language countries' history -Self-esteem as subject leader bolstered by positive status of MFL department	-Contributor to the academic reputation of the school -Self-esteem based on pupils' successful exam results and positive pupil feedback to teaching and learning	-Self-perception leans more to a pastoral teacher than a teacher of MFL -Self-esteem related to MFL teacher identity is less significant	-Important to be seen as compliant with curriculum policy guidelines - Absence of emotional dimension
Self-understanding: job motivation and task perception	-Wants to show pupils different cultural perspectives, especially how people think in France -Teaching role encompasses moral duties and generating intrinsic motivation for France, French and French culture	- Desire to inspire pupils with the type of learning he experienced and enjoyed as a boy -Interest in combining teaching of MFL with his love of history	-Apparent tensions here: desire to inspire pupils with cultural learning vs. perceived pressure to deliver measurable results	-Strong pastoral emphasis that is influenced by school's geographical and social context -Desire to open students' minds to contrasting belief systems	-Lesser influence of personal philosophy, looks to policy for this -Tendency to separate professional and private selves
Subjective educational theory of IU	-Embraces the attitudinal dimension -IU developed through examples of 'low' / popular culture from an insider perspective - Conscious of importance of matching cultural issues with the interests and cognitive ability of students	-Dismissal of 'inter' and empathy aspects of IU - Belief that understanding comes from knowledge -Anti tokenistic, multicultural education	- Aspires to engage pupils with aspects of personal intercultural experiences -Negative pupil responses have left her sceptical whether IU can enhance the MFL curriculum -Consequent prioritisation of linguistic skills over IU	-Belief that IU is important for students who come from socially deprived, more insular backgrounds -Know-how about IU development in pastoral education but less confident in integrating this into the MFL	-Cultural learning is determined by policy frameworks, guidelines and textbook content -Cultural learning serves pragmatic goals -Lack of attention to the attitudinal aspect of IU, greater focus on CA
Vulnerability: e.g. working conditions inability to prove cause and effect, judgements/ actions open to challenge	-Awareness of possible risks of negative pupil responses / inability to cope with abstract ideas but confidence in her own mission and pedagogical abilities.	- Concerned about being judged by senior managers about teaching and learning that does not address measurable outputs	- Strongly influenced by performativity agenda and need to receive favourable pupil response	- Vulnerability less evident although concern that pupils' insularity makes developing IU more demanding	- Prone to teach the curriculum 'by the book' in order to satisfy demands of quality control

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Figure 4.2 *Themes from across the sample mapped against adapted Kelchtermans's (2009) framework*

Self-understanding *Self-image and self- esteem:*	• Native speaker – ambassador of and emotional attachment to native cultures, seek cultural affirmation from pupils • Cultivator of positive status of MFL department within the school • Popularity with pupils • Contributor to academic success of the school that is recognised in exam results (i.e. focus is on linguistic learning) • Rule players / approval seekers – closely follow National Curriculum, respond to Ofsted agenda, aim to achieve school awards, e.g. International Schools Award • Risk takers – confident in trialling new ideas, enjoy thinking 'outside the box'
Self-understanding *Job motivation and task perception:*	• Holistic role –breaking down prejudices / challenging stereotypes belongs to broader pedagogical responsibilities • Nurturing / parenting role of the teacher • Teacher of academic knowledge • Want to relive their own positive experiences about discovering another culture with pupils in both the classroom, and, or, on school trip abroad • Response to demographic context of the school – need to help pupils to overcome insularity

Subjective Educational Theory	IU/ cultural teaching and learning …..
	• is likely to reflect the interests and, or, knowledge and experiences of the teacher
	• is reliant on pedagogical intuition rather than an established methodology
	    o may involve an attitudinal / affective dimension
	    o may be about knowledge per se or comparing simple differences
	    o may serve pragmatic goals by stimulating general pupil engagement/ motivation
	    o may provide respite from linguistic learning
	    o may involve deeper pupil engagement with insider cultural perspectives
	    o may complement interests and cognitive ability of pupils
	    o may be subordinate to linguistic learning
	    o may be perceived as difficult to do if met with negative pupil response / socio-cultural status of the culture is less positive / pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds
	    o may be perceived as belonging to pastoral rather than MFL remit

Vulnerability	• Curriculum auditing / quality control by senior managers may not respond favourably to learning that is more difficult to measure • IU does not respond to the demands of the performativity agenda • Negative pupil reactions/ expression of prejudices by pupils to cultural learning may disappoint / upset the MFL teacher

Summary

As illustrated above, the five teachers clearly have distinctive approaches in the way they view and practise the cultural dimension. We see from the analysis that the teachers' interpretation of IU and the way in which they translate this into pedagogical practice is highly idiosyncratic. The cameos do not claim to provide exclusive categories of approach into which the practice of all (other) teachers in the sample could be grouped or organised. Instead, they serve to illustrate that whilst contextual factors play their part and their impact cannot be denied, teacher agency seems to be strongly influenced by values, personality, interests and life experiences.

Martine and Mark illustrate how the cultural dimension is a reflection of a personal preference rather than a conscious decision to adopt a particular theoretical approach. For all of the teachers apart from Sandra, pedagogical practice of the cultural dimension seems concurrent with beliefs, philosophies or interests. By contrast, Sandra' story demonstrates how an externally prescribed curriculum content may be more influential on practice when there is an absence of an individual philosophy. Whilst other teachers in the sample (who had less distinctive 'culture pedagogies' and who are not presented here) reported aspects of practice from the various approaches above, they most commonly adopted Sandra's textbook way. This approach tends to focus on topic coverage as an end in itself rather than the broader educational goal of IU.

It is interesting to note that Martine, as the teacher with the most explicit sense of task perception and strongest IU philosophy, exhibits more confidence in translating her beliefs into practice and is less susceptible to worrying about the judgements of others (vulnerability). Kerry has tensions in her task perception; she is torn between her personal wish to inspire her pupils with Spanish culture and the need to please others. Ultimately Kerry is less resilient and more vulnerable to perceived pressures. There are co-relations here

with Gu and Day's (2007) finding that an important aspect of teacher resilience was fuelled by the strength of a teacher's sense of vocation which includes their professional goals. I have presented my arguments hitherto by mapping the cameos of five teachers from the sample with an adapted version of Kelchtermans's (2009) framework. To bolster my case for its usefulness, I have also demonstrated in Figure 4.2 how findings from across the wider sample may also be categorised in terms of self-understanding, subjective educational theory and vulnerability. Whilst the majority seem to feel that teaching about culture is part and parcel of their MFL teaching job, their actual enactment of this seems to be tempered by factors relating to *self-image* and *self-esteem*. Do they, for example, see themselves as a contributor to the school's success in the league tables? Do they want to be seen as eccentric, as a risk taker or as someone who plays safe? To what extent is it important to seek approval from colleagues and pupils?

Teachers' opinions about the importance of IU often dovetail with their *task perception* and *job motivation*, e.g. Do they consider their professional duties to be weighted more towards a holistically educational or academic role? Are they motivated by their own intercultural experiences which they want to relive (in the classroom or on a trip abroad) through their pupils? The teachers' SET becomes explicit when they define IU or explain how they develop this in practice. Often the SET reflects the interests, and, or knowledge and experiences of the teacher. It relies on pedagogical intuition rather than an established methodology. Some teachers focus on transmitting (their own) cultural knowledge whilst others organise learning around cultural resources which they themselves find interesting. Similarly, cultural experiences on school trips may reflect the interests or experiences of the teacher. Whilst many teachers consider IU to be important, the cultural dimension often becomes part of the lesson for pragmatic reasons. It provides a welcome break for pupils from more demanding linguistic learning. There is insufficient data to be able to claim that

there is a relationship between a pragmatic approach and the importance teachers attach to IU. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that those teachers who employ the cultural dimension for pragmatic purposes are less concerned with its broader educational role. Sometimes there are tensions in the SET as pupils' immaturity or less privileged backgrounds may discourage the teacher from paying more attention to IU. However, a more mature and confident teacher who has a strong IU philosophy may be more resilient here. Finally, we learn that the development of IU is often hindered by teachers' *vulnerability*. It may become a lower priority when teachers feel the pressures of league tables, perceive disdain from senior managers for experimentation or when pupil reactions are disappointing or upsetting. However, teachers who exhibit greater self-confidence in their pedagogical practice may be less susceptible here.

Thus, whilst certain influences may vary depending on the context of the school, there are many that are closely related to teacher individuality. Teachers' cultural interests, beliefs, personalities and (inter)cultural life experiences are less prone to change and, as we have seen, have a profound impact on IU beliefs and practice. As far as the cultural dimension in MFL teaching is concerned, Kelchtermans's (2009) claim "Who I am in how I teach is the message" seems very fitting.

4.3 The pupil perspective

This section presents the results and analysis from the survey and group interview data collected from Year 9 (age 13-14) pupils in schools in the North West of England. In general terms, this dimension of the research is concerned with pupil perceptions about the significance of IU in the MFL curriculum. More specifically, it set out to discover the

different types of experiences and reasons that may influence pupils' perspectives. Thus, this dimension of the study concerns itself with the following sub-set of research questions:

1. Do pupils perceive their current experience of (inter)cultural aspects of the MFL curriculum to make the subject more interesting or enjoyable? Would a greater emphasis be welcomed?

2. Do pupils think it is important to develop openness to other cultures through their school education?

3. Do pupils consider the acquisition of IU beneficial or relevant to their (future) lives outside school?

4. How might pupils' perceptions vary according to gender / socio-economic group / type of school attended?

As explained in Chapter 3, a questionnaire survey was used in order to capture descriptive data relating to attitudes and beliefs from a wide target pupil population in different types of state secondary schools. The survey served to map the territory before exploring perceptions in greater depth through pupil group interviews. The profile of the survey respondents (in terms of school attended) and the frequency of each type of school participating in the survey are illustrated in Figures 4.3 and 4.4. The group interviews took place in one of each of the five different types of school represented in the survey: a boys' grammar, a girls' grammar, a mixed comprehensive, a boys' comprehensive and a girls' comprehensive.
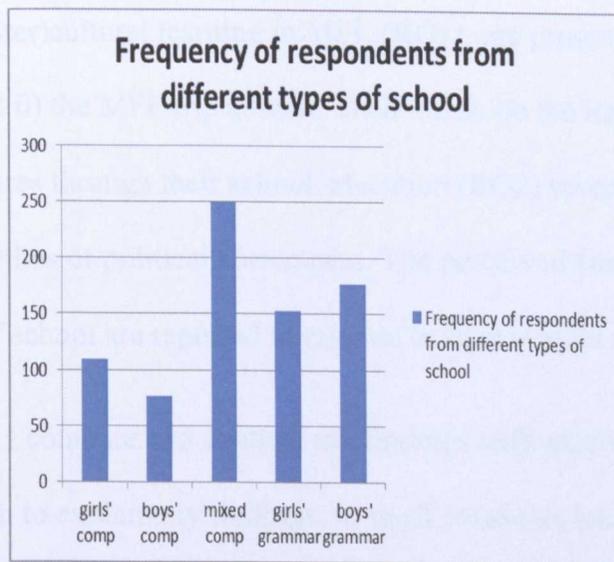
Figure 4.3 *Frequency of respondents from different types of school*
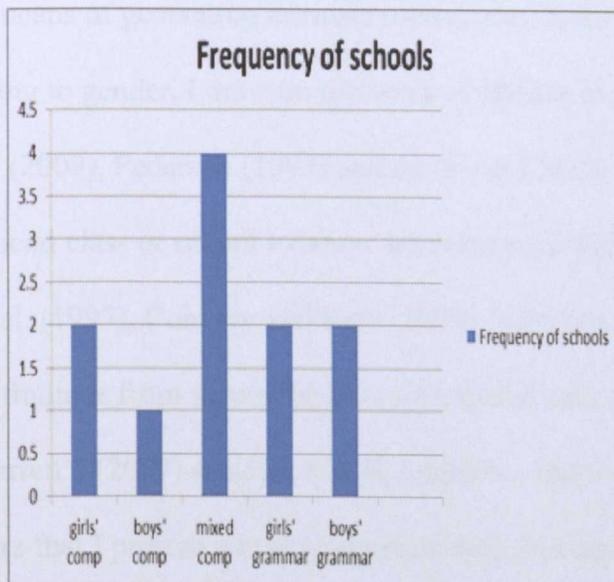
Figure 4.4 *Frequency of schools*

The findings and analysis in this chapter are presented in sections which correspond

sequentially to the first three sub set of research questions (RQs). The fourth question is

addressed in an integrated manner within each of the three sections. Pupils' opinions about

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their experiences of (inter)cultural learning in MFL (RQ1), are presented in relation to i) classroom learning and ii) the MFL trip abroad. Their views on the importance of developing openness to other cultures through their school education (RQ2) reveal the influences of gender, whole school ethos or political correctness. The perceived benefits of the acquisition of IU (RQ3) outside of school are reported in relation to their current and future lives.

In the analysis, I compare and contrast my findings with existing empirical research or use conceptual research to explain my findings. In most cases this leads to confirmation of other work. I use the theory on second language acquisition (SLA) motivation to analyse pupils' perceptions about their enjoyment of MFL and compare the data on expressed interest in learning about other cultures with claims made by those who suggest that intercultural learning may be a means of generating intrinsic motivation. In accounting for differences in perceptions according to gender, I draw on the work of Byram et al. (1991) Convery et al. (1997), Holm et al. (2009), Pederson (1997) and ter Avest (2010). The results reflecting a relationship with social class or school location are compared with research by Byram et al. (1991) Convery et al. (1997), Convery and Kerr (2005) Pederson (1997) and Pykett (2009). Finally, I draw the findings from across the data set together and analyse these more holistically with Barrett's (2007) societal, social, cognitive and motivational (SSCM) framework. It is here that I present a new conceptual map that enriches Barrett's model.

4.3.1 IU and pupils' interest in MFL

RQ1: Do pupils perceive their current experience of (inter)cultural aspects of the MFL curriculum to make the subject more interesting or enjoyable? Would a greater emphasis be welcomed?

