THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Investigating dualistic degree structures in Modern Languages Implications for Criticality and Intercultural Competence

A mixed-methods comparative study in two UK and US

Higher Education Institutions

being a Thesis submitted

for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of Hull

by

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April 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor Marina Mozzon-McPherson and Dr. Duncan Hunter, for their invaluable advice, guidance and encouragement throughout my doctoral research. I am also deeply grateful to the heads of department or subject leaders of all four universities, which took part in the study, whose encouraging support for my research made it possible for the project to be undertaken.

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„Wer fremde Sprachen nicht kennt, weiß nichts von seiner eigenen.“
(Those who know nothing of foreign languages know nothing of their own.)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Abstract

This thesis explores the complexity behind the separation of language and content within Modern Language degree programmes with particular focus on implications for students' development of criticality and intercultural competence. The study consists of a comparative investigation comprising German studies programmes across four institutions, two located in the U.K. and two in the U.S. It is situated in a context of uncertainty for Modern Languages as a discipline as a result of a decline in uptake for language degrees, which over the years has led to department closures and language degrees being disproportionately concentrated in elite Russell Group universities (Coleman, 2011). The importance of developing a curriculum that more holistically encompasses both the language and content area of the discipline has been raised in official reports both in the U.S. and in the U.K. and, in both countries, a great emphasis has also been placed on developing language graduates with deep intercultural competence (Worton, 2009; MLA, 2007; QAA, 2015). The rationale for a comparative approach originated from the literature review, which highlighted similar concerns being raised in both higher education contexts with regards to the lack of coordination and integration across the language and content strands of Modern Language degrees, in spite of the significant difference in the way undergraduate study is structured in the two contexts.

The thesis draws upon Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) as well as his notion of tourist and sojourner in exploring students' development of intercultural competence and, more specifically, Critical Cultural

Awareness (savoir s'engager). It is further informed by Barnett's (1997) model of criticality and conceptualisation of Critical Being. The two theoretical frameworks firstly informed the research questions guiding the investigation and subsequently provided a starting point for the data analysis and discussion of findings.

The empirical study consisted of a mixed-methods design comprising an initial questionnaire administered to students of German, follow-up interviews and finally a separate interview study of selected staff members, who played a significant role within German Studies. The analysis of empirical data drawn from both the questionnaire and interview study highlighted observable differences among the four universities, particularly regarding the extent to which the target language (TL) was employed in content modules and ways in which some universities appeared to have more successfully integrated the language and content areas of the curriculum across the degree programme. Across all four institutions, students expressed a preference for being taught content in the target language and in programmes where content modules were often or exclusively taught in English, students also felt that there should be greater integration between the two strands.

With regards to students' development of intercultural competence and criticality, the findings suggested that the explicit coaching and guidance towards critical reflection and evaluation of culture, most often attributed to the content element of the curriculum, played a significant role in helping students develop into effective critical cultural mediators (Byram, 2008). As Holmes (2015) argues, students' intercultural awareness and development 'is unlikely to occur of its own accord' (p.17). Where reference to language modules was made, this was also most often linked to the lecturer's own outstanding effort and commitment to guide students towards developing more critical perspectives on both texts and contexts. The importance of developing a critical perspective towards culture has also been raised in the Worton (2009) report and in the QAA (2015) Benchmark

Statement, which emphasises the value of graduates developing a 'critical understanding of other cultures and practices other than one's own' (p.15-16). The MLA (2007) report, referring to the US context, suggests that ' a curriculum should consist of a series of complementary or linked courses that holistically incorporate content and cross-cultural reflection at every level' (p.5).

The analysis of empirical data also highlighted the existence of criticality, as described in Barnett (1997) thus supporting the model of domains and levels, at least in part, yet students' development of criticality appeared more fluid with utterances providing evidence of criticality development across more than one level of domain simultaneously. There was also little evidence that the degree programmes observed played a significant role in facilitating students' development of transformatory critique and critical action, yet some exceptional examples did emerge from the analysis. The study also highlighted facets of students' development of intercultural competence, which extended beyond Byram's (1997) ICC model and thus contributed to a re-examination of the existing literature on intercultural competence, third spaces (Kramsch, 1993), symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2009) and other theoretical conceptualisations on otherness (Zarate, 2003; Byram, 2009).

From the study a new conceptualisation of criticality (Communicative Criticality) emerged as well as an extension to Byram's (1997) ICC model through a new savoir defined as Savoir se reconnaître. The former describes a higher form of criticality in which the reconstruction of self occurs through the process of understanding one's own thinking and an experience of discovery of one's own and the foreign language's limitations. The latter draws upon theories of otherness but more specifically describes the students' ability to recognise themselves as the 'foreign' among the TL community.

It is concluded from this study that the importance of students' development of

intercultural competence and criticality needs first of all to be acknowledged by staff who are in leadership positions within the department / subject of Modern Languages. This would then allow adjunct and newer lecturing staff to understand ways in which their teaching can best support students' development across these graduate attributes. The findings also highlight the importance of linking all three strands of Modern Language Degrees (language, content and the year abroad) through the objective of fostering students' criticality and intercultural competence.

The following recommendations are made for Modern Languages in Higher Education: firstly to recognize the invaluable contribution of content modules for the development of the critical dimension, secondly to consider how the language modules may similarly contribute to this development and thirdly to reflect upon the role of the target language in bridging the language and content curricula in order to achieve a more holistic curriculum.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIGINS OF STUDY

1.1. Origins of study

The study results from a thoughtful reflection on Modern Language degrees as they are taught and structured both in the U.S. and the U.K. My own personal experience in both contexts allowed me to observe different approaches towards delivering the curriculum and ways in which they appeared to affect the student experience. Tertiary level study in Modern Languages is often driven by an intrinsic motivation into the subject, such as enjoying to speak in the language (Busse, 2013), and hence exploring how curricular models may affect the student experience, can add to our understanding of ways to improve current practice. Concerns for the future of languages in Higher Education arise from a decrease in applications for both single and joint-honour degrees, which, over the years, has already led to departmental closures across many British universities. In 2013 The Guardian described the extent to which the decline had affected universities as follows:

> Whereas in 1998, there were 93 universities offering specialist language degrees, now only 56
>
> do, a 40% drop'. (The Guardian, 2013)

More recently, in a 2015 article, The Guardian exposed once again ways in which the decline continues to affect admission to Modern Language degrees across the U.K.

> In 2010, students had a 15.9% chance of winning a place at one of the 24 Russell Group
>
> universities, rising to 17.4% in 2014 due to dwindling interest. (The Guardian, 2015)

This alarming phenomenon has raised concerns about the future of languages in Higher Education and, as Coleman (2004) pointed out; surprisingly there has been little written on the development of the study of languages as a discipline in higher education. A further unexpected challenge to the future of languages is posed by the 2016 Referendum results. Kelly (2016) argues that in the aftermath of Brexit 'we will need to redouble our efforts to

widen access to language studies, and make them attractive to school students who currently drop them at the first opportunity' (p.61).

With regards to language degrees, Gieve and Cunico (2012) found that among other factors, the delivery of language modules alongside content as two parallel strands of the degree, appeared to affect the student experience. Students often did not understand the purpose of studying content as they did not see how these modules, particularly if taught in English, would help them develop linguistic and communicative competence. Gieve and Cunico (2012) describe the evident separation between language and content in Higher Education as follows,

> It is common practice to offer separate grammar classes […] along with translation classes consisting of texts bearing little or no connection to any of the 'content' modules that run in parallel, and oral 'conversation' classes that would only by chance cover a topic area that is the subject of any other class. (Gieve and Cunico, 2012, p. 274 - 275)

Gieve and Cunico's findings played an important role in developing the research questions guiding this investigation as well as providing a starting point for the literature review. Gieve and Cunico (2012) also cite the MLA (2007) report and the recommendations it makes with regards to integrating language and content within degree programmes. The separation between language and content as it is manifested in degree programmes both in the UK, through the parallel teaching of language modules alongside content, and in the US, through what the MLA (2007) report describes as a 'two-tiered' structure plays a central role in the investigation. The report argues that a two-tiered structure 'impedes the development of a unified curriculum' and proposes new directions for the language major in American universities. The separation between language and content, described by Kramsch (1993) as 'one of the more tenacious dichotomies' (p.3) also puts in question the socio-linguistic theory on the relationship between language and culture.

Throughout the thesis the term *culture* is understood on the one hand as referring to the

content courses, which are taught alongside language courses in degree programmes, while on the other culture is understood and explored from a theoretical perspective. While the former refers to the exploration of culture as it emerges for example in literature, film and media, the latter draws upon the different ways of defining and understanding culture, for example as synonymous or not of nation cultures or in the debate concerning whether language and culture are inseparable.