(i) Classroom learning

The survey data showed (see Figure 4.5) that the pupils in the girls' grammar schools (there were two of these in the sample) enjoyed language learning much more than their peers who attended other types of schools. When comparing the *differences* between enjoyment of language learning and desire to learn more about life in target language communities (also see Figure 4.5), the survey data showed that grammar school girls were considerably more interested in 'learning a foreign language' than 'learning about life in another country' in comparison to pupils in the other schools. These findings suggest that the pupils in the girls' grammar schools are quite content with MFL lessons the way they are and that they enjoy linguistic learning.
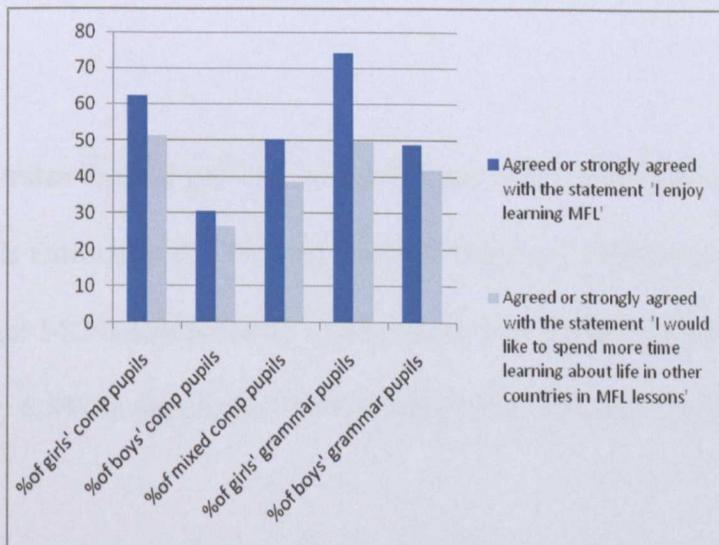
Figure 4.5 *Pupils' desire to learn a language and about life in other countries*

However, the cross-tabulation of statements 'I enjoy learning MFL' and 'I would like to spend more time learning about life in other countries in MFL lessons' with gender and socio-economic pupil population in the respective schools reveals additional perspectives. Figure 4.6 illustrates that the gender gap (15.6%) is much wider in relation to pupils' enjoyment of MFL than that in relation to pupils' interest in learning about life in another country (9.4%).

Figure 4.6 *Enjoyment of MFL learning and desire to learn about life in other countries related to gender*

Figure 4.7 demonstrates that the gap also narrows when taking into account the schools' percentage of pupils entitled to Free School Meals (FSM), i.e. whether it is above or below the national average: 14.3% compared to 15.6% where enjoyment of learning a language is concerned and only 6.8% as opposed to 9.4% when pupils' wish to 'learn about life in other countries'.
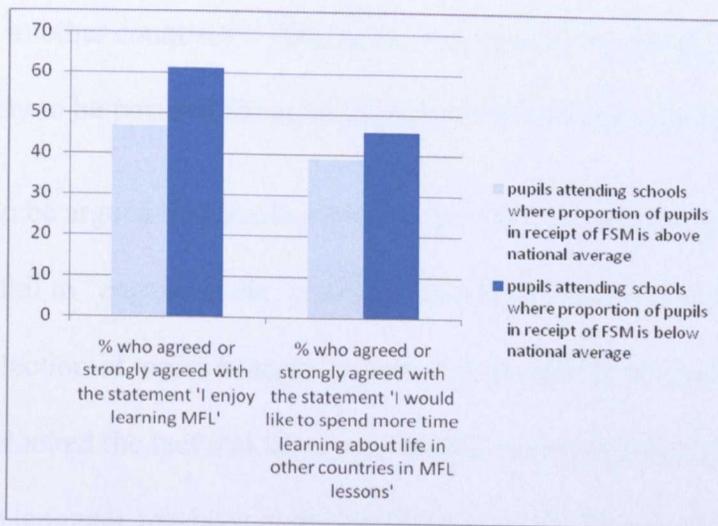
Figure 4.7 *Enjoyment of MFL learning and desire to learn about life in other countries related to socio-economic background*

Chi-square tests also found the respective gaps to be of statistical significance, whereby in each case there was a p value of 0.000.

These results may enable us to speculate that an increased focus on (inter)cultural learning has the potential to narrow the gap in motivation for language learning between a) boys and girls and b) pupils from more and less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. McPake et al. (1999), Fisher (2001) and Starkey (2005a) suggest that intercultural learning may stimulate intrinsic motivation in MFL by providing pupils with topics that are more likely to resonate with their interests than those in current GCSE or typical Key Stage 3 syllabi. However, I am more wary of claiming that there is a direct relationship between these two variables. The aforementioned writers did not research the motivation of pupils who have learnt about culture integrated with language; they speculate about motivational potential based on young people's reported dislike of current MFL experiences and expressed interest in learning more about culture. Moreover, a test for co-relation found a co-relation coefficient of 0.385 between the variables "I enjoy learning MFL" and "I would like to spend more time

learning about life in other countries". This means that pupils who are positive about learning MFL are more likely to be positive about learning about life in other countries.

It could also be argued that Starkey's criticism (2005) that the topics from the "personal sphere" fail to "engage lively, young minds" does not consider the original rationale for the selection of topics brought in with the communicative method. Starkey seems to have overlooked the fact that these very themes were introduced in conjunction with the communicative language teaching method with the specific intention of motivating learners with content and contexts that relate to their interests and life experiences. Advocates of the communicative method expressed a strong belief in learning a language to communicate in real, relevant contexts (Littlewood, 1981). Starkey neither makes mention of this, nor does he discuss the level of linguistic competence that would be required to engage with political issues in the foreign language.

It is possible that the data from this study about pupils' interest in learning more about life in other countries is partly related to a possible rather than actual curriculum emphasis on IU. The survey did not ask about the extent of current enjoyment in learning about life in other countries. The pupils' opinions about the motivational capacity of IU could also have been informed less by the experiences of IU integrated with linguistic learning rather than cultural learning in English. The pupils who consider IU related learning attractive therefore may simply see it as an appealing (and comprehensible) alternative to foreign language learning. Furthermore, they may find it even more challenging to engage with societal issues in the foreign language.

The fact that the survey asked about pupils' potential interest in learning more about life in other countries in MFL rather than current experiences is potentially a weakness in the research instrument. However, questions on their opinions about *current* experiences of

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cultural learning were posed in the group interviews. The interviews enabled a more in-depth exploration of the reasons for their views that would be more difficult to capture from a survey aimed at teenagers. The survey question was intended to gauge pupils' general curiosity across a larger sample in learning more about life in other countries.

A comparison of the survey and group interview data on this matter enables a more detailed analysis. In the interviews, most pupils were more positive about the potential of cultural learning to provide lesson variety rather than demonstrating a specific interest in this type of learning. In four out of the five interviews, pupils expressed a preference for playful, entertaining learning that veered away from more routine language practice. Cultural learning was another way of breaking away from the textbook; it seemed to be a way of filling a 'motivation void'.

> -*I think that because we have learnt the vocab for quite a while it would be really interesting to do more on the culture in what we do in French and German.* (Pupil 1, boys' comprehensive school)

However, pupils in the girls' grammar school who had experienced academic success in languages learning seemed more motivated by acquiring linguistic competence and academic achievement. The question 'What do you prefer – cultural or language learning?' elicited the following response:

> -*Language, language, language, language.* (Several pupils in the group in chorus)
>
> -*Yeah, I think it is interesting to learn about the culture but I think the language is the main thing that we really need to learn.* (Pupil 2)
>
> -*The culture by the language.* (Pupil 3)
>
> (girls' grammar school)

Their motivation to learn a language seemed to be fuelled by the prospect of acquiring a useful academic qualification as well as a realisation that developing their understanding of grammatical concepts and linguistic structures would enable them to use the language creatively and independently. Most of the girls here expressed enthusiasm for language learning in itself. In these circumstances, cultural learning does not serve the purpose of filling a 'motivation void'.

The reference to "culture by the language", suggests that one pupil considers a more integrated approach (the combination of linguistic and cultural learning) to be more acceptable. Later on in their discussion, two pupils in the girls' grammar school enthused about their experience of content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Thus, the pupils may be more interested in cultural learning if it is done in the target language, which in fact supports intercultural pedagogy. The 'either or question' seems to have been problematic as it set up cultural learning as distinct from language learning.

The findings related to the girls' grammar school pupils echo those from the second phase of research on SLA motivation, especially work by Oxford and Shearin (1994) and Dörnyei (1994) who stressed the role of perceptions of self-efficacy and the many authors (e.g. Bacon and Finneman (1992) and Gardner and Lambert (1972), cited in: Williams et al. (2004); Stables and Wikeley, 1999, Williams et al., 2004) who reported a stronger interest from girls in learning languages. The opinions expressed by pupils in other schools about desire for lesson variety mirror arguments made by the researchers (see Coleman et al., 2007, Nikolov, 1999) who stress the greater relevance of the overall classroom experience. Thus, intercultural learning in itself would not appear to be a way of generating intrinsic motivation in MFL.

Interestingly, however, the group interviews indicated that pupils across the five different types of school were all interested in lived experiences. The human factor seems to make culture less abstract and introduces an emotional dimension. Whilst pupils are interested in hearing stories from the MFL teacher, the perspective of the foreign languages assistant (FLA) seems particularly powerful.

> *-I prefer when we get a teacher from the country.* (Pupil 1)
> *-Yeah, cos we've got Nadia (the name of the FLA).* (Pupil 2)
> *-I like Nadia cos she understands what it is like in Germany.* (Pupil 1)
> *[…]*
> *-She told us a bit about the different parts. She had a map and it had Germany on it. And she told us about the different places on it. And it was nice to learn about that. She could tell us because she understood.* (Pupil 1)

(Girls' comprehensive school)

As we will see below, the trip abroad also seems to provide the opportunity for developing an emotional connection with the target language culture. Thus, the trip abroad may also serve as a vehicle for developing intrinsic motivation for MFL through intercultural learning. The importance of this human dimension should be borne in mind by those involved in future IU curriculum development. It could be argued, however, that a human dimension is appealing to pupils in all aspects of the curriculum and therefore does not necessarily apply to IU in MFL in particular. In her study on the pupil perspective on International Education, Marshall (2007) found that pupils were also enthusiastic about a more personalised pedagogy. Like me, she was unsure whether this was related to International Education in particular.

Thus, the results so far suggest that

- Many pupils may consider intercultural aspects of MFL to be significant if they add to the variety of activities they experience in the classroom.

- More academic pupils (in this case, girls) seem less concerned about variety and more interested in progress. They do not want to do more cultural learning at the expense of linguistic learning.

- The girls in the grammar school are supportive of (and indeed refer to without prompting) integrated language and culture learning.

- An increased emphasis on cultural aspects of language learning may have the capacity to intrinsically motivate pupils who otherwise claim not to enjoy MFL lessons although it is important to note that the responses about learning more about life in other countries in may have been related by pupils to a *possible* rather than *actual* curriculum emphasis.

- Pupils express a particular interest in learning about lived experiences in the target language countries, especially those related by the FLAs.

(ii) The MFL Trip Abroad

In most of the schools in the sample (12 out of 14), the MFL curriculum extended beyond the classroom to a trip to a target language country. Only one school had a foreign language exchange in operation. Most of those who had participated on the trip enthused about their experiences. Some pupils explained how they were particularly interested in making contact with their French peers.

> *... there was also French children staying there as well (referring to the youth hostel) so we would be like bonding with them.* (Pupil 1, boys' comprehensive school)

One pupil stressed how she valued the cultural insights she gained *in situ*:

I like going on trips. Because you learn languages in school, you can go on school trips and learn about cultures as well as actually learning the language. You get an insight into the lifestyle of each language. (Pupil 1, girls' grammar)

But in spite of the fact that an MFL trip abroad may have great potential to stimulate interest in MFL learning and develop IU, the survey data highlighted that pupils' opportunities to benefit from this experience was likely to be influenced by financial factors. Pupils who attended schools with above average proportions of pupils in receipt of FSM were less likely to go on an MFL trip. 46% of pupils who attended schools where proportion of FSM was above the national average reported that they had gone or will go on trip compared to 65% in schools where the proportion of those receiving FSM was below the national average.

However, pupils' direct contact with the target culture should not lead us to assume that intercultural experiences will be automatically perceived as positive. Some pupils in the boys' grammar school complained about the activities, the food and their encounters with young French people:

-I didn't enjoy the French trip because it was all museums ... I don't do that at home so why do I want to go to another country and do that? (Pupil 1)
[...]
-I think the only difference between there and us was the food. I found that was the only difference, I thought it was disgusting (Pupil 2)
[...]
-All I can remember was that when we were in that little hotel thing, there was young French chavs were there – giving us abuse in French. (Pupil 3)
-That's just like the same as it is here. It's no difference. (Pupil 2)
-Except we could batter them. (laughs from the others) (Pupil 1)
(Boys' grammar school)

These boys are dismissive of the activities planned by the trip organiser(s). Moreover, a pupil rejects the 'different' cultural (food) experience and although the boys joke about it, they are negative about their encounter with their French peers. In fact, the data suggests that these boys were more likely to have moved in the direction of ethnocentricity than developing openness to other cultures. The fact that the boys felt mocked was perhaps threatening to their egos, especially since the experience did not occur on 'home territory'. This finding chimes with Allport's (1954) 'contact hypothesis' which argues that mere contact with other cultures is not enough and indeed, may even be counter-productive. Whilst we cannot generalise from this small amount of data about a potential relationship between gender and openness to other cultures, there are findings from the survey that suggests that this might be quite a serious issue. This point will be discussed in more detail in response to RQ2.

Finally, there is also data that suggests that teachers may need to give careful consideration to encouraging pupils to *practise the target language* when abroad. Whilst intercultural understanding is underpinned by the development of positive attitudes to people from other cultures, it is likely to be further enhanced by communication with people from other cultures. Byram's model (1997) of intercultural communicative competence also encompasses the skill of *savoir faire* (interaction in real time). It could be argued therefore that such interaction may enhance their development of IU.

Figure 4.8 reveals that in general, girls are more willing or confident to engage in some conversation in the foreign language than boys. This may be explained by boys' lesser enthusiasm for engaging with 'otherness' established elsewhere in the literature. For example, Holm et al. (2009) found that teenage boys scored much lower intercultural sensitivity scores than girls. Byram et al. (1991) found a statistically significant difference in boys' (more negative) attitudes to the French compared to girls. Convery et al. (1997) found

that boys across Europe were less interested in the European Dimension whilst Ter Avest et al (2010) found that males expressed less value in learning about other religions than girls.

An analysis of pupils' foreign language practice when abroad by breakdown of the respective schools (Figure 4.9), however, reveals that grammar school pupils are more likely to engage in speaking the foreign language practice abroad than comprehensive school pupils. This could be explained by perceived or actual foreign language competence which would be supported by a theory of self-efficacy (Oxford and Shearin, 1994).On the other hand, working class pupils may feel lack the confidence to communicate with others outside their social comfort zone which resonates with the research by Convery, et al. (1997), Convery & Kerr (2005) and Pykett (2009) who all found that working class pupils find it difficult to imagine themselves actively engaging with people who live beyond national borders. Finally, these findings may be related to naturally occurring opportunities or opportunities facilitated by teachers. In any case, it is clear that the pedagogy of visits and exchanges (Snow & Byram, 1997) needs careful attention. These results suggest that foreign languages teachers should carefully consider planning 'comfortable' opportunities for foreign language practice in order to develop pupils' confidence that otherwise might be lacking. The potential for developing the skills of *savoir faire* and *savoir apprendre* (Byram 1997 and Byram and Zarate 1994) may indeed be limited for some young people without such consideration.