The concern about the integration of language and culture in language teaching is not new; in fact the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (SWH), formulated over half a century ago, drew more attention to this relationship and acknowledged that 'learning and studying foreign languages does not only have an instrumental goal but also an important educational one' (Bredella and Richter, 2004, p.523).   The somewhat peripheral role that language plays in the university curriculum may hence have implications for ways in which its study is perceived. Byram (2001) in this regard points out that the separation between language learning from its content affects the way teaching is carried out; he argues that 'the integration of language study, culture study and language learning would be helpful especially to learners and would also benefit teachers' (p.171). A greater integration between language and content can offer students the opportunity not only to develop the valued understanding of the semantics and morpho-syntactic system of a foreign language but also encourage learners to become more conscious and effective users of the L2 through 'comparative reflection on their own language(s) as well as the target language(s) and culture(s)' (ibid.). Byram (2001) makes reference to ways in which learning a foreign language can provide a context for 'comparative reflection' on both the known (one's own language and culture) and the other (the language/s and culture/s studied), thus ascribing an educational goal to the learning experience.   The MLA (2007) report similarly makes reference to the instrumental vs. educational goals of language learning.

Divergent views concerning language and its many functions are reflected in differing approaches to the study of language. At one end, language is considered to be principally instrumental, a skill to use for communicating thought and information. At the opposite end, language is understood as an essential element of a human being's thought processes, perceptions, and self-expressions; and as such it is considered to be at the core of translingual and transcultural competence. (MLA, 2007, p.3, emphasis added)

The view of language as having an educational goal hence demands greater expectations from language study, which extend beyond the acquisition of linguistic and communicative competence. While the importance of acknowledging the educational goals of language learning has been acknowledged in the literature (e.g. Byram, 1997, 2008; Kramsch 1993, 2009), the shift in Higher Education towards designing degree programmes that meet the needs of students seeking practical skills, poses new challenges for the discipline of Modern Languages. From an external perspective the study of language is often regarded as 'an instrument', while insiders view the study as a 'discipline' and arguably the former is now becoming dominant (Lodge, 2000, pp. 105-106). This further introduces the question of whether Modern Language departments will be able to effectively act upon the recommendations emerging from theory and policy documents. Barnett (1997) similarly pointed out that Higher Education may be headed in the opposite direction of what he defines as 'criticality'.

From this perspective, the thesis explores the experiences of undergraduate students of German across four universities, two located in the U.K. and two in the U.S.A. In particular the investigation seeks to explore possible implications of the separation between language and content on students' development of intercultural competence and criticality. The conceptualisations, theoretical frameworks and rationale for exploring students' development across these two competencies are discussed in the following section.

1.2 Rationale for exploring students' development of criticality and intercultural competence in Modern Language degrees

If language learning is to be understood as a potentially transformative experience guided by educational goals, it necessarily needs to entail more than the acquisition of linguistic and communicative competence in a foreign language. The Council of Europe stressed that 'language learners are not mere vessels to be filled; learning itself has begun to be seen as rather a more porous activity' (Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004, p.30). Byram, Zarate and Neuner (1997) stressed the capacity of the language learner to affect social change. The transformative potential of language learning plays an important role in this study as it bridges the two theoretical conceptualisations central to the investigation, namely Intercultural Competence and Criticality. Byram and Zarate (1997) argue that 'language learners are conceived as cultural mediators, 'intercultural speakers' (p. 240). By coining this new term, the author also challenges the notion of the 'native speaker'.   He argues that the 'intercultural speaker' should be adopted as a substitute for the native speaker model, whose aim is to 'develop a critical cultural awareness, otherwise referred to as 'savoir s'engager' in learners. (Byram, 2009, p. 325). Most relevant to the investigation is Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) model, which comprises five savoirs or skills that the Intercultural Speaker should possess. The five savoirs are defined as follows: 1. Savoir être (attitudes) 2. Savoirs (knowledge) 3. Savoir apprendre / faire (skills of discovery and interaction) 4. Savoir comprendre (skills of interpreting and relating) and 5. Savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness).   The model has been very influential to the field of intercultural competence and has often been cited in reference to its relevance to foreign language education.   Byram (1997) highlights the importance of the critical dimension in his ICC model by arguing that 'the inclusion in ICC of savoir s'engager / critical cultural awareness as an educational aim for foreign language teaching is crucial' (p.113). Critical cultural awareness is defined as 'an ability to evaluate,

critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (Byram, 2001, p.7). The emphasis placed here is on the 'critical' and 'educational' dimensions. Barnett's (1997) conceptualization of criticality, while not specifically designed for Modern Languages, can add to our understanding of ways in which Higher Education can seek to have a transformatory effect on learners. Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) similarly establish a link between Byram's ICC model and Barnett's conceptualisation of criticality by arguing that the kind of language learning and teaching they envisage 'is that of developing interculturally critical beings (Barnett,1997)' (p. 90). The conceptualization of criticality theorized in Barnett (1997) comprises three different domains of criticality: knowledge, self and world, three forms of criticality: critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action as well as four levels of criticality: critical skills, reflexivity, refashioning of traditions and transformatory critique. Transformatory critique is regarded as the highest level and most comprehensive form of criticality. The need for language education to offer more than the acquisition of communicative skills has been highlighted both in the UK and the US. Kramsch (2014), in reference to the US context, writes that in today's globalized environment, 'semiotic fluidity presents a challenge to the traditional normativity of [ML] education, which is expected to teach usable skills but is increasingly outpaced by the changes brought about by global means of communication' (p. 300). The study hence aims to explore the phenomenon in both American and British universities; the following section describes the methodology adopted as well as discussing the rationale for a US-UK comparative study.

1.3 Overview of the methodology

In light of the discussions above and what has been identified in the literature as areas for development in the Modern Languages degree, the study attempts therefore to investigate the implications of the separation between the content and language elements of the degree on the student experience and, more specifically, on students' development of intercultural

competence and criticality. The research questions posed in this study are the following:

(1) In what ways do current degree structures affect the student experience in relation to ICC and criticality?

(2) What curriculum models appear to best develop criticality and intercultural competence in students?

(3) Is the acquisition of intercultural competence and the development of criticality facilitated through more integrated programmes and if so, what are the key factors?

To investigate the above questions, the thesis opens with an overview of the aims of foreign language study in Higher Education in the contemporary world, with particular focus on the U.K. and the USA. It includes an analysis of the traditions behind the current degree structures and approaches adopted in Higher Education as well as a literature review on criticality, intercultural competence and how both can be integrated into pedagogy. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach consisting of an interview study with a preceding questionnaire. This methodology allows the researcher firstly to gain a general picture from the survey responses and subsequently explore these further through the interview study.

1.4 What contributions does the study make to the field?

The research examines a particular issue in Modern Languages through a rather small-scale study due to the time constraints of doctoral research. Whilst the quantitative element includes a larger sample, the qualitative one comprises of interviews with a smaller number of participants.

The empirical study involved two UK and two US institutions for the purpose of establishing comparable results. The participants selected comprised finalists students of German in the two UK universities and students enrolled in upper-level German courses at the two US institutions. Interviews with teaching staff and department heads were also

conducted, where possible. As the division between language and content has been similarly identified in the literature in both countries, it was interesting to explore whether or not similar findings would emerge from both contexts. The study presents the unique characteristic of bridging the research on criticality development, associated with studies such as the Southampton Project, Houghton and Yamada (2012) and Barnett (1997) with the work of Byram (1997), Guilherme (2002) among others, on Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence. It also explores the much-debated relationship between language and culture by investigating the way it is reflected in collegiate Modern Language curricula through a comparative US-UK research study. From this perspective, the specific role of 'criticality' and 'intercultural competence' within the degree programme are discussed and recommendations are made for further lines of inquiry.

1.5 Overview of the thesis and its findings

The thesis is structured around the main objectives below, which guide the investigation:

- To explore implications of the separation between language and content on the experience of Modern Language students
- To explore possible implications of this separation on students' development of intercultural competence and criticality
- To explore ways in which the development of criticality and intercultural competence can be better fostered in Modern Language degree programmes

The introduction chapter aims to provide an overview and rationale for the study, followed by Chapter 2, which describes the complexity behind Modern Languages in HE in the UK and the USA and explores the debates concerning the view of language as a 'skill' on the one hand and as a 'discipline' on the other. The chapter further discusses recommendations emerging from reports and reviews on Modern Languages, which

support the rationale for this study.   Chapter 3 presents review of the literature on the theoretical frameworks of Criticality and Intercultural Competence as well as making reference to policy documents, which describe the competencies that language graduates or language learners, more generally, should develop.   Chapter 4 describes the research questions, design and instruments adopted for the investigation.   The chapter further includes a rationale for selecting a mixed-methods design and a description of the profile of the universities and participants included in the study.   Chapter 5 provides a summary of both quantitative and qualitative results. This is followed by chapter 6, a discussion on the findings related to criticality and chapter 7, which discusses the findings related to Intercultural Competence.   Chapters 6 and 7 also discuss the emerging new competencies of Communicative Criticality and Savoir se reconnaître, which make a contribution to existing theory.   Chapter 8 summarises the study, its findings and discusses recommendations and implications for teaching practice, policy and theory.