Did you practise speaking the foreign language when you were abroad?

Figure 4.8 Relationship between gender and foreign language speaking practice abroad

Did you practise speaking the foreign language when you were abroad?
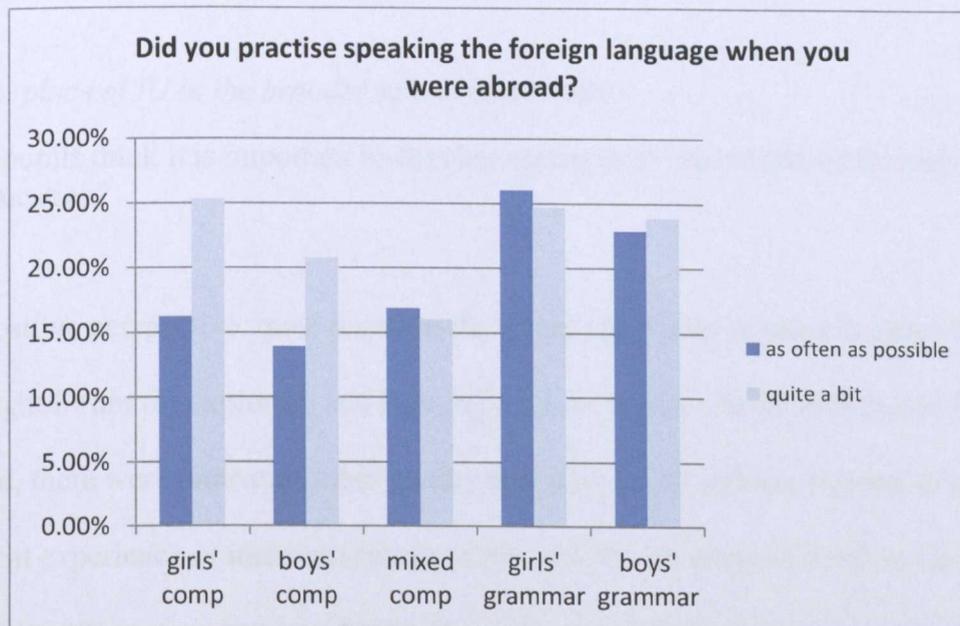
Figure 4.9 Relationship between school type and foreign language speaking practice abroad

We have learnt therefore that participation on the MFL trip abroad has great capacity to make the IU aspect of the MFL curriculum more significant to pupils. However, the relationship between offering a languages trip abroad and the development of IU can be quite complex:

- The chances of participating on such a visit may depend on socio-economic factors.

- Whilst many pupils would appear to develop positive attitudes to people from other cultures by consequence of their visits abroad, there may be a chance that teenage boys have negative intercultural experiences that prompt them to be more defensive about their own culture rather than becoming open to others.

- Similarly, if the development of IU is enhanced by interaction with people from other cultures / countries, teachers may also need to pay careful consideration to scaffolding opportunities for pupils to communicate in the target language, in particular for boys or for pupils from less privileged socio-economic backgrounds.

4.3.2 The place of IU in the broader school curriculum

RQ2: Do pupils think it is important to develop openness to other cultures through their school education?

From a positive perspective, most pupils in the group interviews seemed to agree that school was the right forum for exploring and learning to understand cultural differences. On the other hand, there were indications that gender may negatively influence pupils or that inconsistent experience of intercultural education in different subjects result in uncertain ideas. Finally, there are inferences that some pupils gave politically correct answers to please the researcher as some pupils contradicted themselves.

(i) School is the right place for intercultural learning

The benefits of intercultural learning through school education were stressed by the pupils in the girls' comprehensive. They were not sure that they would have opportunities for this kind of development outside school.

-You won't really learn it anywhere else apart from the telly. You can understand it [other cultures] a lot more, because without understanding it I don't think you would be able to do anything. No one would understand the way of people's other living. (Pupil 1)

-Yeah. It's essential, isn't it? I think it's really important to know it. Because if you don't learn it in school, you're not going to learn it anywhere else. (Pupil 2)
(Girls' comprehensive)

Similarly, in the boys' comprehensive school the pupils implied that learning about other cultures in school (in particular in MFL) helps them to overcome prejudices:

- Do you think it is important to learn in school to be more accepting or open to other cultures? (Interviewer)

-You need to learn about it or otherwise you'll just think it's weird or something. (Pupil 1)

-Yeah. (Pupil 2)

-To know why they do things differently. (Pupil 1)

-Yeah, because you would just be obnoxious to other languages and cultures – the French – everything would just think that they are stuck up – like that's what the English kind of make out the French to be but if you get to know them. (Pupil 2)
(Boys' comprehensive)

Pupils in the girls' grammar school seemed to believe that their school provided a forum where they are more likely to consider culture from different perspectives, in a non-biased fashion. They were not sure that this would necessarily happen if they were left to their own devices. They valued some "formal" learning in this regard.

-Do you think that you are getting that education elsewhere, in other forms, or from different sources? (Interviewer)

-Just like going on holiday with your family. You learn, say you spend a week there or something, you learn just watching different people, like just from being in the country (Pupil 2)

-I don't really think there's other ways to learn about it apart from in school, but what B said, when you actually visit the country, but if you are just hearing it from somebody else (Pupil 3)

-It could be false. (Pupil 4)

-Yeah, it's just not actually learning. (Pupil 3)

(Girls' grammar)

(ii) Boys and cultural learning

Some of the remarks of the boys' grammar school pupils suggested that a 'macho' pupil culture may make it more difficult for them to express positive attitudes to different cultures in front of their peers. This is especially true when a dominant and influential pupil expresses his reluctance to engage with learning about 'otherness'.

> *-I think the French and Spanish are quite similar to us though ... – it's not like here and a 3rd world country is it? So I think... if you're learning about that language, like Arabic or something like that ... if you're learning that language then yeah, learn about that culture because it is totally different to here. Whereas French – you go to France and it's pretty much the same.* (Pupil 1)

This pupil's opinion about an absence of cultural differences between the UK, France and Spain may be informed by his own travel experiences. However, given that the pupils in the other schools expressed their recognition of cultural differences between different European countries and the UK, this may have been an attempt to 'legitimise' his lack of interest in learning about other cultures, or even a way protecting his own identity. Whilst, these remarks may be of limited significance in isolation, this dominant pupil (under the pseudonym of James) also seemed to influence his peers.

-Do you think your education in school should include that kind of learning? i.e. learning about other cultures, do you think school is the right place? (Interviewer)
-It depends on the language you're learning like going back to what James said before, if it's French or Spanish you don't really want to learn about Spanish culture because it's quite similar to England I think. Whereas we're doing an Asian culture day where it's a completely different country- but other than that- no. (Pupil 2)

This qualitative data is worthy of comparison with some of the statistics from the survey. An analysis of the responses to one of the items in question 27 revealed that boys' attitudes to people in other countries were much less positive than girls'. 63.1% of boys reported that they strongly agreed or agreed with the statement "I have a positive attitude to people in other countries" compared to 79.3% of girls. The difference in percentages was also *statistically significant*. (The p-value was 0.002 which means that $p<0.05$, see Table 4.1). By comparison, there was no statistical significance found in the relationship between attitudes to people in other countries and socio-economic profile of the pupil population in certain schools (indicated by the proxy of percentage of children entitled to free school meals).

Table 4.1 *Cross-tabulation of gender with "I have a positive attitude to people in other countries"*

		"I have a positive attitude to people in other countries"						
		yes, definitely	yes, I think so	I am not sure	no, probably not	no, definitely not	6	Total
gender	male	126	126	75	17	15	2	361
	female	100	158	73	9	2	1	343
Total		226	284	148	26	17	3	704

The p-value was 0.002 which means that $p<0.05$

The fact that pupils across the sample mostly felt that school was an appropriate place for developing their understanding of other cultures concurs with the findings of the REDCo

project (Jackson, 2008) and Convery et al. (1997). However, the findings suggest that this idea may receive less enthusiasm from boys as male teenage group identity may inhibit the expression of openness, especially if a 'macho' culture is prevalent. This raises a new insight into to the relationship between gender differences and the cultural dimension of language teaching. To my knowledge, this issue has not received attention by other researchers.

(iii) Fragmented experiences of intercultural education?

Whilst pupils provided arguments why intercultural education is important, some data suggest that they may simply have provided answers to 'please' the interviewer. A girl in the mixed comprehensive explained that she thought intercultural learning may be helpful in deconstructing prejudices:

> *I think it's like people judging other people who come over here. Because they speak different languages and everything, because it's like, if you learn a bit more about it then you're not so bad, so then you're fine with it [...] Cos, we're all the same and if there is the language barrier, it stops us from knowing people.* (Pupil 1, mixed comprehensive)

But later in the discussion, whilst talking about Religious Education (R.E.) the same pupil was extremely dismissive about learning about the Moslem religion:

> *-I'd rather have stuff to revise for exams or to have for a useful lesson. Rather than, I don't know why I need to know like – say if people bomb us they get seventy two virgins. I don't know what all that means.* (Pupil 1, mixed comprehensive)

Pupils' prejudices or confused ideas may be influenced by factors external to school. Young people are influenced by social and societal views expressed in their communities and media (Barrett, 2007) that are not always welcoming of other cultures. These mixed messages in and

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outside school may be difficult for young people to interpret. However, some data suggests that pupils' confused ideas may be the consequence of mixed messages about the importance of IU from *within school*. For example, in the girls' comprehensive, we learn how pupils had very positive feelings about learning about other cultures in R.E. but that such experiences were either lacking or negative in MFL. These contrasting experiences are highlighted in the extract from the discussion in bold.

-What about the R.E.? What have you learnt there? (Interviewer)

-Islam – it shows you what they wear and all that. And what god they praise and all that. (Pupil 2)

-I haven't a clue about the French, like if they believe in God or what the Germans believe in or not. It would be good to know what they believe in. (Pupil 3)

-Yeah (Pupil 5)

-Do you find R.E... ? Do you like RE when you learn about other religions? (Interviewer)

-Yeah, yeah (Pupil 5)

-I do. (Pupil 2)

-I love it (Pupil 3)

-Why?(Interviewer)

-Cos, it's like a mixture of different people. And like one community, isn't it. Cos loads of people live here now, like from all different countries, and they still like live, what they would do in their home country or city or stuff like that but they live here. (Pupil 1)

-It's good to understand the reasons for what they do so .. (Pupil 3)

-So it's like a break from just learning the English culture. (Pupil 1)

(Girls' comprehensive)

Later on in the discussion, one girl expresses much less enthusiasm about learning about cultural differences in MFL:

-People hate French. They just don't even want to look at it so it's like, they're not going to learn any of the culture.

In the mixed comprehensive, the situation was exactly the opposite. Earlier in the conversation, the pupils had expressed interest in learning about other cultures in MFL but this was definitely not the case in R.E. lessons. The data suggests that they also find aspects of religious practice presented to them by teachers difficult to comprehend:

*-I don't really get R.E. Cos **if you want to know stuff about them (reference to other cultures) then fair enough**, you just go to the library or just check it or google it. **But like R.E. – I don't learn nutin – cos I just don't find it interesting and if you don't find something interesting you don't really listen**, so you don't really put it in your head, so there's no point.* (Pupil 2)

-But I wonder why – you've just told me about all the reasons for learning about life in Spain – you gave me loads of reasons. (Interviewer)

*-**But not learning about another country in R.E.*** (Pupil 2)

-But why's that different? What's different about it? Is it another country, or another religion or is it the way it is taught? (Interviewer)

*-**It's more different, it's more complicated.** They have rules like, like you can't be married and you have to be circumcised and all that. **It's just too complicated**.* (Pupil 2)

(mixed comprehensive)

The data in response to RQ2 suggest therefore that

- Pupils are generally positive about developing their understanding of other cultures in the school curriculum.

- Male teenage identity may inhibit boys from expressing openness to other cultures in front of their peers.

- A fragmented approach to intercultural education across different subject areas can lead to mixed messages and uncertain ideas about its value.

- Pupils may find it difficult to express personal opinions here and simply repeat messages they have heard elsewhere, ranging from political correctness to prejudices.

4.3.3 The benefits or relevance of IU to pupils outside school

RQ3: Do pupils consider the acquisition of IU beneficial or relevant to their (future) lives outside school?

(i)   Pupils' current lives: holidays, the internet and popular culture

In the survey, the pupils reported that they most commonly came into contact with people from other countries when they were on holiday (see Figure 4.10). The highest ranked holiday destinations in the survey were Spain, Spanish Islands, Greece and Turkey, all of which are typical destinations for package or 'all inclusive' holidays that are less likely to involve intercultural contacts with the indigenous population. In this respect Byram (1997) makes the point that intercultural skills are more pertinent to the sojourner than the tourist. It is questionable whether young people who go on holidays abroad that do not involve contacts with local life or people consider intercultural understanding to be important. The second highest response in Figure 4.10 was 'other'. On the questionnaire next to the 'other' box, some pupils noted that they talked to people in other countries through the X Box game on the internet. Although we do not know this for certain, it is possible that other pupils who ticked this box were also referring to internet contacts. It is difficult to say whether pupils would find their understanding of other cultures advantageous in communication of this kind.

In the group interviews, the pupils reported that most of them mixed only with people from their own culture or ethnic group in their daily lives. When asked in the group interview,

what they discussed with people in other countries when playing on the X box, a pupil in the boys' comprehensive school explained

   -We always ask them about where they are from and what time it is where they are.
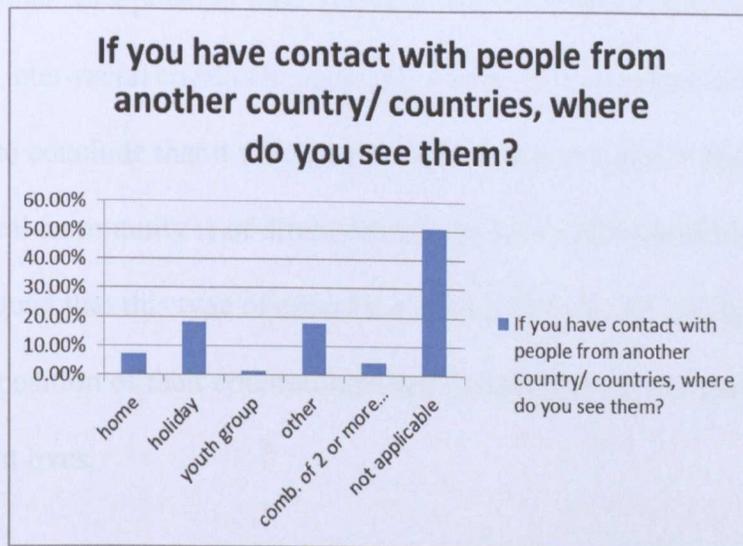
Figure 4.10 *Place of contact with people from other countries*

So as far as the pupils in the sample population of this study are concerned, the data suggests that their ability to function interculturally is not a priority for their daily lives. However, the demographic of the sample and the lack of pupils talk about this make it difficult to draw any conclusions. Asides from the girls' comprehensive school where I conducted one of the group interviews (but no survey), there is little, if any, cultural diversity within the schools in the sample. The great majority of the participating pupils also live in areas with little ethnic diversity. Indeed, the culturally homogenous nature of the sample may be considered as a limitation of the study. I have highlighted this point in the final section of the methodology chapter (see section 3.8).

Nonetheless, although one of the recommendations of the Ajegbo report (DfES, 2007) was to foster social cohesion in troubled multi-ethnic communities, the report also stressed that education about cultural diversity is all the more pertinent for young people without experience of this. Pupils should become familiar with the unknown in order to combat potential prejudice arising from ignorance. Pederson (1997) found that familiarity with other cultures through daily life experiences does not necessarily influence the degree of openness to the 'other' in a positive way. Young people may be less tolerant of others if they have experienced inter-racial conflict or suspicion within their communities. Pederson's finding leads me to conclude that it would be presumptuous to suppose that the ethnic make-up of a pupil's local community is of direct bearing on their opinions about the relevance of IU. It could be argued that this type of education is important for all young people, regardless of the ethnic composition of their communities and even if they do not see the advantages of this in their current lives.

The relevance that pupils attach to the development of IU to their daily lives may also depend on other *vicarious* experiences. The survey asked the pupils to rate their knowledge about France, Germany and Spain. Relationships were investigated between pupils' perceived levels of knowledge of these countries and the actual language, or first MFL (MFL 1) they were studying. Figure 4.11 reveals that 62.1% of pupils who study Spanish as MFL 1 agree or strongly agree that they know a lot about Spain. This percentage is noteworthy when it is contrasted with perceived knowledge about France and Germany of pupils who study French and German as MFL 1. 35.5% of pupils who study French as MFL1 agree or strongly agree that they know a lot about France and 41% of pupils who study German as MFL1 agree or strongly agree that they know a lot about Germany.

The fact that pupils studying Spanish as MFL 1 reported that they knew more about Spain than their peers learning French or German knew about France or Germany, suggests that research from the first phase of SLA motivation (e.g. Gardner, 1985; Gardner & Lambert, 1972) on integrative motivation may still have some currency. Young people may identify with Spanish culture by consequence of positive holiday experiences or the resonance of Hispanic popular culture. They therefore may feel that intercultural learning connected with this makes the MFL curriculum more enjoyable or interesting. It is possible that young people may feel that they know about Germany as a result of the history national curriculum that commonly addresses learning about World War 2. Overall, these findings lead me to conclude that intercultural learning that engages with Hispanic culture is more likely to be perceived as relevant by young people than German or French culture. Thus pupils' perceptions of the relevance of intercultural learning to their current lives may vary as a function of the language they are studying.
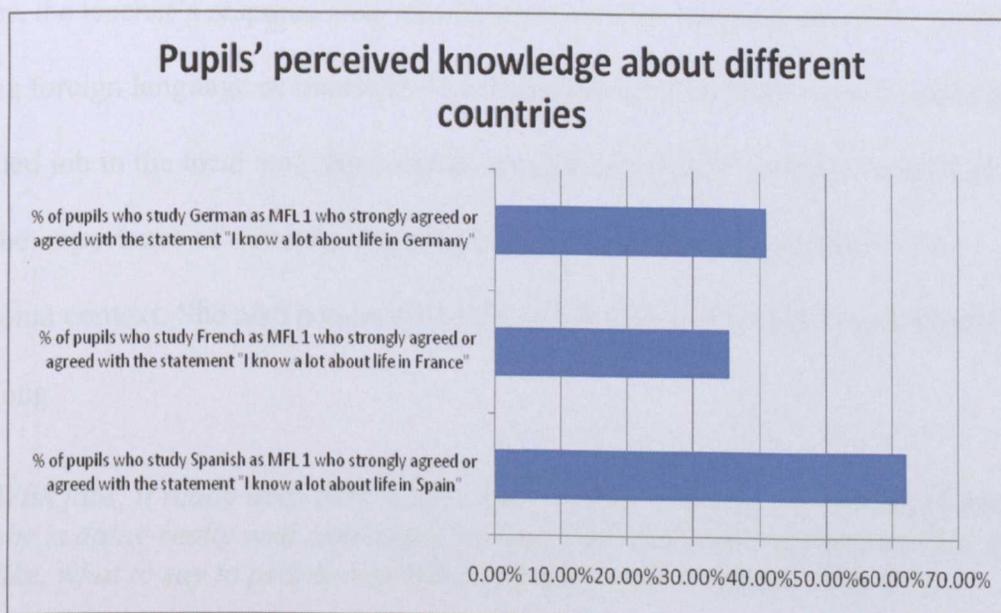
Figure 4.11 *Pupils' perceived knowledge about different countries*

In contrast to the data relating to pupils' *current* lives, there were some findings that suggested that pupils may perceive the development of IU to be beneficial for the future. However, pupils' views seemed to vary here as a function of socio-economic background. For example, pupils in the girls' comprehensive could not imagine the benefit of learning a language or learning about other countries:

> *I just don't see the point really if we're never going to go there.* (Pupil 1)

> *-I asked a random question in [a] French [lesson], like is it in case you get a job in McDonalds and someone who comes in is French or German (giggling) and you need to know what they want? Because then you would understand them? But then they [the teacher] said no – like a point blank no.* (Pupil 2)

> (Girls' comprehensive school)

The fact that the pupil giggled suggests that her 'random' question was not entirely serious. However, the teacher's response may equally have sent the message that there is no need for acquiring foreign language or intercultural understanding if the pupil aspired (merely) to a low skilled job in the local area. By contrast, a pupil in the girls' grammar school seemed to realise the importance of not only linguistic but also intercultural competence in a professional context. She also personally knew of somebody who had a professional career in Hong Kong.

> *With jobs, it really does help. Like, I know someone who is a vet in Hong Kong and she is doing really well over there because she learnt the language and she knows like, what to say to people and what will affect their response.* (Pupil 1)

It is possible that these contrasting perspectives are symptomatic of social class related expectations of future career opportunities. When schools are divided along socio-economic lines there is the risk that teachers may even reinforce these expectations (Convery and Kerr 2005). The survey data suggests that levels of confidence in moving out of a social comfort zone may also vary as a function of socio-economic background (see Figure 4.12). The proportion of pupils who felt confident communicating with people from other countries was markedly higher (47.9%) in those schools that had a below average proportion of FSM in contrast to those (35.5%) who with an above average percentage.

% of pupils who rated their confidence levels between 1 and 3
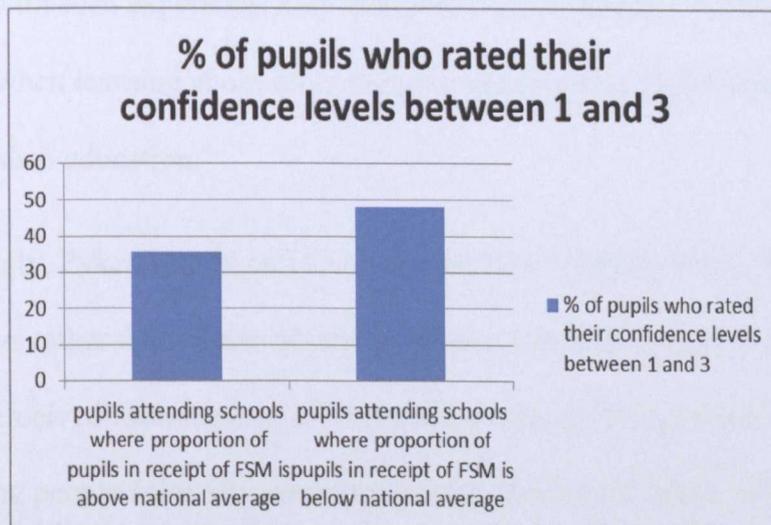
Figure 4.12 *Pupils' confidence in communicating with people from other countries*
(1=very confident; 5 = so so; 10=very nervous)

Young people's expectations about the benefit of IU for their future lives could also be related to their travel experience. If pupils have not yet been abroad, it might be difficult to imagine that they will make intercultural contacts in the future, especially if their local environment remains culturally homogenous. 86.7% of the pupils who attended schools

where the proportion of FSM was *below* the national average reported that they had visited countries other than the target language ones compared to 77.8% where the FSM proportion was *above* the national average.

Jahoda (1962) and Wiegand (1991) cited in Barrett (2007) found that knowledge and attitudes to foreign countries varied (amongst other factors also) as a function of social class. Barrett (2007) seeks to explain these findings as a consequence of the influence of travel. Middle class (older) children are more likely to have had more extensive travel experience which in turn is likely to influence knowledge and attitudes. The data from the survey in this study lends support to Barrett's claim about greater travel experience of middle class children. Pupils with such experience may therefore be at different, possibly more advanced 'starting points' when learning about other cultures and therefore find it easier to appreciate the relevance of such education.

Interestingly, Pykett (2009) and Convery and Kerr's (2005) research suggests that social class factors rather than ethnic diversity within a community may have a more direct bearing on the perceived usefulness of IU. Like these authors, I have found evidence to suggest that young people from less privileged backgrounds may find it difficult to imagine themselves crossing national or cultural boundaries. Unlike Byram et al. (1991), I did not find a statistically significant relationship between *attitudes* to French people and socio-economic status. However, my other findings suggest that the background variable of class is still as prevalent as twenty years ago in its potential influence on international outlook.

Overall, it can be concluded from the qualitative findings (relating to pupils' job aspirations) and the quantitative data (on levels of confidence in communication with the 'other' and current travel experience) that pupils from more advantaged backgrounds may well regard IU to be more beneficial for their future lives than their less well off peers.

The findings in response to RQ3 can therefore be summarised as follows:

- The pupils in this study have an absence of cultural diversity in their local communities. This suggests that IU has limited social value in their everyday lives.

- When pupils in this study do to come into contact with people from other countries, this is most likely to be on holiday. Thus pupils' experiences of life in other countries are likely to be limited to a tourist perspective, especially if they have been on package holidays.

- Whilst the internet has, in many respects, made the world smaller, and some pupils meet young people from other countries through interactive internet computer games, this does not necessarily broaden their experiences of other cultures.

- Middle class pupils are more likely to have wider travel experience than children from working class backgrounds and thus have had more exposure to different cultures, meaning perhaps that they are at a different 'starting point' when learning about other cultures.

- There seems to be a relationship between pupils' perceived level of confidence in communicating with people from other cultures and socioeconomic background. Thus pupils from less privileged backgrounds may consider IU less significant if they cannot imagine themselves engaging in intercultural communication.

4.3.4 The LSCI Framework

Having compared specific elements of the findings for this research with existing research to establish confirmation of or challenge to previous work and to use where appropriate theoretical insights, I will now set out a more holistic analysis of the pupil data that I present

in a new conceptual map that draws upon and enriches Barrett's (2007) SSCM framework. According to what I have coined the *LSCI Framework*, the significance pupils attach to IU in the MFL curriculum is influenced by their experiences in four different areas: a) Language learning, b) School environment, c) Community and d) International world (LSCI).

The respective elements of this LSCI framework cover: 1) pupils' MFL (extra) curricular experiences; (b) the type of school they attend; (c) the family and local community in which they are embedded and (d) any first or second hand encounters with the international world. These areas are neither exclusive nor hierarchical domains and overlap in different ways (see Figure 4.13). Of course, pupils will also have individual, highly personalised, idiosyncratic experiences that may affect their perceptions here and cannot necessarily be mapped specifically.

LSCI Framework

- Vicarious experiences (e.g. through media)
- Holidays
- Contacts with family / friends from other countries

Language learning

- Linguistic capability
- Importance of fun factor / academic progression
- Academic status of MFL
- Trips abroad – who can go and what do they experience there?

Inter-national world

Significance of IU in MFL curriculum to pupils

School

- Socio-economic profile of the pupil population
- Gender and other 'sub cultures' within the school
- Pupil identity
- Whole school culture / ethos

Community

- Socio-cultural attitudes
- Demographic
- Geographical location

Figure 4.13 *LSCI Framework*

These four influential contexts can be compared and fitted into the **societal, social, cognitive and motivational (SSCM)** framework that Barrett (2007) underscores as fundamental in understanding a young person's attitudes towards other cultural groups.

Pupils' language learning (L) is affected by their academic ability in the subject (**cognitive** factors) or the academic status attributed to language learning by parents or the peer group (**social** factors). It may also be influenced by pupil identity with a gender group (**social** and **motivational** factors), a sense of self-efficacy (**cognitive** factors), the ability of parents to finance a school trip abroad or contact with members (family or friends) of the / a foreign culture (**social** factors). As has been shown by this study, when the academic status of MFL learning is high or positive, the development of IU seems to be considered as subordinate to linguistic learning. Where pupils are less enthusiastic about MFL learning, perhaps because they consider this difficult, IU education seems potentially attractive. However, as we have seen, the MFL learning experience can also be affected by the dynamic and culture within the peer group (**social** factors) which may be welcoming to learning about otherness to greater or lesser extents.

The data also suggest that the significance that pupils attach to IU is influenced by the school experience (S) reflected in school ethos or culture. As educational institutions of the state that are expected to operate within national statutory frameworks, schools reflect **societal** values and norms. To what extent does the school promote British, European or other perspectives? How does the school promote the value of IU *across* subjects or in the pastoral curriculum? To what extent is education promoted that is not of direct instrumental benefit? The school experience is equally affected by **social** factors: To what degree are macho or intolerant attitudes present or culturally acceptable? In what way does the school experience overlap with community experience in terms of reproducing socio-cultural attitudes?

Young people are deeply affected by the dominant socio-cultural attitudes (**social factors**) in their communities (C). These social factors may also impact on their **motivations** regarding future careers. We have seen from the data how pupils' confidence in venturing out into unknown territory seems to be associated with social class. Socially less privileged pupils may therefore consider IU to be of less relevance than their better off peers. Pupils' attitudes may also be affected by the geographical location or ethnic demographic of their community. As I have indicated, the young people in this study live in predominantly homogeneous communities affording limited opportunities for social interaction with different ethnic groups in their day-to-day lives.

My findings also suggest that pupils are more interested in Spanish rather than French or German culture. Whilst the aim of this study was not to establish whether the increased popularity of Spanish is due to Spain constituting a favourite holiday destination for many British families, we learn how pupils' real, or vicarious, experiences of the international world (I) (subliminally affected by stereotypical media coverage of different cultures) may impact on the way they view intercultural learning. Holiday destinations and holiday types are affected by **social** factors such as cost, popularity of resorts and level of trendiness with different groups whilst the media reflect the norms and values of **society**. Popular culture communicated by the media may also influence young people's **motivation** to learn about particular cultural groups.