CHAPTER 2   MODERN LANGUAGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1   Modern Languages in UK Higher Education Institutions

The case of the future of Modern Languages in Higher Education has, in recent years, been discussed at conferences across the UK and articles in the press have repeatedly highlighted the concerning fall in student numbers for Modern Languages. It is then ironic to see that in the aftermath of the Nuffield Language Inquiry a national language strategy was issued with recommendations for a language entitlement in primary school and a promotion of language learning for all individuals as suggested by the strategy's title *Languages for all: languages for life* (Kelly, 2003) with 'no reflection on the specialist study of languages at university level' (ibid. p.107). While participation in Institution Wide Language Programmes or Languages for All may play an important role in ensuring UK graduates leave university with at least some language skills, attendance in these elective modules will not bring the falling student numbers in Modern Languages to a halt. Kelly (2003, p.107) argues that it appears that the main concern of government is with 'a general increase in language learning, and it is not specifically concerned to address the issue of a fall in students specialising in languages at university'. One of the issues with promoting a general increase of language learning in HE primarily aimed for non-specialists is that this unfortunately does not benefit academics, as IWLP modules generally offer beginners to advanced language classes and do not focus on any of the content areas of the ML discipline specifically. Additionally as MFL is no longer compulsory at GCSE and few students complete A-levels in languages 'higher education thus appears, coupled with further education, as a context for (school-based) language learning (Kelly, 2003, p. 106). The widespread initiatives of providing language instruction 'for all' inevitably affects the way people perceive Modern Languages as a discipline.   UCAS figures for 2013 showed that the number of applicants for European language courses fell by 5% from the previous year (The Guardian, 31st January 2014). In

light of this, Nigel Vincent, Emeritus Professor at the University of Manchester commented that 'we should be very concerned at the news that yet again the UCAS figures show that applications for modern languages are down' (The Guardian, 31st January 2014). There is no doubt that there is a nation-wide concern about the U.K. becoming a monolingual nation and that an effort has been made to address this, however discussions predominantly link this concern with employability and ironically do not advocate for more students studying towards a degree in Modern Language but rather emphasise the importance of gaining linguistic proficiency in a second language. The argument in favour of language skills making people more employable is also only valid if individuals achieve a desired level of fluency which, in an FE institution or HE part-time courses, will take a number of years to achieve, thus the learning experience is not comparable to the intense language acquisition process that single or joint-honours students in Modern Languages experience. Most vacancies do not require employees with a low level of fluency in a second language but are rather looking for candidates with native or near-native fluency; this is very difficult to achieve even for students in a Modern Languages degree programme and usually requires an extensive period spent abroad. Not only can the argument be made that linguists are no doubt better prepared for these kinds of vacancies, but the argument for employability also seems to overlook the non-linguistic skills that students in Modern Languages acquire. In reference to this, in an interview conducted by Crosbie (2005) Dr. Alison Philips, Director of the Graduate School for Arts and Humanities at the University of Glasgow commented that 'the marginalization of modern languages is in fact a way of discarding critical self-reflection as the object of education in favour of an education that is little more than training for a job market' (Crosbie, 2005, p.299). Modern Languages degree programmes in fact offer students much more than the simple acquisition of linguistic and communicative competence in one or more languages (see Byram, Kramsch, Kelly et al.) and arguably

achieving this competence is not necessarily the most important aim of the discipline, however from a non-linguist perspective the aim of studying languages at university would appear to be 'becoming fluent in a second language'. This is very much a wide-spread perception and it affects prospective students' expectations and their attitudes towards the study of anything but the language. It is therefore important to explore what the discipline of Modern Languages actually comprises of and what graduate attributes students actually develop through this field of study as this appears to be little understood particularly from those who are not linguists.

2.1.1 The crisis of languages at post-secondary level

In Anglophone countries falling numbers of students studying languages have become a major preoccupation for language educators (Doughty, 2011) and 'the sense of crisis appears to be particularly marked in higher education' (Gallagher-Brett and Broady, 2012). Modern Languages in HE have seen student numbers fall sharply since the late 1980s/early 1990s; which has led to some language departments having to close while others have resorted to early retirements and internal reorganisation gradually phasing out language specialist degrees (Klapper, 2006). It is particularly the recruitment to language degrees that since 1998 has seen at least a 20% decrease (Kelly and Jones, 2003). The figures are concerning as they have already resulted in a decrease of full-time staff and has led to the 'progressive closure of many language departments across the UK (…) [and] parallel developments across the English-speaking world, in North America, Australia and Ireland.' (Coleman and Klapper, 2005, p.5). The 2000 Nuffield full report on Modern Languages in HE refers to a language 'crisis', highlighting departmental closures and a steep fall in student numbers in what had always been the two most popular foreign languages, French and German (The Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000). This decrease in enrolment has prompted universities to seek alternative ways of recruiting students into languages such as through institution-wide language programmes (IWLP) an area which

still recruits a steady number of students. Surprisingly, integrated degrees such as those in European Studies, have seen the proportion of the language component decrease and only half of such programmes require a period of residence abroad (Kelly and Jones, 2003).

One reason offered as a factor contributing to the decline is linked to the 'dual nature' of the Modern Languages curriculum. Klapper (2006, p.1) describes the field of Modern Languages as 'complicated by its dual nature', which in some ways is 'like any other humanities or social science subject, but it also has at its core the development of linguistic proficiency'. This dualism is reflected elsewhere in the literature, such as in the recent Worton report which states that 'Modern Foreign Languages' as a discipline has an identity which is vague and uncertain as a result of its dual nature' (Worton, 2009, p.8). Some would argue that Modern Languages, devoid of its linguistic aspect, would be no different from the other social sciences. Yet the linguistic aspect does not appear to be portrayed as a central part of the curriculum. Coleman (2005, p.6) hypothesized that 'the separation of target language use and content teaching through English must tend to devalue the former'. The formation of subcultures among language and content staff may also be linked, to a certain extent, to the division between language and content discussed here. In some universities language teaching is not even carried out by the departments, rather these modules are taught by the university's specialist language centre (McBride, 2000). The rationales for teaching content in English are often linked to financial pressures and efforts to maximise attendance (McBride, 2000, in Coleman, 2005, p.6). To add to this complexity, the parallel non-integrated delivery of language and content further seems to complicate how students experience the study of language at specialist level. It appears that 'consideration of the exact nature of the interaction between language and content is often neglected' (Brumfit et al. 2005, p.158) as few research studies have addressed this particular issue in Modern Language degrees.

A small-scale qualitative study conducted by Gieve and Cunico (2012) found that students displayed a weak appreciation of connections between language form and aspects of culture and attributed this to the curriculum.

> [The students'] weak appreciation of connections between language form, language use and moments of culture (whether textual, cognitive or in the form of cultural practices) and intercultural communication, and of other beneficial outcomes of a modern languages degree, appears to be associated with a curriculum that does not promote an integration of language and content.
>
> (Gieve and Cunico, 2012, p.273)

There is some variety in the way different universities structure and deliver the Modern Language curriculum in degree programmes, however predominantly in pre-1992[1] UK universities and doctoral-granting departments of American universities we find a significant split between the structure and delivery of language and content modules (Coleman, 2005). The split extends beyond a division between modules; it also affects staff allocation and in some institutions has led to the formation of subcultures between language and content staff whereby many language modules are often taught by non-academics resulting in an inevitably accentuated split particularly 'when content is delivered by departments and language by the language centre' (ibid., p.6). The formation of language centres in the UK's Higher Education system are further discussed in this chapter, as their function has gained greater importance in many institutions over the years. This phenomenon raises the question of how students perceive this split between language and content and what effects the structure of the degree and its delivery may have on their experience.

In order to gain greater understanding of factors, which have led to some of the issues

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[1] 'Pre-1992 universities' refers to the UK's older, longer-established universities, which had university status prior to the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992.

reported in the literature, it is first of all necessary to explore how Higher Education has been transformed and re-focused over the years. The next section provides an overview of some of the changes that have taken place in U.K. universities over the years with particular emphasis on how this affected Modern Languages as a discipline.