Conclusion

In the first instance, I have found that whilst a greater focus on IU may potentially generate interest from pupils, it is unlikely in itself to be a solution to motivation issues associated with MFL learning in Key Stage 3. Instead, the results suggest that pupil motivation is

affected by a variety of different factors that are best explained with reference to established research on SLA motivation.

However, whilst my findings confirm many of the existing theories on motivation in SLA, I have also established a new insight into the gender differential. Girls are not only more motivated to learn foreign languages than boys, but are also more interested in or open to the cultural dimension in MFL. This issue has not yet been raised by other researchers. Similarly, whilst other empirical studies have found a relationship between social economic status and pupils' perceptions of citizenship or attitudes to other cultures, the variable of social class has not yet been highlighted in terms of its possible impact on intercultural learning.

In summary, I conclude that the pupil perspective on IU in MFL is affected by LSCI experiences. In many respects, these experiences overlap with the four dimensions in Barrett's SSCM framework. Thus, I have been able to enrich and extend Barrett's model. In its adapted form, presented as the LSCI model, it helps us to understand the significance pupils attach to IU in the MFL curriculum.

5. Discussion

Introduction

In this penultimate chapter, I draw the threads from the thesis together, comparing the differences and similarities in the perspectives of policy makers, teachers and pupils. I then deliberate the implications of the findings from the study for those who are responsible for or have an interest in the future development of the secondary MFL curriculum and the related place of IU. Finally, I raise a set of sign-posting questions for policy makers in 2012 given that there is to be yet another National Curriculum revision to be launched in 2014.

5.1 Comparing and contrasting the perspectives of the stakeholders

We have learnt that the formulation, delivery and reception of an IU curriculum in MFL are greatly complex. Policy makers were concerned about creating a more motivational curriculum, but equally, were keen to fulfil the broader political goals of developing community cohesion and economic competitiveness. If a greater focus on intercultural understanding is to achieve these aims, one would expect to find a degree of overlap in the teacher and policy maker perspectives. This study has found disconnect rather than concurrence between the teacher and policy maker stakeholders.

Although there are some indications that both policy makers and teachers feel that cultural learning can help to create a more motivational curriculum, it does not seem to be happening in the way that the QCDA envisaged. Rather than "root[ing] language learning firmly in the cultural context of the target language" (QCA, 2008a), culture teaching more

typically occurs in short bursts in English. Furthermore, it seems very uncertain that MFL teachers feel that through promoting IU, they are contributing to the community cohesion and economic competitiveness agendas. They have, after all, been trained in pedagogy to teach language rather than the exploration of identity, citizenship or intercultural communication for business purposes. When teachers in the study talked about the importance of developing openness to other cultures, this seemed to be a reflection of their educational principles rather than an overt expression to comply with underlying social policy aims or the enactment of a familiar intercultural pedagogy. The authors of policy have considered the reasons for an increased emphasis on IU without due attention to implications for curriculum guidelines or professional development. Similarly, policy has not spelled out what teaching and learning should look like if teachers are to help pupils to acquire intercultural skills for the global economy. Although the current Key Stage 3 Framework has employed intercultural understanding as a vehicle to promote personal, learning and thinking skills, this places languages education in a 'soft skills melting pot'. Rather than considering the particular contribution that the MFL curriculum may make in developing a set of intercultural skills, the authors of the Framework have considered how the subject may contribute to a generic set of skills for the 21st century economy.

In spite of the lack of attention to such important detail, the attempt to make IU a National Curriculum *Attainment Target* suggests that policy makers were keen to raise its status. But teacher objections to this proposal clearly signalled that they are not prepared to focus on IU at the cost of linguistic learning. Evidently, policy has been unsuccessful in communicating that the development of IU should be integrated with language learning rather than competing with it. Thus, in the absence of clear curriculum guidelines and more explicit explanations how IU may differ from its predecessor *cultural awareness*, the teacher

approach to the cultural dimension is almost completely disconnected from policy aims and instead, haphazard and individualistic.

In many respects, the teacher and pupil perspectives are also detached from each other. The teacher treatment of the cultural dimension commonly reflects their personal interests, personalities and life experiences or their educational principles or beliefs. The pupil perspective, in contrast, is affected by their experiences of language learning, the school environment, their communities and their real or vicarious experiences of the international world (i.e. the LSCI factors). These can vary from school to school or even from one individual to another. Some pupils may feel that an increased emphasis on IU makes MFL more interesting. However, this study confirms research into motivation in SLA is influenced by a complex variety of other factors.

Nonetheless the teacher and pupil perspectives are not entirely unrelated. Teachers' perspectives about the significance of IU are frequently influenced by their perceptions of the pupils they teach. For example, some teachers thought that cultural learning served as a motivational tool when pupils are less enthusiastic about language learning. The pupils of these teachers expressed a very similar view; cultural learning (in English) is a welcome break from linguistic learning and provides lesson variety. Interestingly, both teachers and pupils see it as a way of generating general engagement rather than serving a broader educational purpose. By contrast, the girls' grammar school pupils were motivated by linguistic achievement rather than lesson variety. Interestingly, the girls' grammar school teachers did not describe intercultural learning as filling a motivation void either. Instead, they talked about situated language learning in the cultural context of the target language country(ies). As I will explain, this cycle of teacher-pupil reinforcement is also notable in other areas.

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We find further overlap in the teacher and pupil perspectives with regard to pupils' gender, pupils' social background and the target language in question. We have learned that when a macho peer culture is present amongst boys, or pupils are less mature, they may express a negative response to cultural differences. Such responses have an impact on teachers' practice. They explain that negative pupil reactions can make their IU job more challenging. In fact in Kerry's case, her pupils' responses dissuaded her from further developing IU as part of the MFL curriculum. It would appear to take a certain amount of confidence and maturity on the part of the teacher to overcome gender or immaturity barriers like these.

The teacher and pupil perspectives also seem to overlap as a function of pupils' socio-economic background. Teachers express the view that IU is more difficult to develop in schools where pupils come from less privileged homes. Typically, they blame pupil prejudices on parental attitudes and pupils' limited contact with different cultural groups or the international world. As far as pupils are concerned, we have learnt that young people from less privileged backgrounds are less confident in communicating with people from other cultures and have less travel experience than their middle class peers. Without such experience or confidence, these pupils may perceive IU as less relevant to their future lives. But in spite of these limiting factors, there was no relationship of statistical significance found between socio-economic groups and attitudes to other cultures. So when teachers perceive pupils' social background as a barrier to developing IU, they may in fact be influenced by a biased view of societal differences rather than reality. Ultimately, such predispositions reinforce a belief that engaging with "otherness" or crossing social or cultural borders is more appropriate for the middle class.

Finally, the teachers and pupil perspectives about the significance of IU overlap with regard to the target language studied. Pupils studying Spanish claim that they know much more about target language culture than their peers studying French or German. Although this may be attributed to external factors such as holiday experience or popular culture, it is interesting to note that several teachers expressed the view that they find it easy to teach about Hispanic culture and thus engage with this more readily. Teachers of German expressed converse views. In effect, this practice once again reinforces socio-cultural attitudes whereby some countries are viewed more favourably than others. The growing trend of languages departments in schools and universities to offer more courses in Spanish (and close down German and French departments) is an indication that not only teachers, but also managers of education, are influenced by such attitudes.

The analysis of these differences and similarities in the perspectives of the three stakeholders (represented in Figure 5.1) raises many important issues. I now turn my attention to the implications of the findings for IU curriculum development. In this discussion, I also consider the role of intercultural languages theory.
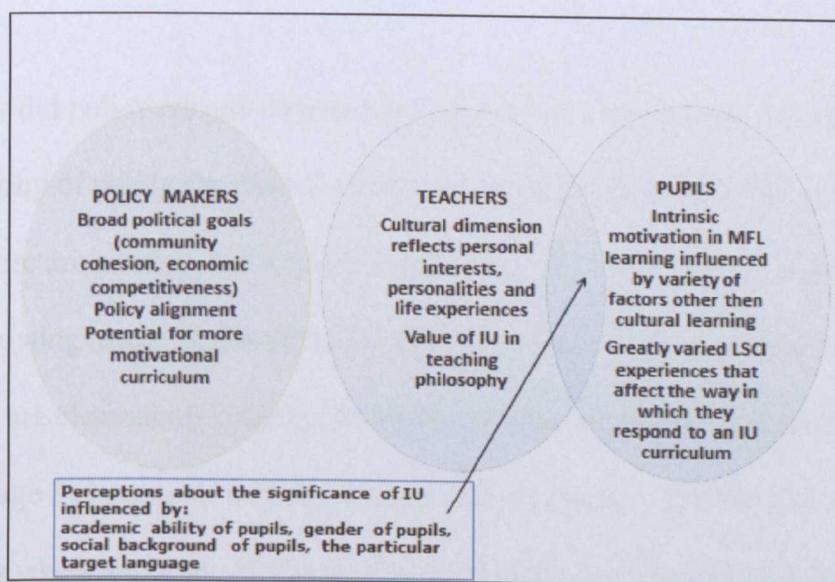
Figure 5.1 *Relationships between the perspectives of the three stakeholders*

This study has revealed that the reference to Intercultural Understanding in the Key Stage 3 Programme of Study was adopted with well-meaning intentions. However, it also illustrates that policy makers have borrowed this term from elsewhere with limited thinking about what exactly it would mean in terms of teaching and learning. This has resulted in ambiguity and mixed messages in various statutory and non-statutory documents. The lack of clarity around classroom pedagogy and the absence of clear and realistic objectives are perhaps inevitable given that there were so many different rationales for choosing the IU term of reference. Not only was a new emphasis on IU supposed to inspire and engage learners, it also served to align Key Stage 2 (primary) and Key Stage 3(secondary) curriculum frameworks, foster community cohesion, meet expectations of the Council of Europe, develop economic competitiveness, not to mention the more utilitarian skills encapsulated in the Personal Learning and Thinking Skills. In this policy 'mash up', the writers of the curriculum overlooked two factors that may have resulted in a more pedagogically informed curriculum: intercultural languages research and the perspectives of the teaching and learning stakeholders.

So why did policy makers choose *not* to consult or even ignore research? My analysis and close scrutiny of policy documents and the intercultural languages literature lead me to believe that there are a number of likely reasons: the complex and highly academic nature of much of the existing research, the difficulty in translating it into a curriculum for English teenagers who are elementary language learners, the absence of practical teaching examples for the Key Stage 3 classroom, its political or moral undertones, and the lack of awareness among policy makers about the distinction between cultural awareness and intercultural understanding. The complex intercultural languages learning models have been developed by

linguists and commonly appear to be more influenced by scholarly and political arguments than user-friendliness for policy makers and classroom practitioners. The '*savoirs* model' and others like it require substantial investment of time and thought for comprehension, interpretation and application. Given these constraints, it is perhaps no surprise that policy makers are hesitant to consider a theoretical underpinning of IU in the Programme of Study.

These likely factors have significant messages for intercultural scholars and researchers. If intercultural language learning is to be more successful in transcending the borders of higher education and finding a more established place in the school curriculum, there is further work to be done on practicability and exemplification. Research should also become more concerned with gaining a deeper understanding of what constitutes good intercultural languages pedagogy in the school context. Such work may be very helpful in bridging this gap between the academic and educational policy worlds.

This study has also demonstrated that IU policy was drawn up without consideration of the very people it affects: the teachers and the pupils. The New Labour government's enthusiasm for the personalised learning (see Johnson, 2004) does not seem to have been applied to the notion of IU. My analysis in section 4.3 suggests that in order for an IU curriculum to be more effective, it must be sensitive to the array of societal and linguistic capability factors that vary from school to school or pupil to pupil. Furthermore, this study shows that in the absence of clear guidance, teachers' treatment of the cultural dimension is almost left to chance and delivered in an intuitive, haphazard way. On the one hand, the existing confusion makes the case for much clearer teaching guidance with a common understanding. At the same time, however, the guidance needs to be sufficiently flexible to allow for differentiated application with different pupils. Striking the balance between clarity and flexibility is without doubt a challenge that requires a good deal of further thought.

Nonetheless, I would argue that my findings underscore the need for good educational policy making to be based on solid research evidence that takes into consideration the perspectives and limitations of those who are to translate it (teachers) and those for whom it is intended (pupils).

5.3 Implications for teacher education

Teachers' idiosyncratic treatment of the cultural dimension underscores the fact that there is an evident lack of clarity about what IU actually means. Their intuitive approaches reflect subjective interests, personalities and life experiences rather than a clear rationale with goals or outcomes. They invent IU definitions and teaching methods based on personal outlooks or re-enact styles they found appealing from their own time as pupils or undergraduates. For the teachers in this study, teacher education and policy guidance have failed to provide both a road map and a clear destination for IU. Those who have plotted the IU journey more consciously seem to have done so independently.

I believe that these findings have implications for MFL teacher education. As a first step, it would be helpful to raise awareness of the variety of rationales for intercultural languages education. This could be achieved by providing relevant literature which would serve as a foundation from which to set appropriate learning objectives. This process should be complemented by exploring teaching and learning examples and the development of an awareness of the challenges and limitations of their application. In short, the literature, objective setting and pedagogic exemplification would provide an IU road map.

However, the strong influence of teacher individuality on the cultural dimension suggests that there should be a second step, an equally important dimension of IU teacher

education. Beginning and experienced teachers would benefit from opportunities for reflection on the more personalised factors that impact on practice, with the help of tools that enable them to become aware of their own beliefs, attitudes and values. To navigate their IU road map, the study of intercultural research, objectives and pedagogy need to be complemented by some study of the self.

As Korthagen (2004) argues, meaningful teacher development will only occur if it focuses more on the person, providing opportunities for the exploration of professional identity and a sense of mission. But teachers not only need opportunities to ask themselves what they - and others - consider to be important, but also to reflect on whether their actions mirror their beliefs. I suggest that my adapted version of Kelchterman's (2009) interpretive framework could be adopted as a suitable tool for enabling this very process. It can be used in conjunction with the teacher narrative method for professional development whereby one may learn "what might be possible plans or actions and how their [personal] scripts are not the only possible ones" (Conle, 2000: 56). In so doing, teachers may become more aware not only of their own, but also of alternative philosophies or approaches which would help them to recognise motivators and inhibitors in developing IU. This framework could also be employed as a blank template to scaffold the writing of their own stories, bringing about a more explicit awareness of the complex interplay of values, personalities and life experiences with context. This humanistic, person-centred (e.g. Hamachek, 1999) approach to professional development would complement theoretical learning and could potentially have a profound impact on teachers. As such, it could make a valuable contribution in assisting beginning and experienced MFL teachers to develop confidence in the critical analysis and evaluation of their professional practice, not only with regard to their immediate learning

environment, but also in relation to the wider social, political and cultural contexts within which their practice is embedded.