2.1.2 A historical overview of the different institutions conferring degrees in Modern Languages

Higher Education has been considerably 'reshaped' in recent years and the various identities of the 'Modern Languages' degree that vary from institution to institution reflect those changes.   Among the earlier forms of Modern Languages degrees, we find what used to be classed as a 'philology' degree, comprising of the study of language and literature. These types of degrees were introduced in most countries towards the end of the 19th century taking their pattern of study from Classical Languages, which included a canon of esteemed authors. (Kelly, 2013)

Initially Philology or Modern Languages degrees were largely literary and the language element adopted a grammar-translation approach (Coleman, 2006, p.104) characteristic of the model of the classics. The primary aim of these degrees was to enable students to undertake analysis of literary and philosophical texts.   As many institutions historically modelled themselves on the 19th century concept of the study of literature and philology, with language competence viewed as means to an end, this model is to an extent still present in more traditional degrees often located in the 'old' universities (Kolinsky, 1993, p.83). Many of these degrees were single-honours degrees though they may have involved two languages in some instances. In more recent years, joint-honour degrees have gained in popularity although the number of students overall is on the decline. In reference to the kinds of institutions, which exist in the UK, we often come across terms such as 'old' and 'new' universities; these terms not only refer to the age of the institution but often also to

the curriculum and vision of the institutions themselves. The term 'old universities' refers to pre-1992 institutions to be contrasted with 'newer universities', a term referring to former polytechnics, which, following the Education Act of 1992, were awarded university status (Mackinnon and Statham, 1999). Around the 1960's applied language degree programmes acquired popularity and became popular predominantly in newer universities (Kelly, 2013). These degrees emphasised linguistic competence, often in at least two foreign languages, as well as placing focus on the business environment. However, in spite of their popularity, more recently language degrees in new universities have probably suffered the most nation-wide. 'Over the last decade (…) some departments have grown and others have declined. The result is that a majority of language students now study at Russell Group[2] universities' (Kelly, 2013 in press). There are undoubtedly external factors, which may have also contributed to the overall decline in student numbers and the concentration of students in these institutions. There have been many changes in Higher Education in recent years, for instance the rise of tuition fees now costing students on average £9,000 since 2011, has arguably prompted students to consider carefully their degree choice before applying for university admissions. The 2013 QAA commissioned report 'Student Expectations and Perceptions of Higher Education' found that 'across all student year groups, institutional types and subjects […] students hold a 'consumerist ethos towards higher education, wanting 'value-for money'. (Kandiko, and Mawer, 2013).

Arguably one of the concerns about language degrees is that for many prospective students it is not always easy to envision a specific career objective for which this course of study is necessary. The CEL / ELC (2013) report titled The Future of Language Degrees identifies the need for departments / schools of Modern Languages to address the question 'What can I do with this degree?' as students are 'increasingly concerned with the

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[2] The Russell Group represents the 24 leading UK universities.

potential value of their studies for their future employment' (Kelly, 2013, p.7). To understand the current situation that language degrees face today, we need to consider some of the changes that took place towards the end of the 1960s when the new universities were established in the UK (Lodge, 2000). Universities began to be transformed from 'closed' to 'open' field and after the transformation of former polytechnics into universities in 1992, vocational qualifications were introduced in Higher Education Degrees (Coleman, 2004). As a result, combined degrees and joint-honours gained popularity and the modular system was introduced to make combinations of different disciplines easier (Coleman, 2005). Furthermore, universities have then had to once again re-define and re-structure their programmes in order to respond to the important demands of globalization, internationalization of Higher Education and address issues such as student mobility across countries (Byram and Dervin, in press; Byram and Feng, 2006). Universities can therefore no longer be viewed exclusively as the places for academic study but also need to consider employability and career outcomes. This brings us to re-look at Modern Languages as a discipline today and discuss what constitutes the new degree aims of the discipline in the context of a modern view of Higher Education.

2.1.3 The identity of Modern Languages as a discipline

As discussed previously, Modern Languages as a discipline is very difficult to define and declining student numbers in the UK and US have caused the field to become even broader resulting in a vast diversification of the discipline. The names used for Modern Language study as a discipline reflect this broad identity through labels such as 'Modern Languages and Cultural Studies', 'Languages, Linguistics and Cultures', or 'Languages and Area Studies' among others. Language degrees have now become so diverse that there is no simple model to represent them. The previous canonical models of philology or 'language and literature' are no longer adequate and attempts have been made to replace them with new models such as 'languages and cultures', 'languages and area

studies', or language, culture and society' (Kelly, 2000). It is however not very clear what content these culture modules are meant to cover, in fact in some way the traditional model portrayed a clearer identity for the discipline. As the purpose of language degrees used to be to be able to read the great works of literature and philosophy in their originals, associating the study of language with literature was appropriate and there was no question of relevance between the two elements. The shift from a focus on 'languages and literature' to 'languages and cultures' is one, among others, of the outcomes of redefining the field of Modern Languages. However, defining a degree programme as the study of 'languages and cultures' is somewhat problematic. Although it is generally understood that the study of language would inevitably include culture, a field such as 'cultural studies' is per se not a discipline and, some would argue, the same can be said about Modern Languages.

> Cultural Studies poses big problems for its marriage with Modern Languages. For what one has [...] is a meeting of two non-disciplines. Modern Languages is a non-discipline because of the way it has evolved historically and multiplied its functions. From a sort of carbon copy of classics in the nineteenth century, in which each European language had, like Greek and Latin, its canon of great authors, its golden and silver ages, and procedures of literary scholarship borrowed from classics, it became a more pragmatically orientated subject in the twentieth [century], particularly with the increased centrality and professionalization of language teaching. (Forgacs, 2001, p. 62)

There are multiple factors which may have contributed to what is known as the 'crisis' of Modern Languages; firstly, the rise of an instrumental approach to languages, with the occasional language degree components and of single module IWLPs; and secondly, through the fragmentation of language degrees ranging over area studies, cultural studies, media studies, among others, which denies Modern Languages the thematic and methodological unity of many other disciplines (Coleman, 2006, p. 6). As Kelly (2003, p.105) notes 'the languages community in higher education is compelled to manage a

difficult interface between the intellectual and professional demands of its discipline. The result is at times a high-wire balancing act'. Although diversification of the field has the added advantage of potentially targeting students from other disciplines, hence widening participation, this can also result in a wide range of graduate attributes as each student may have chosen a different selection of electives and combinations of modules. It is also ironic that although the undergraduate degree aims to combine the 'intellectual' (content) and the 'professional' (language skills), ironically fields of inquiry for postgraduate studies in Modern Languages are still dominated by a predominantly literary tradition. Addressing the concerning issue of falling student numbers is not an easy task; 'university language admissions officers who used to speak about student selection now speak about student recruitment' (Marshall, 2003, p.143). However, one advantage this has brought prospective students is a higher chance of getting accepted for a Modern Language degree at a prestigious institution.

> A student's chances of getting into a leading university to study languages have increased
>
> in the past five years, as interest dwindles and applications plummet, new figures suggest.
>
> (The Guardian, 2015)

Furthermore, Modern Language graduates generally have lower unemployment than graduates in many other subjects, often mistakenly regarded by the public as better pathways to employability (Marshall, 2003, p.141). With this in mind, Modern Language departments should establish links with secondary schools and colleges to make the case for languages in higher education and illustrate the career prospects available to language graduates.

2.1.3.1 The aim of a Modern Languages degree

In light of the various discussions regarding the changes that have taken place more generally in Higher Education and more specifically in the discipline itself, defining a new

aim for the field presents its challenges. When applying for an undergraduate degree in Modern Languages, students are faced with an extensive number of choices. The UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) lists numerous titles for language degree combinations that reflect the very diverse and complex nature of the discipline. The variety of choice within the discipline may appear to best cater for the diverse needs of students, who may be interested in more traditional career paths; it also offers options for students, whose career prospects are more vocationally oriented or for whom the language element of the degree plays a more marginal role. Although this diversity may on the one hand open options and increase the number of students enrolled in specialist level language modules at university, on the other hand it denies Modern Languages a clear identity. (see Coleman, Klapper, Kelly) It appears to be increasingly difficult to define what constitutes the study of Modern Languages today and to identify clear aims for a Languages Degree. Klapper (2006) refers to the phenomenon as a 'crisis' resulting from a 'the lack of centrality' in accordance with 'demand-led' policies. This is perhaps due to Modern Languages facing continuous external pressures that dictate what range of options universities should offer students. Lodge (2000) and Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) also highlight the lack of own theory and method in Modern Language Studies. Outsiders tend to perceive the study of language as 'an instrument', while insiders view the study as a 'discipline' and arguably the former is now becoming dominant (Lodge, 2000, pp.105-106). In light of these developments, Coleman (2004) highlights potential outcomes for Modern Languages that don't portray a very optimistic picture of the future of the discipline. He argues that it is probable that language skills as an adjunct to a professional degree will continue to be recognized as bringing real employability advantages and will presumably continue to be offered by Language Centres, while the employment advantages of 'a good degree from a good university' will also ensure the survival of a few specialist, however this may result in a further decline in the number of students

graduating with either single or joint-honours degrees in Modern Languages. As studying at university is becoming increasingly a greater investment for students to make, with the rise of tuition fees and concerns about employability, Modern Languages would need to carefully re-examine the current degree structure and work collaboratively to identify clear aims and purposes for the study of languages at specialist level UK Higher Education institutions.

2.1.4 Specialists, non-specialists and widening participation

The question of identity and expected graduate attributes as well as the discussion about the objectives of language learning is perhaps of greatest concern for specialists than for those students studying a language at university alongside their discipline. Any argument concerning the curriculum of content modules, target language use, the residence abroad experience largely concerns specialist students who are either pursuing a full language degree or joint-honours with a different discipline. However, because of the progressive decline in applications to language degrees over the years, many Modern Language departments in the UK now rely on non-specialists to secure teaching hours to members of staff and increase funding to the department or school of Modern Languages. Hence non-specialists have come to play a significant role in the language provision in HE. One of the arguments posed with regards to non-specialists is often the question of whether there should be a difference in the degree of progress expected and the learning outcomes. According to the QAA statement (2002, p.4), there is no fundamental difference between the two.

> …the language learning experience of these non-specialist students has much in common with that of the specialist student, in particular, the balance between receptive and productive skills, the exposure to authentic resources and the role of educational technology. As such, therefore, the teaching, learning and assessment section of this statement is potentially applicable also to these students.

If on the one hand one may argue that language learning should indeed constitute a similar learning experience for all learners, else the concept itself would need to be methodologically re-defined, on the other hand one may argue that specialists, whose aim is to become linguists and who may already enter HE with a substantial background in language learning, would inevitably tackle the learning experience from a different perspective. Di Napoli et al. (2001, p.4) criticises the terminology of specialist vs. non-specialist language learning as he argues that this terminology 'gives a restrictive view of language learning'.

> Such a restrictive and polarised view leads to a dichotomy between language learning for 'specialists' (language as object of study through texts = knowledge) and language learning for 'non-specialists' (language for use = skills) in higher education institutions. The necessary implication of this opposition is that *non-vocational language learning is understood to impart knowledge* and felt to be *intellectually challenging*, whereas *vocational language learning is understood to impart mere skills* and is felt to be *intellectually unchallenging* - for both learners and teachers.
>
> (Di Napoli et al., 2001, p.4, my italics)

This perspective arguably affects the perception of non-specialist language learning as having lesser value and recognition, which also has implications for the qualification requirements of staff responsible for the delivery of the non-specialist provision. The distinction brings about an interesting argument concerning what constitutes vocational study and what place this kind of study occupies in higher education. As language skills, generally viewed as increasing employability prospects, are widely considered to be an advantage for all graduates, a need for a language provision 'for all' led to a more vocational purpose for language learning in HE. Some initiatives such as Vocationally

Oriented Language Learning (VOLL)[3] were formed. VOLL was an initiative targeted towards the development of language skills as a form of lifelong learning (see 'languages for work and life' in the title of Egloff and Fitzpatrick 1997). More recently other vocational initiatives have provided non-specialists and members of the public with a language provision run in some institutions by the university's language centre and in others by the department / school of languages. Among these, initiatives such as Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLPs) and Languages for All similarly cater for a vocationally oriented language provision in HE.

The main language provision offered to non-specialists is often referred to with the term IWLP, although other terms such as Languages for All are also adopted. These programmes, as highlighted in the 2013-2014 UCML – AULC survey of IWLPs, typically offer elective modules that can be taken for academic credit alongside the student's degree programme (Morley et al., 2013). In some institutions non-specialists take these modules as non-credit bearing while in others they may have a choice to follow an assessed or non-assessed route. This language provision may be managed from within a university's language centre or a language department depending on the institution (ibid., p.2). As the provision is quite varied, in some institutions the provision is extended to external students (members of the public / lifelong learning students). The number of languages offered also differs between institutions, with some offering three or four languages while others up to twenty (ibid., p.2). Unlike the concerning decline in uptake for language degrees, non-specialist provision appears to draw interest from a wide number of students and hence it is likely that the provision will be sustained and possibly developed further in the future. The 2013-2014 UCML-AUCL survey found that the number of students enrolled on IWLP courses was somewhat higher in 2014 than it was the previous year (53,971 v

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[3] The term VOLL was coined by the Council of Europe between 1989 and 1996 in the context of the modern languages project entitled 'Language Learning for European Citizenship. (Vogt and Kantelinen, 2013)

49,637) (ibid., p. 3). The survey also asked respondents, from the institutions which participated in the survey, to indicate their opinion regarding future prospects for the provision. Most respondents indicated that they were optimistic about the future of IWLPs provisions while a minority expressed uncertainty (ibid.). Thus vocational language learning in HE over the years appears to have gained popularity and it is likely that much of the language teaching, taking place in many universities, will continue to be for the benefit of non-specialists. This inevitably has implications for staff qualifications and contracts as well as the image of Modern Languages as a discipline in HE. The next section looks at the different roles that language centres and language departments take and the place of 'language learning' in this respect.

2.1.5 Language Centres and Language Departments in the UK

Modern Languages in Higher Education are often taught under the management of a 'Language Department' or 'School of Languages' which in some institutions is then subdivided into the different specialism e.g. German / French Department. Institutions with larger student numbers often distinguish between the 'Language Centre' and the 'Language Department', the former being responsible for the delivery of language modules and the latter responsible for the teaching of content, traditionally delivered by academics.

As Coleman (2004, p.12) notes, 'the younger generation of academics has less attachment to the target language as a disciplinary identity' while language centres are increasingly supplying a large portion of the language classes in many institutions (ibid., p.5) yet one may question whether this really is in the students' best interests (ibid., p.12). Language centres are found in many universities in the UK and their role, as Coleman notes, has been quite diverse over the years. With the decline in student numbers in secondary, further and higher education, the majority of language centres have experienced growth due to the language teaching provision offered to non-specialists students wanting to take

advantage of the opportunity to further their language skills or pick up a new language (Powell, 2001, pp.167-168). The exact role of language centres is difficult to establish as this differs between institutions. In some instances, due to financial cuts in the arts and humanities, language centres have been absorbed within other units or even disbanded entirely (ibid., p.168). However, in other institutions, they occupy important roles and, as a result of widening participation initiatives, have often managed to recruit an extensive number of students. One area, which could be developed in language centres, is the extent to which staff engage in research. Language centres could provide an optimal setting for qualitative and empirical studies in language teaching and learning however, partially due to the arguments illustrated previously on language learning for vocational purposes, most language centres do not have academics (ibid. p.175). Staff members are hence not required to submit themselves to national research assessment exercises, however this should not exclude them from engaging in research (ibid.). As a large portion of language teaching is increasingly carried out by Language centres, 'there are more opportunities for funding in these areas than ever before and the procurement of external funding by a member of language centre staff can give an immediate boost to the status of the centre in the university' (ibid., p.175). The profile of language centre staff as well as the underlying vocational ethos of the language provision offered could be linked to what Di Napoli (2001) describes as 'a split between *theoretical knowledge* and *practical knowledge'* (p.14, italics in the original).

> Content, both in terms of teaching and research is thought to embody the former, while language teaching and research are conceived as both applied and instrumental. This situation has translated itself into status differentials, with language teaching and research being regarded as less prestigious than any teaching and research related to content.
>
> (Di Napoli, 2001, p.14)

Ironically in an area of language teaching where there seems to be funding available and a need for research, academics are often not present or less involved as their specialisms are often literary, which concerns merely one component within the teaching of 'content' to specialists, a provision, as discussed previously, with an increasingly narrow number of students. The following section examines this structural and curricular division in more depth examining the effect of this phenomenon on staff cultures and the student experience.

2.1.5.1 The division between Language and Content – effects on staff cultures and students

Two distinctive rationales exist in support of both dualistic and non-dualistic approaches to the delivery of language and content. In UK pre-1992 universities that have an established Modern Languages Department, we find that language modules are often delivered by the Language Centre, rather than by the department itself, leading to a greater separation between the two degree components. Many Modern Language departments still operate according to a traditional paradigm, which emphasises the teaching of content over language at specialist level (Di Napoli, 2001). The result of this 'divisive culture', according to Di Napoli (1997), has served to preserve a rigid, elitist hierarchy, both with regards to academic functions and status, among different members of staff in modern language departments. The division is then further marked by the medium in which content modules are taught; in many cases a large portion of the content (which may include film, literature, politics, history and culture) is taught in English and there are various rationales that academics hold to justify this. Some academics argue that this split may actually be beneficial to students as they are able to better engage with the content if it is taught and assessed in English. There may however also be more pragmatic reasons for this.

According to Coleman, the avoidance of Target Language as a medium of instruction for

content modules is justified by some academics through several arguments:

- 'intellectually challenging material is beyond learner's competence in the language
- the aim is to simultaneously develop students' skills in English
- a degree from the university is internationally recognised as demonstrating a high-level command of English'

(Coleman, 2005, p.6)

While some of the above-mentioned points may seem to present a reasonable argument for the use of English as a medium of instruction in content modules, the first point in particular seems to illustrate a cyclical image of low competence in language skills. Rather than providing a convincing argument for the delivery of content in English, the point made appears to further highlight the negative effects this system has on developing essential skills for future linguists.