This developmental process may help MFL teachers to develop and articulate a stronger philosophy of teaching. Holding on to one's beliefs and values is all the more important in a challenging job that all too often lays teachers vulnerable to the pressures of league tables and Ofsted inspections. In fact Gu and Day (2007) found that an important aspect of teacher resilience was fuelled by the strength of a teacher's sense of vocation which includes the consciousness of professional goals.

5.4 Between idealism and reality

Admittedly, my reflections and suggestions for teacher educators so far appear rather idealistic. They certainly face challenges in the current environment of English teacher education. The introduction of QTS standards in 1997 has been greatly influential on English ITE courses. The standards are largely technicist with no mention in the past, current or proposed QTS standards about the need for developing teacher philosophy. In fact, ever since the standards were first introduced in 1997, the TDA (previously the TTA) has discouraged ITE from focusing on theoretical perspectives found in the social sciences. The emphasis has predominantly been on practice with two thirds of PGCE courses based in school rather than the university or college. The stance of the current education secretary is even more sceptical towards the role of theory in ITE. Michael Gove (2010) has claimed that "teaching is a craft and it is best learnt as an apprentice observing a master craftsman or woman".

In addition to the challenges in pre-service teacher education, there are also those in in-service education. With squeezed professional development budgets, a marked reduction

in TDA funded post-graduate development and the government's preferential bursary support for the deepening of subject knowledge in earmarked subjects, intercultural language courses are unlikely to be high on an MFL teacher's or school's list of priorities. Schools and teachers are more often interested in INSET with quick fix tips for successful Ofsted inspections or raising attainment at GCSE. Teachers on short courses expect to be equipped with practical ideas for the classroom.

Nevertheless, without the understanding of a solid theoretical basis, there is little chance of successful IU pedagogy in English schools. And without IU education and the development of intercultural skills, many of today's pupils may struggle to navigate their way through the complexities of the ever increasing interconnectedness of the international community of the 21st century.

A further challenge is that many MFL teacher educators are unfamiliar with intercultural pedagogy. It could be argued that the translation of lengthier readings into more compact practical examples may not only be greatly beneficial for policy makers but also for busy teacher educators. Whilst it is of course far preferable that tutors acquire a deeper knowledge and understanding of the research, the provision of appropriate resources may be the first necessary step in raising greater interest and awareness of intercultural languages education.

As I have argued, successful IU teacher development would also seem to require a second dimension that takes a more person-centred approach in teacher education. In spite of the picture I have painted of an ITE practice driven culture, I am more confident about the expertise and experience of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop this complementary dimension. The uncontroversial notion of 'reflective practice' or 'reflective teaching' has grown in popularity in the UK since the 1990s (see for example, Schön, 1983,

Schön, 1988, Pollard, 1988). This is well illustrated by the attention it has received in ITE textbooks. 'Reflective teaching' has not only been welcomed as an ideal bridge between university and school based learning but served the more recent pragmatic need of responding to the academic demands of studying for PGCE qualification at Masters level, following the Bologna Agreement in 1999. In order to provide theoretical models necessary for Masters level study, many PGCEs have embraced frameworks from the literature on critical reflection (e.g. Schön, 1983, Tripp, 1994, Brookfield, 2002). These have served as an ideal way of helping beginning teachers to analyse their practice, looking at how their personal perspectives are often informed by aspects in their own biographies. Jones and Peiser (2011) found that PGCE student teachers greatly valued the university as a protected space, within which they could critically examine aspects of their personal identity against their experiences in the school setting. Current government policy regarding initial teacher education, however, favours school-based programmes of initial teacher training. It remains to be seen whether the professional practice setting, with its internal and external pressures in terms of targets and league table positioning, will be able to offer an equally safe environment or the expertise to promote this person-centred type of teacher development.

Aside from opportunities and challenges in the teacher education affected by governmental decisions, there are also those which are inherent in the intercultural agenda. Intercultural education can have political overtones or moral implications with which not all teacher educators or teachers feel comfortable. Most MFL teachers see their role primarily as teachers of *language*. Equally, some may feel more passionate about pastoral responsibilities. Others may be uneasy about overtly politicising or moralising their role. Furthermore, a teacher may not feel that it is in his/her power to influence attitudes of openness. As Harden (2011: 82) has argued, if the affective capacity assumed by *savoir être* (Byram 1997) is

"largely withdrawn from rational control and cognitive invention, how can it be developed?" Perhaps IU would be less complicated or controversial if it were promoted as an essential skill to navigate an increasingly interconnected world.

5.5 *The pupil perspective*

My initial enthusiasm that a greater emphasis on IU may be considered by pupils to make language learning more interesting or enjoyable has been proved simplistic. I found that brighter, female pupils seem encouraged and content with their academic progression in linguistic learning whilst most others simply welcome cultural learning as a break from what they perceive to be more mundane, routine activities. They are not interested in intercultural learning *per se*. There is evidence that suggests that pupils are motivated when there is an emotional connection related to their lived experiences. Whilst this point is worth bearing in mind for future curriculum development, it may well apply to learning in general rather than IU in particular. It clearly takes much more than a change in course content or curriculum focus to motivate young people to learn foreign languages. We should be aware of the wide ranging research in motivation in second language acquisition that stresses the importance of many different influences, including those outside the MFL classroom. It should be noted that this conclusion has been reached based on data relating to pupils' haphazard experiences of intercultural learning and which do not necessarily take place through the foreign language. Further research is needed in order to gain a better understanding about the motivational potential of more sustained and integrated language and culture learning for pupils in the early years of secondary school.

This finding from the pupil perspective is not a reason for making IU a lesser priority. Like other advocates of the intercultural approach, I embrace the wider educational purpose of language learning. Through their study of foreign languages, learners become directly confronted with information about other cultures which provides opportunities for in-depth analysis and reflection. By engaging with alternative perspectives, this educational process should give the learner the knowledge and skills to conduct a more open and confident dialogue with 'the other'.

However, I conclude from my data analysis of the pupil perspective that an IU curriculum without due attention to pupils' experiences of Language learning, School, Community and the International world (LSCI) has many limitations. The Key Stage 3 curriculum presents a one-size-fits-all concept of IU without consideration of the variety of environmental, sociological or linguistic capability factors. Interestingly, Byram (1997) recognised that the setting of objectives for intercultural competence should depend on the learners and their context, although other proponents of intercultural languages education do not seem to have considered the need for such differentiation. If teachers are to be savvy and successful developers of pupils' IU, they will also need to be alert to how these factors vary from school to school or even from pupil to pupil. When pupils' linguistic knowledge or capability is less developed, this may mean that there is a need for complementing integrated language and culture learning with some more in-depth discussion in English. Whilst this could take place in MFL lessons, it seems sensible to adopt a more co-ordinated approach across social science or humanity subjects.

Considered educational attention to socio-cultural factors seems all the more pertinent given my findings regarding the relationship between gender and social class on pupils' views or outlooks. Despite a proliferation of policy initiatives to develop equality of

opportunity for young people from all social backgrounds, in addition to the promotion of the *European Dimension* and Citizenship in the National Curriculum, and in spite of strong warnings against gendered education, the findings emerging from this study suggest that there has been little change since Byram et al. (1991) investigated pupils' attitudes. These striking similarities between two studies conducted almost twenty years apart appear to demonstrate not only the inflexibility of socio-cultural attitudes to change, but also the inadequacies of the education system. Unconsciously, educational institutions and teachers may indeed reinforce or reproduce these mind-sets. Perhaps this is unsurprising as the curriculum has been imposed from top-down as a 'one size fits all' diet rather than allowing individual teachers to develop their own IU curriculum taking the perspectives of pupils and the specific school contexts as starting points. However, we should be mindful that the influences here are complex. The fact that little has changed in twenty years raises the question whether schools alone can actually have a significant impact on socio-cultural attitudes.

5.6 Looking forward

In 2012, we stand at a crossroads waiting for a new MFL National Curriculum for England to be launched in schools in 2014. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, has expressed his scepticism of the underlying principles of the existing Key Stage 3 curriculum that try to make schools institutions which "seek to cure every social ill and inculcate every possible worthwhile virtue." He is critical of cross-curricular education that is so closely linked with the Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills and has vowed to "completely overhaul the curriculum - to ensure that the acquisition of knowledge within rigorous subject disciplines is properly valued and cherished" (Gove, 2009). This implies that the curriculum

will return to more traditional modes of teaching and learning, which in the case of MFL, would signal a particular emphasis on grammar and texts.

But Gove's messages are ambiguous. MFL will receive revived status as a compulsory subject at Key Stage 4 (14-16) with academic rigour. Whilst the Education Secretary may be cynical about the purpose of education to instil virtues, he wants subject choices for GCSE (now to include MFL) to provide young people with "a rounded sense of how to understand this world in all its complexity and richness" (Gove, quoted in The Guardian (5.9.10.) by Wintour, 2010). If some of the drivers for IU are to be abandoned, is it likely to survive as an item in curriculum documents, let alone in the application of the 2014 curriculum? Whilst it is extremely positive to see that the status of MFL has been upgraded, the more academic focus on languages may mean that in the next curriculum revision, IU could be overlooked. The coalition government's proposal to remove Citizenship as a discrete subject from the statutory curriculum (see DFE, 2011), in which IU has been embedded in the Diversity and Identity strand, gives us all the more reason to think that intercultural learning is at risk of oversight. I argue that it would be unwise for the coalition government to throw the IU baby out with the 2008 National Curriculum bathwater.

There are thus important questions to be addressed surrounding the status of IU in the future curriculum:

- Will MFL be recognised by policy as an important site for IU education?

- Which other subject disciplines will contribute to IU education?

- Will policy makers support attention to IU pedagogy as an important aspect of pre- and in-service teacher education?

- How may teachers of MFL, humanities and religious education co-operate with one another to deliver co-ordinated IU education? Will policy, and or schools, encourage such co-ordination?

- Should IU education be left to local rather than national policy decision making? Would this enable a flexible approach that could be adapted according to pupils' or communities' needs?

- Are Free Schools more likely to develop a tailor-made IU curriculum?

- Would schools be more likely to opt out of IU education if they were without obligation to deliver it?

It remains to be seen whether such questions will be addressed. Young people certainly need to learn to live together in harmony with their neighbours in increasingly multicultural communities. Schools therefore have a crucial role to play in helping pupils to overcome potential ignorance, suspicions or racist attitudes to their ethnically diverse neighbours. It is unclear exactly where this type of essential education would occur in the future, other than in schools. Furthermore, IU is indispensable for any person growing up in the 21st century for navigating a globalised economy where careers, mobility, innovation and prosperity increasingly depend on relationships with partners in other countries. In the European context, IU is not only necessary to be able to take full advantage of the rights afforded to people from EU member states, but is a pre-requisite for playing an informed role as an EU citizen.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The aims of the study: a recap

The original aims of the study were to investigate whether a greater emphasis on the cultural dimension in the secondary MFL curriculum had the potential to generate more pupil enthusiasm and enhanced subject status. Initially, I intended to co-relate the perspectives of policy makers, teachers and pupils in order to understand what makes for a purposeful and motivational curriculum. These aims were prompted by two personal motives. Firstly, I felt that my own intercultural language learning experiences and those of other MFL teachers could be better translated in the languages classroom. Secondly, I was frustrated by the pupil response to the mundane topics typically covered in curriculum plans, exam syllabi and textbooks. I thought that it was all the more important to investigate the motivational potential of cultural learning given that the subject status of MFL in the English secondary school system was in crisis.

When MFL became an optional subject for 14-16 year olds, GCSE entries plummeted. This was a clear indication that the subject was not only unpopular with pupils but also with those school leaders who did little to encourage pupils about the importance of language learning. My initial research revealed that other MFL practitioners thought that one of the principal underlying reason for the crisis was the utilitarian languages curriculum with a focus on transactional language that pupils learnt by rote. This method of language learning not only made it difficult to develop learner independence and linguistic progression, it also demoted MFL education to what Grenfell (2000: 26) termed a "vocational adjunct". The

critics argued that it was imperative to reconsider the purposes of language learning and claimed that intercultural understanding should be one of these.

Parallel to my research on the curriculum policy context, I discovered that applied linguists had developed a new paradigm for the cultural dimension. There had been a shift in thinking about culture pedagogy that had moved from the bicultural to the transnational paradigm or intercultural approach. The academics in this field stress the broader educational potential of language learning for developing openness to other cultures. In order to realise this broader educational aim, they advocate the integration of cultural and linguistic learning, whereby learners study, analyse and reflect on the meanings of cultural products in the target language and compare these with their own. In this way, language-and-culture learning serves as a vehicle for developing inter-subjectivity and bridging cultural differences.

I was deeply impressed by these ideas that resonated with my own philosophy of language learning. Furthermore, the intercultural approach, I thought, would be an excellent basis for addressing not only my personal concerns but also the challenging issues that had arisen in the English policy context. I thought that it would also be a way of paying more serious attention to the *Education for Democratic Citizenship* agenda promoted by the Council of Europe. Thus, my study originally set out to investigate "The Potential of Modern Foreign Languages to promote and develop the Teaching and Learning of Intercultural Competence in English Secondary Schools", drawing on the perspectives of the three stakeholders: policy makers, teachers and pupils.

I soon realised, however, that it was not possible to assess this potential if I had not instigated an intervention that actually ensured that this was occurring. This type of study would require an *Action Research* design and my research had not been set up in this way. Furthermore, an important policy development had occurred. The revised Key Stage 3

curriculum for MFL introduced "intercultural understanding" as one of the key concepts underpinning the study of languages and the QCDA encouraged teachers to firmly root language learning in the cultural contexts of the target language. I was curious to know whether the change of terminology relating to the cultural dimension (which was previously referred to as "cultural awareness") represented a genuine shift in thinking on the part of policy makers about the purpose of languages education. Had they been influenced at all by intercultural languages theory or did this term represent policy rhetoric informed by other political goals?

In addition, I was keen to discover how this curriculum policy alteration was translated and operationalized by teachers and, equally how it was received by pupils. What did those involved at the micro level perceive to be the significance of intercultural understanding? Did the teacher and pupil perspectives vary depending on the type of school in which they taught or attended? How might teacher and pupil experiences outside school influence their perceptions about the significance of IU? In short, what were the complexities bound up with policy implementation and curriculum development as far as a greater focus on intercultural understanding was concerned?

6.2 Key findings

(i) Policy

In interviews with two key players in curriculum development, I was able to establish that there was little deliberation over the choice of terminology for the cultural dimension in the 2008 revised Key Stage 3 curriculum for MFL. The Director of the Languages Company explained that the original decision to use the term intercultural understanding in the

Languages Strategy (Dearing and King, 2007) and in the Key Stage 2 Framework (DfES, 2005) was not the consequence of any lengthy discussions or consultation of intercultural theory, but instead a phrase which met with broad acceptance and without controversy. Whilst in some respects, the notion of intercultural understanding was a way of articulating what teachers had expressed as an important aspect of language learning, the Director also admitted that that this phrase was a convenient way of responding to the then Labour government's community cohesion agenda as well as the concern with the Global Dimension (DfES, 2004) in education.