There are then other more pragmatic reasons for delivering content modules in English and these don't necessarily take into account students' preference or their learning experience. Coleman (2004) points out the following with regards to major UK universities:

> Academic staff in the Modern Languages Department are highly rated for their world-class research in literature and benefit from a substantial RAE income as a result. They have never been trained as language teachers, are contentedly unaware of the extensive research literature on advanced level language teaching, and resent spending time teaching language: it distracts them from research. (Coleman, 2004, p.153)

Ironically this division between language and content is something students are not accustomed to, when entering higher education, as languages in secondary schools are taught by trained language teachers and content is embedded into the study (Gallagher-Brett & Canning, 2011, p. 6).

In reference to Gieve and Cunico's article (2012), Gallagher-Brett and Broady point out that while the study of MFL at secondary level tends to emphasise language skills, 'degree programmes typically comprise both 'language' and 'content' but often with little integration between the two.' (Gallagher-Brett and Broady, 2012, p.6). This may lead students to question the relevance between the two elements of study. We find that in the most prestigious UK universities Modern Language departments regard literary research as most important although research shows that 'students increasingly opt out of literary courses' (Coleman 2004, Rodgers et al. 2002 in Coleman and Klapper, 2005, p.7). To address this decreased interest in literary studies, many departments have offered a more flexible curriculum, which embraces media, film, cultural studies, and politics alongside literary specialism (Coleman, 2005, pp.1-9). Although these different specialisms appear to provide an attractive alternative to a purely literary focused degree, such content modules are often taught in English (McBride, 2000) hence minimising the exposure of specialists to the Target Language.

Newer universities with much smaller departments often follow slightly different structures. There isn't necessarily such a clear split between language and content (possibly due to the fact that student numbers are too low to make a large number of courses viable) and therefore language modules are often taught by academics. These universities have managed to retain the link between studying the language and studying the culture(s) of relevant nation states. (Coleman, 2005, p.1-9) However, newer universities have been adversely affected by the fall in student numbers more than the longer established institutions such as those belonging to the Russell-group[4].

> The fall in recruitment to specialist language degrees has disproportionately damaged
> departments in universities with lower standing. 'Old' universities (i.e. those which acquired
> the appellation prior to 1992, the date at which the distinctive but less prestigious 'Polytechnic'

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[4] The Russell Group represents 24 leading UK universities http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk.

designation was abandoned in favour of 'university') have always maintained their popularity with parents and employers. As their elite pool of self-disciplined, self-motivated, highly-qualified Modern Languages entrants started to dry up, they began to fish further downstream, in the reaches previously harvested by the better new universities (i.e. ex-Polytechnics), who in turn poached the applicants on whom other colleges had relied.

(Coleman, 2004, p. 10)

Because pre-1992 universities have retained a student number sufficient to enable academics to focus primarily on research, this has placed departments in a position to retain a very much literary-focused curriculum and delegate language teaching to professionals in the language centre (Klapper, 2006, pp.1-11). Although newer universities may 'accidentally' have reformed their departments in such a way that there is more integration between language and content, there are additional challenges that these institutions in particular have faced. Newer universities often do not enjoy a large enough student body and have therefore had to resort to initiatives such widening the provision of Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) as a measure to secure teaching hours for language staff and keep the department running. The numbers of students studying for a Modern Languages degree have fallen sharply since the 'boom' years of the late 1980s/early 1990s. As a result, some departments have completely closed, while others are gradually phasing out specialist language degrees (Coleman, 2004). Since 1998 recruitment to language degrees has fallen (Kelly and Jones, 2003). However, 'in almost all circumstances, institutions have retained some form of institution-wide language programme (IWLP)' (Klapper, 2006, p.2). Initiatives such as attempting to widen participation to IWLP or increasing the number of languages offered however don't directly address the decline in language degree entrants. In this regard, Worton (2009) notes that 'there is a sense that Modern Foreign Language Departments tend to respond reactively, rather than innovative pro-actively' (Worton, 2009, p.3).

One of the problems encountered due to the shrinking market is the typical academic profile of staff, generally holding specialisms in literary and cultural topics (Klapper, 2005, p.24). On the other hand, we find that a large number of staff teaching language are native speakers of the target language and / or former secondary and further education (FE) teachers (ibid., p.23). The decline in student numbers has also led to some decisions concerning the employment of language teaching staff. Some departments, for instance, in order to protect non-language aspects of the programme, employ experienced teaching fellows or tutors, who are responsible for the coordination and delivery of a large portion of the department's language teaching, however they are often employed 'on temporary or part-time contracts with limited career prospects despite holding professional qualifications' (ibid., p.25). In part because of these practices, the teaching of 'language' has come to be perceived as having lesser status and prestige in comparison to content delivered by academics generally involving the teaching of literary studies or area studies. Busse (2013) in reference to the findings of her study on motivation in Modern Languages notes that 'one reason why students may value language teachers less highly than literature teachers[5] may be that literature is taught by permanent staff while language is taught by temporary staff, reflecting a difference in status between the two' (p.447). In an interview, one of the students commented that language teaching staff are not respected as highly and this has its implications for the effort students put into language activities and assessment. Interestingly, Busse's study followed a longitudinal design in which data was collected at two separate points in time, and she found that 'fewer students attend language seminars towards the end than towards the beginning of the academic year' (Busse, 2011, p.113) which resulted in the responses collected at time point 2 to be considerably fewer, resulting in sample attrition. Specific reasons behind the decreased attendance were not

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[5] This particular study was conducted in two institutions both belonging to the Russell Group category and holding international prestige. 'Content' in these institution is primarily literature, hence the term 'literature teachers' here refers to the academic staff.

part of the aim of this study, however student responses to their experiences in language vs. literature modules seemed to devalue the former in favour of the latter, which may have played a role in the decreased attendance.

2.2 Issues raised in reports and reviews on Modern Languages

In recent years the decline in student numbers in the UK, particularly for language degrees, has been identified as concerning in a number of reports. The reports reviewed below refer to language degrees as well as language learning for non-specialists, such as IWLP or Languages for All provisions.

2.2.1 Modern Languages in the UK - Responding to the Nuffield Inquiry (2000), Worton Report (2009), British Academy Position Statement (2011) and the QAA Benchmark Statement (2015)

2.2.1.1 The Nuffield Inquiry (2000)

The Nuffield Inquiry issued a report in 2000 titled 'Languages The Next Generation', the report raises concerns about the current provision of languages in the different sectors and offers recommendations to Higher Education and government to encourage a more effective strategy for languages in the UK. In its forward concerns about the UK's capability in languages are raised and the question of whether English is enough is posed. The foreword further advocates for a change in policy and argues for language skills to be integrated in the culture and practice of British business. The document includes recommendations for schools but also refers specifically to the role of Higher Education both in providing specialist study as well as a language provision for adult learners and current students who are not studying languages as part of their degree. Section one opens with a discussion on languages for the next generation and draws a comparison between the UK and other European countries. Early exposure to language learning is now common in many countries in Europe, this gives Europeans the advantage of not only

growing up virtually bilingual but also being better equipped for the study of languages in later years. In reference to this, David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, commented that 'learning a language is vital for the insights it provides into the languages and cultures of our own country. I want to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to have a language as this will be one of skills they will need for the new millennium' (The Nuffield Inquiry, 2000, p.15). In reference to pathways to Higher Education, in the section 'Matching Needs and Provision, Policy for languages in Education' the report highlights that 'there is no rational or consistent path of learning from primary through to higher education and beyond' (ibid., p.39). This inevitably affects recruitment for specialist study at university, ability to learn a foreign language and motivation to carry on or start learning a foreign language for the first time. With regards to languages in Higher Education, the document reports the concerning future of languages as a discipline and states that 'most university language departments are operating in deficit and an increasing number are under threat of closure or reduction. Some have already closed' (ibid., p.54). It reports that recruitment of specialists is declining and less widely taught languages are at risk. Also, in reference to non-specialist study, the document describes HE language provisions such as Institution Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) as 'free-standing language options for students of other disciplines' (ibid., p.55). However, there are concerns about the staffing and practicality of this provision as it generally holds a 'low-status' and is being 'under-resourced'. The courses, often delivered by the language centre in universities with larger language departments, generally have a 'small core of full-time staff and an extensive cadre of part-time temporary staff usually employed on an hourly basis' (ibid.). Professor John Sandford of the University of Reading commented in this respect that 'the kind of basic provision that so many undergraduates now find they need to add to their degree courses should ideally have been part of what they did at school so that language work at university could operate

at a more appropriately high level' (ibid.). There are then revisions to be made also in this area to ensure that the provision is of good quality and that staff members are provided with opportunities for progression, as this will also have an effect on their motivation to undertake professional development and further training.

2.2.1.2 The Worton Report (2009)

The Worton Report (2009) exposes both the challenges faced by the discipline of Modern Foreign Languages in UK higher education as well as some of the factors, which may be associated to the decline in student numbers. Among other issues, it addresses the relationship between language and culture / content in language degrees.   The report opens by acknowledging the diversity of the discipline and its 'dual nature', which is described as follows:

> 'languages in HE' (is) a concept which encompasses the broad linguistic, pedagogical and content diversity of the specialist discipline as well as the more general language skills which are increasingly regarded by students and employers as an essential graduate attribute. [...] 'Modern Foreign Languages' as a discipline has an identity which is vague and uncertain as a result of its dual nature.   (Worton, 2009, p.7-8)

The report further describes this 'dualism' as it is manifested in the teaching of language often carried out by graduate students, language assistants and part-time tutors and the teaching of the content / culture modules being carried out by academics, generally employed on full-time contracts. It also places particular emphasis on the role language learning plays in the development of intercultural competencies.

> ...the languages community in HE and FE must emphasise the importance of linguistic and intercultural competencies as key skills that need to be developed and maintained as a core part of lifelong learning...   (Worton, 2009, p.20)

This is further emphasised in the 'conclusions and recommendations' section where the report refers to the decline in language learning as a 'cause for concern' not only because

it may lead to a future of monolingualism but also for the UK's ability to negotiate with other countries with 'in depth intercultural competence'.

> The decline in modern language learning in England is a cause of real concern for a variety of reasons. If not arrested, it will lead to the UK becoming one of the most monolingual countries in the world. [...] The decline will have implications in many areas: [...] For the UK's international position and our *ability to negotiate in all fields with in-depth intercultural competence.*

<div align="center">(Worton, 2009, p.35, my italics)</div>

The report hence highlights both the challenges faced by the discipline as well as offering recommendations for the future of Modern Languages in HE. The points made here mirror in many ways observations reported in the other documents discussed here.

2.2.1.3 The British Academy Position Statement (2011)

The British Academy Position Statement (2011), with regards to languages in Higher Education specifically, identified the following challenges:

- declining national and regional capacity

- the concentration of languages in the older universities

- the narrow student class profile of language undergraduates

<div align="center">(The British Academy Position Statement, 2011, p.32)</div>

The above-mentioned points echo in many ways what has been previously mentioned in Coleman and Klapper (2005) earlier in this chapter as well as in the Worton (2009) report. As a result of the decline in uptake particularly for language degrees, most specialist students are now found in Russell Group universities and represent an elite minority of the British population. The report also highlights the disparity between supply and demand for foreign language skills in the UK.

> There is strong evidence that the UK is suffering from a growing deficit in foreign language skills at a time when global demand for language skills is expanding.
>
> (The British Academy Position Statement, 2011, p.10)

The document also highlights the need for UK graduates to be adequately prepared to 'manage complex international and intercultural relationships' (ibid., p.54) voiced by the Association of Graduate Recruiters/Council for Industry and Higher Education.

The need for UK graduates of any discipline to develop some linguistic and intercultural competencies is repeatedly emphasised as well as the concern that those pursuing language degrees remain a minority and represent only a narrow elite British population.

2.2.1.4 The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement (2015)

The QAA Subject Benchmark Statement Languages, Cultures and Societies issued in September 2015 reflects some of the changes made to the previous Subject Benchmark Statement published in 2007. In particular the most recent statement was issued 'to reflect the changing context for the study of languages in the UK and the development of new areas of provision' (p.5). Among other changes, the 2015 Statement aims to make a 'more detailed reference to the learning outcomes specified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching' (ibid.).

Of particular relevance to this study, is reference made in the statement to the 'intercultural' and 'transcultural' nature of Modern Languages as a discipline and to the important role of 'intercultural competence' as a graduate attribute.

> The study of languages enables students to understand the similarities and differences between cultures, in the broadest sense of high culture, popular culture and the customs and practices of everyday life. In this sense it is *inherently intercultural*. The study of languages enables students to understand ideas and events that cross national boundaries, the current and

historical relationships between countries, and the ways in which other countries interact with the UK. In this sense it is *transnational*.

(QAA , 2015, p.8, my italics)

The description of the Modern Languages discipline offered above makes reference to aspects of the study, which are not solely linguistic, but rather may be drawn from the content areas of the curriculum. It makes reference to the comparative nature of the study and its objective to develop students' thinking so that they are able to 'understand ideas and events' pertaining to both their own and other cultures. The statement then addresses graduate attributes more specifically by setting specific outcomes for all students of languages.

> All students of languages develop awareness of the similarities and dissimilarities between other cultures and societies, and their own. This is gained through their studies and through their contact with the target language and associated cultures. In particular, their competence in the target language means that they have an appreciation of internal diversity and transcultural connectedness, and *an attitude of curiosity and openness* towards other cultures. The skills and attributes they develop include:
>
> · *critical understanding* of other cultures and practices *other than one's own*
>
> · ability to function in different cultures
>
> · ability to articulate to others the contribution that the culture has made at a regional and global level
>
> · ability and willingness to engage with other cultures, appreciating their distinctive features
>
> · ability to appreciate and evaluate critically *one's own* culture

(QAA, 2015, p.16, my italics)

Interestingly the terminology of 'attitude of curiosity and openness' echoes Byram's (1997) definition of 'savoir être' hence making reference to his conceptualisation of

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Intercultural Competence. The importance of developing not just an 'understanding' but a 'critical understanding of other cultures' furthermore appears to describe a somewhat similar competency to what Byram defines 'savoir s'engager' or 'critical cultural awareness'.   The emphasis on comparisons and critical evaluation is once again evident in the final point.

By emphasising the importance of the CEFR and making reference to Intercultural Competence as a necessary graduate attribute, the QAA sets certain expectations for Higher Education institutions, which go beyond developing language students' linguistic and communicative competencies.   While some of the documents reviewed above refer more generally to language learning and not specifically to language degrees or higher education, they similarly recognise the advantages gained from the study of language, which extend beyond the ability to communicate.

2.3 The medium of instruction in content modules: English or the Target Language?

The issue of whether foreign language instruction should be carried out exclusively in the Target / Second Language (TL / L2), or whether the first / native language (L1) can play a role in the process of second language acquisition, has been researched and discussed from a range of theoretical standpoints in recent years. This question does not merely concern the divide present in Higher Education between the teaching of language modules on the one hand and content/ culture modules on the other, but rather concerns language pedagogy more generally and hence arguments concerning Target Language use have emerged from MFL teaching in the secondary sector and EFL, as well as from foreign language education at the tertiary level.

Klapper (2006, p.223) notes that 'there is an assumption in much of the FL-teaching world that maximum TL use is the ideal and that use of L1 can actually be harmful (e.g. Halliwell and Jones 1991, p. 34)'. He argues that this view has been further encouraged

by the 'rapid growth of EFL' where use of the L1 is not possible because the tutor does not speak the language/s of his or her students. The foreign language context, however, may present a somewhat different learning environment where the L1 may play a valuable role. The view that 100% TL use is a 'methodological ideal' has in fact been contested. As Klapper (2006, p.223) points out, 'Macaro (1997, pp.73-76), in his overview of research into FL learning/teaching and TL use, finds no support for the view that a virtual 100% use of the TL leads to more effective learning'.

While an exclusive use of the TL does not appear to lead to more 'effective learning', particularly the learners' use, according to Macaro (2000, p.185), of the TL as medium of communication in the classroom has been associated with an improved communicative competence.

> I want to re-affirm a basic belief that learners' use of the L2 is conductive to successful learning. Oral L2 use, particularly, leads to the internalisation of the rule system, an awareness of how language is linked to its speech community, how discourse operates between speaker and hearer. Only through the learner using the L2 can s/he achieve strategic communicative competence. The over-arching pedagogical tool should, therefore, be learners' use of the target language, not teachers' use of the target language.
>
> (Macaro, 2000, p.185, emphasis added)

The precise position of the L2 as well as that of the L1 is problematic also for theoretical reasons, which extend beyond the question of which methodological tool may be more effective in developing students' communicative competence. The experience of learning a foreign language and struggling to express thought in the L2 will inevitably bring the student to reflect on why similar meanings are expressed differently grammatically or syntactically. The student might then begin to notice how different languages may have a range of words to describe an object or situation while others only have one term. They

may begin to notice different uses of language according to contexts and situations. Hence comparisons between the L1 and the L2 are constantly taking place in spite of the medium of instruction chosen. Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) refer to the concept of 'languaging' to describe the process of discovery of both the language and cultures of the L2 as well as our own.

> Languaging involves encounters with others, yes, but also, importantly with our own expectations, false assumptions, likes and dislikes, and often deeply rooted unexamined opinions.   (Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004, p.169)

While in the secondary sector MFL teaching is expected to be mostly carried out in the Target Language (see dfE, 2005), the same cannot be said about language degrees particularly in the UK, where in many universities much of the content / cultural modules are taught in the L1 and in some even some aspects of the language (e.g. grammar and translation).