Additionally, the reference to intercultural understanding in the Key Stage 3 Programme of Study conveniently served the purpose of alignment with the Key Stage 2 Framework. This was all the more important at a time when there was a political concern with children's smooth transition from primary to secondary school and there had been a great deal of money invested in language learning in primary schools. Thus overall, the insertion of the term fulfilled pragmatic goals rather than a new vision around the purpose of language learning. As this study shows, a comparison of the language used to explain intercultural understanding in the MFL Programme of Study with the Ajegbo Report (DfES, 2007) and the policy on the Global Dimension in education (DfES, 2004) confirms that successful policy alignment was probably a more important consideration.

I was astonished that curriculum policy appears to be written without any research basis, but instead driven by broader political concerns. It seems inconceivable how such an approach to the construction of policy statements within the curriculum can be translated into appropriate, let alone successful pedagogy. This shortcoming became all the more apparent in my interviews with the curriculum adviser at the QCDA and in my close scrutiny of curriculum policy and guidance documents.

The curriculum adviser at the QCDA clarified that they had not consulted any theoretical literature. He claimed that they had been unable to find any references or models that were suitable for curriculum development for beginner learners in English secondary schools. The attempt to make Intercultural Understanding an *Attainment Target* without theoretical consideration of what this actually involves in terms of progression further indicated that IU had become part of a curriculum policy fudge. In addition, it became apparent that the policy related to IU has been vacuous as it was introduced without consideration of those who translate and operationalize it (teachers) or those who receive it (pupils).

The revelation that policy makers could not find suitable theoretical models on which to base IU curriculum development prompts the question whether this is an easy excuse or a challenging reality. It could be argued that some of the models developed by academics can appear abstract or inaccessible, often lacking concrete examples that are applicable to the Key Stage 3 MFL classroom. This is the reason why, perhaps, it is difficult to develop an IU research-based curriculum. My research reveals that there is a pronounced gap between theory and practice that remains to be bridged.

(ii) Teachers

My key finding from the teacher perspective is that in the absence of a shared definition and established methodology for intercultural languages learning, the significance teachers attach to IU is not only underpinned by contextual factors, but even more so by personal factors. My study shows that different teacher types and personalities adopt significantly different approaches to IU. This finding adds an entirely new angle to existing research that hitherto has not considered the impact of teacher individuality and personal history on professional practice in the MFL classroom.

As far as contextual factors are concerned, teachers' treatment of the cultural dimension seems strongly influenced by the pupil factor. Teachers' perceptions of potential barriers or opportunities posed by their pupils (e.g. low or high motivation for language learning, pupil maturity, social background, enthusiasm or lack of interest in different target language cultures) appears to create a cycle of reinforcement of culture teaching practice. Teachers interpret the reactions of their pupils, sometimes in a biased way, which in turn inform their subsequent culture teaching practice. While previous research has noted the influence of pupils on teachers, it has not recognised the profound impact of the pupil-teacher-pupil feedback cycle. This finding may help to explain why there seems to be little, if any, significant change in pupils' perceptions about cultural learning in the last 20 years. Within their professional context, teachers are also driven by pressures to deliver satisfactory test and examination results which serve as a measure of their effectiveness. Given that in MFL such results are only measured in term of linguistic skills, cultural learning for many does not feature as a relevant priority.

However, the importance attached to IU is also profoundly influenced by teachers' educational principles, interests, personalities and life experiences. I have demonstrated this point by mapping the narratives of five of the teachers in particular, in addition to general themes emerging from across the sample, with Kelchtermans's (2009) personal interpretative framework: *Who I am in how I teach is the message*. As far as the cultural dimension is concerned, it seems very true that 'who they are in how they teach' it is manifest. Those who have a strong belief that developing respect for other cultures belongs to their professional responsibilities, are much more likely to attach more significance to IU. Alternatively, other teachers may see themselves as teachers of knowledge or linguistic skills, or even believe that they have a more fundamental role in providing pastoral support. Some teachers have less

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explicit philosophies or are simply concerned about preserving a non-controversial image that complies with school management or pupil expectations. I have demonstrated that these beliefs, or ways in which teachers understand themselves in their professional roles, are commonly influenced by personal experiences, interests and personalities.

Furthermore, the different ways in which teachers understand their roles all seem to impact on the way in which they conceptualise IU. Their definitions of IU, or their IU subjective educational theory, are often based on personal interpretations linked to their educational values and background. As such, culture pedagogy is commonly an intuitive and individualised practice rather than one that is informed by any theoretical perspectives. Since teacher individuality has been established as a key influence on culture teaching, this has important implications for professional and curriculum development.

(iii) *Pupils*

The analysis of data collected from pupils attending wide ranging types of schools has enabled me to theorise about how different pupil demographics, academic capabilities and school experiences affect the significance that they attach to IU in MFL. I show that pupil perceptions vary as a function of their language learning experiences, their school culture, their experiences in their local communities and their real or vicarious experiences of the international world (the LSCI framework). To my knowledge, this is the first study that has investigated how contrasting environmental factors impact on young people's reception of the cultural dimension in modern language learning.

In the creation of my LSCI model, I have extended and developed Barrett's (2007) societal-social-cognitive-motivational (SSCM) theory, which he uses to explain children's knowledge, beliefs and feelings about nations and national groups, so that it can also be applied to pupils' responses to intercultural languages learning. My findings imply that

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curriculum developers and teachers need to consider the potential impact of sociological filters combined with pupils' language learning capabilities, if they are to create a suitable intercultural pedagogy.

In addition to establishing a relationship between socio-economic factors and pupil perceptions, I have also found a gender differential. This is a new insight that extends the relationship between gender and MFL learning from the area of motivation to now also include the cultural dimension. Finally, this study finds that a greater emphasis on the cultural dimension alone is unlikely to be a solution to the challenges of motivation in MFL.

I recognise that the development of a differentiated IU curriculum may be an extremely challenging task. Indeed, it would take further research to establish how this could possibly be achieved in an effective way. However, acknowledging these obstacles should not become an excuse for paying less serious attention to the development of an IU curriculum. Educators and policy makers must carefully consider the wide-ranging benefits of acquiring IU to young people from all walks of life so that intercultural learning is underpinned by explicit purposes and is no longer associated as more or relevant to a privileged minority.

6.3 Limitations of the research

On reflection, there are some aspects of the research design that may have been more effectively planned. For example, some of the items on the questionnaire survey yielded less useful data in response to the research questions. I realised also that there were two important questionnaire omissions: a question about pupils' enjoyment of their current experiences of cultural learning and another that enquired whether this learning occurred in the target

language or English. To some extent, these omissions were resolved in the group interviews. However, given that there were only five group interviews, it is has been difficult for me to draw conclusions about the motivational potential of intercultural learning that is carried out through the medium of the target language. This is another possible area for future research. A second questionnaire that explored themes arising from the group interviews may have been a way of addressing this shortcoming. However, I had not negotiated this in advance and this may have been an inconvenience for teachers when seeking their informed consent.

With the benefit of hindsight, I also realise that I could have been consistent with my use of terminology for the cultural dimension in both the teacher and pupil interviews. With the pupils this was a particular challenge as I was unsure whether they would understand the term "intercultural understanding". With the teachers, I was reluctant to explain the term as I wanted to discover how they interpreted it. However, this often resulted in interchangeable use of different phrases which may not have yielded data in response to IU in particular. This has alerted me to the need for consistent use of language in research interviews, especially when exploring and comparing different individuals' perceptions about particular concepts. Lastly, if I were to conduct this research again, I would try to co-opt a more ethnically heterogeneous sample. This would enable the investigation of another potentially important sociological factor on pupil and teacher perceptions.

Although I conclude overall that the study has yielded novel findings that contribute to the knowledge base, I am also aware that qualitative data is liable to subjective interpretations. I am not a disinterested researcher; the analysis of data is likely to have been influenced by my professional and personal experiences and opinions. Moreover, the research was conducted within the boundaries of a certain time and geographical space with an ethnically homogenous participant sample. Thus, I do not claim that the findings from the

study can be generalised or extrapolated. I hope, however, that by providing "thick description" (Geertz, 1975) and by clearly mapping the data collecting and analysis process, that I have successfully communicated "vicarious experiences" (Stake 1995) . I hope that the results provide useful information not only to those who have an interest in MFL and IU curriculum development but to future researchers.

6.4 My Learning journey

Personal realisations: This study has involved a journey that started with a personal interest in culture learning and a hunch about its potential for improving the MFL curriculum experience. It has ended with a more considered and realistic view of the many complexities of surrounding policy implementation and curriculum development in IU. I originally thought that if MFL teachers could open pupils' eyes to fascinating cultural insights, the languages curriculum would be much more exciting, motivating and meaningful for pupils. Not only would they be able to learn how different cultural groups may think or lead their lives, this type of learning would help young people to recognise or explore prejudices. As the research journey progressed, however, I came to realise that my initial enthusiasm and ideals were rather naïve.

In addition, I now realise that I had not considered the perspectives of young people without or with very limited travel experiences, let alone personal contacts with people from other countries or cultures. I underestimated that the relative ease with which I function interculturally (in the European context) has been heavily influenced by my mixed nationality family make-up and privileged travel experience. As this study indicates, many pupils are affected by entirely different LSCI factors which means not only that IU may be less relevant

to them, but also that these experiences are perceived by teachers as a potential IU curriculum constraints.

My initial assumptions about the perceptions of policy makers and teachers were equally one-dimensional. I had suspected that teachers' treatment and ideas about intercultural learning would be primarily influenced by their school context. For example, I thought that grammar school teachers may be greater intercultural enthusiasts as their high ability students would enable them to deliver integrated linguistic and cultural learning more easily. However, I have found that teacher enthusiasm for developing IU can be more heavily affected by individual outlooks and personalities. Although the data confirms that teachers' IU practice may be constrained by contextual factors, I discovered that it takes the conviction or philosophy of an individual to rise above these.

Finally, contrary to my expectations, policy makers seemed unaware of the theoretical distinction between cultural awareness and intercultural learning. I was even more surprised to learn that policy makers had not consulted any academic work in this area. I have come to realise that curriculum policy can be based on a variety of political considerations and compromises rather than any particular research base. The net result is a disconnect with the very people it affects. This finding has heightened my belief in the need for systematic educational research involving key stakeholders in order to inform curriculum development.

Looking ahead as a teacher educator: The findings from my doctorate also have implications for me in my professional role as a teacher educator. First and foremost, I have come to appreciate the importance of helping pre- and in-service teachers to develop a critical awareness of curriculum policy. As Pollard (2002) argues, reflective teachers should be able to creatively interpret policy frameworks in light of their own understanding of a particular context and bearing in mind his or her own values and educational principles. This is

particularly true for intercultural learning given that I conclude that a) more effective pedagogic practice will take into account pupils' LSCI experiences and b) teachers are more likely to attend to an intercultural curriculum if they have an explicit awareness of their own IU philosophy. However, we cannot take the existence of a conscious teaching philosophy for granted. We know that the views that teachers have about what makes 'good' teaching and learning are frequently informed by the experiences they had as pupils and that they unconsciously draw on these in their own practice (see Pajares, 1992, Twiselton, 2004, Ng et al., 2010). Alternatively, however, or in combination with the influence of their own educational experiences, teachers' work can be heavily influenced by national curricula, nationally prescribed guidelines, exam syllabi and school inspection frameworks. In an era of excessive curriculum prescription, it could be argued that there is no space or reason for teachers to individually consider, articulate and justify what they themselves think is most educationally important. I therefore recognise my role in helping students to realise not only how their own life experiences may influence their educational values and practice but to encourage them to consider a justification for the ways in which they interpret, implement or adapt curricula written by others. I hope that by raising developing teachers' awareness of possible alternatives, I can encourage them to develop more personally informed pedagogic judgements, whereby they can provide a more critical and individual rationale for their beliefs and practice. Finally, I consider it my responsibility to provide students with insights into intercultural theory that are complemented by concrete teaching and learning examples that they can put into practice in their classrooms and on trips abroad.

6.5 Questions for future research

My study set out to investigate the complexities surrounding this policy initiative by studying the perceptions of various stakeholders. In so doing, I have explored the current state of play rather than proposing solutions or recommendations that have been tried and tested. The results of the study have prompted questions for future research that may help us to further develop a more effective IU curriculum:

- How could an IU curriculum be effectively differentiated in order to take pupils' LSCI experiences into consideration?

- Can intercultural languages learning that truly integrates culture and linguistic learning contribute to generating intrinsic motivation in SLA?

- How may theoretical models of intercultural learning be adapted and applied to a curriculum for beginning learners of MFL?

- Is the narrative enquiry method using Kelchtermans's (2009) adapted framework an effective technique for teacher development in IU?

6.6 Concluding comments

It has become apparent that the development of intercultural understanding through the MFL curriculum in English secondary schools is a complex business. Policy makers have struggled to define how IU differs from cultural awareness and to provide clear curriculum guidance on how IU can actually be achieved. Irrespective of policy directives, we have learnt that the teacher commitment to an IU curriculum is likely to depend on their educational beliefs or their perceptions of its actual relevance to the pupils they teach. The way in which the IU curriculum is finally received is mediated by the sociological and language learning factors

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affecting pupils. If the English secondary curriculum in general, and MFL in particular, are to play their part in helping young people to develop openness to other cultures and equipping them with skills for developing harmonious and fruitful relationships with 'others', it would appear that there is still much work to be done. I hope that this study provides those involved in IU curriculum development with some informative findings.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Letter to head teachers

Gillian Peiser (Senior Lecturer), Languages and International Business Subject Group, Liverpool Business School, John Foster Building, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5GZ.
Tel: 0151 231 3442/ 0785 485 22 55. Email: g.peiser@ljmu.ac.uk

Date

Dear [head teacher],

I am lecturer and researcher at Liverpool John Moores University who has embarked on a PhD dissertation with the following title:

The Potential of Modern Languages to promote and develop the intercultural competence curriculum in English secondary schools.

Prior to taking up my position at LJMU, I spent over ten years as a teacher in Merseyside schools. I am now responsible for undergraduate German courses and aspects of the Modern Languages PGCE.

The project aims to relate a theoretical perspective of what the intercultural competence curriculum may entail to the practical experiences and considerations of civil servants, teachers and pupils. It also seeks to examine whether a greater focus on intercultural understanding and competence would make for a more motivational and purposeful MFL curriculum for the future. I intend to conduct *a case study in [name of Local Authority] schools.*

I am writing to you to ask for the co-operation of your school in the research project, commencing in the second half of the summer term 2008. I have already made contact with [teacher name] in the MFL department in your school to gage her willingness to participate. This has been met with positive approval.

The research would involve the following steps:
- Initial questionnaire with 1 or 2 MFL staff
- Semi-structured interviews (45-60 minutes) with MFL staff on the school premises at a time convenient to them
- Questionnaires to be filled in by Year 9 pupils (at least 2 classes, ideally 3)
- A group interview with approximately 6 Year 9 pupils on the school premises at a convenient time

I have enclosed all relevant consent forms and questionnaires. I do hope that you will be interested in participating in this research project and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Peiser
Email: g.peiser@ljmu.ac.uk

Appendix 2 Consent form for head teachers

liverpool
JMU

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM :
Headteacher consent for the administration of pupil questionnaires and potential interviews

PROJECT TITLE: The Potential for Modern Languages to develop and promote the intercultural competence curriculum in English secondary schools

I have read and understood the protocol presented to me	yes	no
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions	yes	no
I have had my questions answered satisfactorily	yes	no
I am happy to give my consent for pupils to fill in the questionnaires, a copy of which has been given to me to read in advance	yes	no
I am happy to give my consent for a small number of selected pupils to participate in interviews scheduled on the school premises at a later stage in the research	yes	no
I agree to the interviews being recorded and to its content being used for research purposes	yes	no
I would like to see a copy of the transcripts	yes	no

Name (Printed)...

Headteacher of ....**(School name)**

Signature .... **Date**...........................

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Liverpool JMU

REASEARCH PARTICIPATION INFORMATION FORM: INTERVIEW (ADULTS)

PROJECT TITLE: The Potential for Modern Languages to promote and develop the Intercultural Competence Curriculum in English secondary schools: a critical assessment

Dear Colleague

As part of my research, I would like to invite you to participate in a semi-structured interview, the length of which will typically last between 30 and 60 minutes and will be recorded by me, the researcher. A copy of the interview transcript will be provided free of charge, on request. It may be the case that I send sections of the transcript back to you in order to seek clarification.

Material gathered during the research will be treated as confidential, securely stored and subsequently destroyed on completion of the project.

You are not under any obligation to take part and have the right to withdraw at any time. Any involvement or withdrawal from the research does not affect your access to services.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Peiser
g.peiser@ljmu.ac.uk
Tel. 0151 231 3442 / 0785 485 22 55

PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

I have read and understood the information sheet yes   no

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions
about the study yes   no

I have had my questions answered satisfactorily yes   no

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at yes   no
any time without having to give an explanation or
without suffering any negative consequences

I agree to the interview being recorded and to yes   no
its content being used for research purposes

I would like to see a copy of my transcript yes   no

My words may be quoted provided that they yes   no
are anonymous

Name (Printed)..

Signature.. Date ....

Appendix 4 Interview schedule for MFL Teachers

- Teachers' perceptions regarding the meaningfulness of current MFL secondary curriculum for pupils

- Teachers' own understanding of relevance of intercultural understanding in the MFL curriculum

- Teaching and learning activities conducted in MFL lessons / MFL related activities that contribute to intercultural understanding? (opportunities/ constraints)

- School trips / exchanges

- Revised Curriculum 2008

- Personal professional development and potential development of curriculum that contributes to intercultural understanding

'Drilling down' themes

- Interpretation of the term Intercultural Understanding

- Role of MFL teachers in developing pupils' Intercultural Understanding and their own role perceptions

- Does a greater emphasis on IU in MFL make the curriculum more meaningful/ relevant to children's lives?

JMU liverpool

<u>Participant Information Sheet (Pupils)</u>

Dear Pupil

I am a research student at Liverpool John Moores University, who is interested in finding out about your experience of learning about other cultures in Modern Languages lessons. I am also interested in finding out about your experiences if you have visited or have contacts with any of the countries where the language or languages you are learning are spoken.

Could you please help me by filling in the questionnaire distributed by your teacher?

At the end of the questionnaire, you are asked whether you might be willing to take part in an interview to discuss some of these topics in more detail. Please print your name and class on the dotted line if you think you might be interested. Do not worry if you change your mind about this at a later date. You can withdraw this offer at any time.

All information provided by you will be treated anonymously.

Best wishes,

Gillian Peiser

Pupil Questionnaire about Modern Languages and Learning about other Cultures

1. **Your age:**   ....

2. **Your gender (tick next to correct letter):** M ....   F ....

3. **Name of school:**   ....

4. **Your year group:**   ....

5. **Which languages do you learn?**

Language 1 ....

Language 2 (if appropriate) ....

6. **Did you learn a language in primary school?** Yes ...... No ......

   If yes, which one(s)? ....

7. **Have you visited any of the countries *where the language(s) you are learning* is/ are spoken? Please tick**

Yes ....   No.............

8. **If yes, which country or countries have you visited? ANSWER ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 7 WAS YES. OTHERWISE LEAVE BLANK.**

   ....

   ....

9. **How many times have you been there? ANSWER ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 7 WAS YES. OTHERWISE LEAVE BLANK.**

   ....

10. **Who took you there? ANSWER ONLY IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 7 WAS YES. OTHERWISE LEAVE BLANK.**
   ....

11. **Have you been abroad to any other countries?**

   Yes ....   No ....

   If yes, where? ....

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12. Have you been on a school trip organised by languages teachers? Please tick

Yes ………   No, but will go in the future ……….

No, but would like to go ……..   No………

13. If yes, where did you go?

………………………………………………………………………………

14. How long did the trip last?

………………………………………………………………………………

15. Do you feel more positive about learning languages after having been to the country/ies where it is spoken? Tick one box

Yes, definitely	
Yes, I think so	
I am not sure	
No, probably not	
No, definitely not	

16. Do you feel more positive about the people who live in the foreign country after having been in their country?

Yes, definitely	
Yes, I think so	
I am not sure	
No, probably not	
No, definitely not	

17. Did you practise speaking the foreign language when you were abroad? Tick one box

As often as possible	
Quite a bit	
A little	
Not at all	

18. Did you feel comfortable (mentally, NOT physically) when you were abroad? This question is related to the country and not to personal issues. Tick the answer that is the closest to how you felt.

Very comfortable	
Pretty comfortable	
So-so	
Not so comfortable	
Not at all comfortable	

19. Have you been on a school exchange?

Yes ………   No…………

20. Do you have contact with family of your own who live abroad?

Yes ……….   No …………..

21. Has anyone in your immediate family (parents/ brothers/ sisters) lived abroad for a year or longer?

Yes ……….   No …………..

22. Does anyone in your immediate family (parents/ brothers/ sisters) speak a foreign language reasonably fluently?

Yes ………..   No …………..

23. Do you have contact with friends who live abroad?

Yes ………..   No …………..

24. Do you have contact in any other way with people from another country / other countries?

Yes ……….   No ………..

25. Answer only if the answer for Question 24 is yes. Where do you see them? Tick one box only.

home	
holiday	
youth group/ sports event / church event etc	
other	

26. On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel about communicating (in any language at all, including English) with people from other countries? Circle the number that best represents how you would feel.

Very confident ………………….so-so ……………………very nervous

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

<u>**Please turn to the next page**</u>

27. For each of the following statements, please say whether you strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree.
Tick one box only for each statement.

	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
i. I know a lot about the way of life in France					
ii. I know a lot about the way of life in Germany					
iii. I know a lot about the way of life in Spain					
iv. I know a lot about the way of life in another country Please specify which country					
v. I learn a lot about the way of life in other countries in modern languages lessons					
vi. My teacher is knowledgeable about the way of life in the country/ies of the language he/she teaches					
vii. Modern Languages textbooks help me to gain an insight into life in other countries					
viii. I learn about life in other countries *in modern languages lessons* from films					
ix. I learn about life in other countries *in modern languages lessons* from the internet					

	strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
x. I enjoy learning foreign languages					
xi. I learn about life in other countries *in modern languages lessons* from penpals/ email contacts					
xii. I have a positive attitude to people in other countries					
xiii. Modern Languages lessons help me to respect people in other countries					
xiv. I gain understanding for other nationalities and cultures in *other* lessons in school					
xv. I would like to spend more time learning about life in other countries in Modern languages lessons					
xvi. I would like to live or work abroad at some time in the future					

Please turn to the last page

28. Are you going to take a modern foreign language as a GCSE subject?

Yes …………..   No ……………

29. Do you have any other comments on the themes addressed in this questionnaire? If yes, feel free to write them down on the dotted lines below.

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Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your teacher will return it to a researcher at Liverpool John Moores University.
If you would be prepared to take part in an interview to discuss some of the topics in this questionnaire in more detail, please print your name below.
Supplying your name and class, does not mean that you HAVE TO take part in an interview. You will be asked at a later date if you still want to take part.

Name ……………………………………………………………

Class ……………………………………………………………

Appendix 6   Interview schedule for pupil group interviews

Enjoyment
- Have you enjoyed learning Fr/ Sp / Ge?
- Why/ why not?
- What have you found most / least interesting? Why?
- Have you enjoyed learning the MFL in question more/ less at particular points in time? Have things been the same all the way through or more/ less enjoyable at different times?
- Those of you who study more than one MFL: Would your answer be different for different languages?

Balance between the linguistic and culture
- How would you describe the balance between how much you learn about (France) and people/ way of life in (France) and how much you learn the language?
- Which do you prefer? What do you not like?
- Do you like learning about the country and the people/ way of life or are you not interested in that?
- Do you think that you would be more interested in learning the actual foreign language if you knew more about the people in that country and about their way of life?
- How do you learn about life in other countries? From what/ whom / using which kind of resources?   Are any of these materials, activities etc. more interesting than others?

Potential Change
- If you were able to change the content of MFL lessons in any way to make it more meaningful / enjoyable for a younger sister/ brother / pupils you know coming to secondary school, what would you suggest? What would you put into the curriculum that you think is missing?
- How would you improve the textbook? How could text books be improved by those writing them?

Perceptions of the reasons for learning an MFL / importance of intercultural understanding
- What do you think is the purpose having modern languages as part of the curriculum at Key Stage 3?
- In one of the questionnaires I got back from schools, a pupil in another school said that she thought it is important to learn about life in other countries in languages lessons in order to become more open/ accepting of other cultures. What do you think about this? Do you also think this is an important aspect?
- Do you think it is important for your life in the future to learn how to get on with people from other cultures?
- Do you think that you already understand the way of life in other cultures in any way?

- Do you think that you learn how to get on with people from other cultures in other lessons in school, other than in MFL?
- Do you think your education in school should involve you in this kind of learning?

<u>Participant Information Sheet (curriculum policy makers)</u>

PROJECT TITLE: The Potential for Modern Languages to promote and develop the Intercultural Competence Curriculum in English secondary schools: a critical assessment

PROJECT INVESTIGATOR: Gillian Peiser

Dear Colleague

I invite you to participate in a doctoral research project which aims to assess the viability and value of promoting and developing the intercultural understanding element of Modern Languages education in secondary schools. In agreeing to become involved, you will be asked separately to provide consent to participate in a semi-structured interview. Material gathered during research will be treated as confidential, securely stored and subsequently destroyed on the completion of the project.

The project aims to relate a theoretical perspective of what the intercultural competence curriculum may entail to the practical experiences and considerations of civil servants, teachers and pupils. It also seeks to examine whether a greater focus on intercultural understanding and competence would make for a more motivational and purposeful MFL curriculum for the future.

I would like to reassure you that as a potential participant, you are not under any obligation to take part and may withdraw at any time. Withdrawal from research does not affect access to services.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Peiser
g.peiser@ljmu.ac.uk
Tel. 0151 231 3442 / 0785 485 22 55

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PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW

I have read and understood the information sheet	yes	no
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study	yes	no
I have had my questions answered satisfactorily	yes	no
I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation or without suffering any negative consequences	yes	no
I agree to the interview being recorded and to its content being used for research purposes	yes	no
I would like to see a copy of my transcript	yes	no
My words may be quoted provided that they are anonymous	yes	no

Name (Printed)...

Signature... Date ....

- What would you pinpoint as the most important developments in MFL educational policy since the inception of the National curriculum?
- What do you consider to have been the major successes or shortcomings in policy? Are there lessons that have been learnt from experience
- What do you consider to have been the main reasons for change?
- Who or what directly influences curriculum design / change?
- Have the aims of MFL education changed over the last 20 years?
- If the aims have changed, can these be traced in terms of change in policy?
- To what extent is MFL educational policy informed by (academic or other e.g. OFSTED) research?
- Have policy makers had to prioritise the instrumental over the educational rationale for learning languages? Examples to illustrate answer
- Do current assessment regimes present any obstacles regarding the above?
- Is the EU's policy on multilingualism taken as seriously by British policy makers as in other EU countries?
- In which ways has policy reacted to issues relating to low motivation in secondary MFL?
- (If answer focuses on Primary MFL) What needs to be done in secondary schools before the impact of primary languages can be fully assessed or appreciated?(2014)
- What part has MFL to play in establishing the new "big picture"? / What will the "big picture" do for MFL? How will the subject (at the chalk face) meet the challenge of helping young people to gain deeper intercultural understanding? Training/ resources? Assessment fit for purpose – how will this type of pupil development be recognised/ acknowledged?
- Why have policy makers chosen to place greater emphasis on "intercultural understanding" for the first time in 2008?
- Should / will secondary MFL be more likely to work in conjunction with other subject areas in the future? Which ones, why, how?

Primary MFL
- How did the term "intercultural understanding" become one of the strands of the primary MFL framework?
- Where did the term come from?
- What did/do policy makers hope that the incorporation of intercultural understanding in the PMFL curriculum will bring about? What is its significance?
- Does this term appear only in the MFL curriculum documentation or can it be found in other subject domains? Is this aspect of education primarily a responsibility of teachers who find themselves teaching MFL?
- Do you think that a focus on intercultural understanding makes for a more relevant primary MFL curriculum for pupils?
- Do you think that primary MFL teachers have the skills, know-how, knowledge etc. to make the intercultural aspect of the curriculum a success?

Secondary MFL
- Is the reference to "intercultural understanding" in the revised Key Stage 3 curriculum a direct consequence of it appearing in the Key Stage 2 framework?
- Why did the term "cultural awareness" become converted to "intercultural understanding" in the latest Key Stage 3 policy document?
- What is the policy rationale behind "a greater emphasis on intercultural understanding"?
- How should intercultural understanding learning and teaching activities at Key Stage 3 differ from those at Key Stage 2?
- Do you think that a greater emphasis on intercultural understanding at Key Stage 3 makes the MFL curriculum more relevant for pupils in English secondary schools?
- Why has it been proposed to have Intercultural Understanding as a new Attainment Target at Key Stage 3?
- Can you explain the progression from one level to another within the Intercultural Understanding attainment target? How were these various levels conceptualised?