> As is common practice in the UK and in many universities in continental Europe, the first language [...] is the language of instruction for literature classes and for classes on the linguistic aspects of the second language.   (Busse, 2012, p.438)

A number of academics have argued that the language used for the delivery of the content modules affects how students perceive this element of their degree and its relevance to the language component. Gieve and Cunico (2012) expose this issue and make apparent that in many cases the decision to teach content in the TL or in English does not seem to be supported by any pedagogical or methodological rationale.

> The teaching of content modules in the TL is not an explicit requirement in HE and as a result most MFL departments resolve the issue of how (not) to bridge the gap between language and content by making ad hoc local rather than principled decisions.
>
> (Gieve and Cunico, 2012, p.280)

McBride (2000, p.19) pointed out that, in her view, the target language should remain the main means of communication in language classes and 'has been and still is, a widely debated issue in universities, yet articles or publications on the subject are scarce'. Nicole McBride of the University of North London, mentioned above, carried out a survey in Spring / Summer 1999 to explore the extent to which English, the target language or a combination of both was used in the teaching and assessment of 'target culture', as she calls it, in language degree programmes. The term 'target culture' is used here to refer to the content courses (also known as cultural studies). The article reports the findings of the survey and discusses the implications that these findings may have for further research. The survey was large scale and represented almost 80% of HE institutions. The study found that 41% of departments had a language policy that slightly favoured use of TL. Additional data collected on individual practices (without reference to policy) identified a 'majority (52%) using a mix of target language and English in the delivery of target culture, *25% using English as sole language of delivery* and 23% the TL.' (ibid. p.63, my italics). It was found that rationales behind which language medium to use for content modules were influenced by staff attitudes as well as by pragmatic concerns. Staff members, who preferred the use of English, argued that it was more effective for the development of 'intellectual depth', while those who believed in the integration of the target language and content generally attempted to use as much TL as possible. McBride's survey results highlight an overall increase in the use of English, which may be attributed to a variety of factors.

> Language programmes have adapted to internal and external forces. […] Strategies which made cultural modules accessible to a wider group (by mixing students of varying levels of linguistic competence, or at different stages of their degree, or from different degrees) […] have inexorably led to an increased use of English as the language of delivery for cultural

modules. […] The resulting situation has led to an overall reduction in the use of TL to teach

TC[6].   (McBride, 2000, p. 64)

The question of use of TL or English as a medium for content modules remains an ongoing debate; the article indicates that there is scope for further research into this phenomenon and particularly to examine student's views at first hand and the impact that the use of TL teaching has on the teaching of content (ibid., p.66).

2.3.1 Rationales for the use of English in content modules

Arguments in favour or contrary to the use of TL as a medium of instruction and assessment are still ongoing in Higher Education and, depending upon the institution, department or school, the amount of teaching taking place in the TL can vary considerably.

The work of McBride therefore aids to gain a greater understanding of both staff and student perspectives on the use of TL. As mentioned above, a common issue 'frequently and spontaneously raised by staff [was] (…) that of the level of depth achievable when either the TL or English was used.' (McBride, 2003, p.304). However, McBride's study found that 'this concern was spontaneously voiced by only 10% of the students who referred to more depth as an advantage when English was used, while 3% linked lack of depth to the use of the TL in class' (ibid. p.304). Staff views on the matter were quite different from those of students, in fact 'thirty eight per cent of the staff replied that the same level of depth would not be achieved if the TL was used. Only 24% of the students shared this view' (ibid.). As was pointed out in McBride (2003), the literature on rationales for the use of English as a medium of instruction for content modules illustrates a teacher's perspective rather than a student's perspective on the matter. Seago (2000, p.4) points out as follows,

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[6] McBride (2000) refers to content modules as the teaching of 'Target Culture'.

The claim that content study should be mediated in the foreign language is often countered with the argument that this produces a conflicted relationship on whether it is the language that is assessed or the content.

The argument predominantly comes from a staff perspective, which may be concerned with the practicality of teaching and hence assessing in the TL. Where the TL is not the norm for teaching content modules, it is understandable that some students may be concerned that they may not be able to achieve equally high results compared to being assessed in English. Yet, as Seago (2000, p.9) points out, the parallel teaching of language and content observable in many Modern Languages departments / schools in the UK, does not appear to foster the development of competencies which language graduates need.

There is a clear awareness that the structure of degrees, with its separation into content and language, does not contribute to achieving the competencies and capabilities that language graduates need today.

While Seago maintains that the separation of language and content is counterproductive for students of Modern Languages, the issue presents a number of complexities from both a theoretical and pragmatic standpoint. From a theoretical perspective, this draws upon the theoretical framework of language and culture, which is relevant both to sociolinguistics and foreign language pedagogy, and from a pragmatic point of view it poses implications for staff structures and curriculum design. These issues are further discussed in chapter three with reference to theoretical positions on language and culture.

2.4 Student expectations – Transitions from secondary to tertiary

Among other factors playing a role in the dwindling interest in language learning are the experiences and expectations that school-leavers may have about the study of languages at

university. Transitions from A-level to university can at times be difficult for students as teaching methods and expectations are often significantly different from what students might expect.

2.4.1 Transitions from sixth-form – MFL study at secondary and A-level

Any discussion concerning decline in student numbers at tertiary level needs to take into consideration any previous experience of language study taken place in secondary schools and colleges. To better understand motivational factors of prospective university applicants, we firstly need to review the literature on the student experience in the MFL classroom. For the most part, research shows that a positive learning history together with enjoyment of the language serves as important motivators for students' decision to study a language degree, (Ushioda, 1996; Busse, 2013). A study conducted by Macaro (2007) at the university of Oxford, on the other hand, found that 'students applying to study German at Oxford had instrumentally oriented motivation for wanting to do a language course, which was qualitatively different from the one experienced at A-level.' (ibid. p.467). Students who are intrinsically motivated would presumably apply to Oxford because of a genuine interest in explicit grammar learning, translation and literature study, while extrinsically motivated students would apply for the status and opportunity that studying at Oxford would grant them. (ibid. p.471). Interestingly, Macaro describes the study of Modern Languages at Oxford as 'grammar learning, translation and literature study', quite a different package to what students are accustomed to at A-level. Although it may be argued that Oxford represents an extreme case and that many universities in the UK do not follow such as strongly grammar-translation oriented curriculum, what takes place at Oxford is not that diverse to teaching approaches observable in many other institutions, particularly now that language degrees are disproportionately concentrated in elite Russell Group universities (Coleman, 2011). This constitutes a difficulty for even the

most able students, as the A-level syllabus does not follow a grammar-translation curriculum.

> The modern languages course at Oxford with its heavy orientation towards *grammar and translation* is a challenge to students whose secondary school education focused essentially on *communication skills and socio-cultural topics.*
>
> (Macaro, 2007, p. 471, my italics)

The study brings to light what is perhaps one contributing factor to students' decision not to study Modern Languages at university. The secondary MFL curriculum, and the documents that guide its content and assessments, do not seem to particularly prepare students for a languages degree. Studies repeatedly report a 'lack of preparedness for the study of literature as well as a weak understanding of grammar and ability to read in a foreign language.' (Gallagher-Brett 2006; Holmes and Platten, 2005; Macaro and Wingate, 2004). This complaint is echoed by academics, who are often disappointed with the competences and ill preparation of their entrants, in spite of the competitive entry requirements. As Coleman (2005) notes, in previous years a traditional A-level curriculum would have been similar to the study of English Literature while current qualifications focus upon the acquisition of language skills where students focus on shorter texts such as excerpts in textbook and newspaper articles. These texts are viewed as a 'functional source of information, diminishing the intellectual demands on the student and emphasising the capacity for expression in the target language over the quality of what is expressed' (Holmes and Platten, 2005, p.211). The argument for what school students should be learning in MFL is twofold. On the one hand the study of languages at secondary level, and particularly at GCSE, focuses on a 'broadly communicative language teaching approach (…) [with] many tasks (…) transactional in nature' (Graham, 2004, p.173) while on the other, academics in Modern Language departments would prefer to have prospective candidates with some prior knowledge of what it means to do extensive

reading and text analysis in the target language, hence leading to a clear mismatch between student preparedness and university expectations (Haggis and Pouget, 2002).

Aside from the concerns with the content of the current A-level curriculum, another issue that Modern Languages in higher education face, is the rather small percentage of students actually completing A-levels in languages; as a result, many institutions have had to offer ab-initio routes to address this phenomenon. Out of the 46 languages taught across the UK, 'French, German and Spanish are accessible exclusively as non-ab initio respectively in 64%, 45% and 16% of the English institutions that offer these languages at degree level' (Verruccio, 2010-2011) as these are the main languages pursued at A-level and at university. As the figures illustrate, a large number of institutions allow students to follow ab-initio routes, thus making for instance an A-level in Spanish not a necessary requirement for admissions to a Spanish degree programme. Graham (2004) points out that 'the number [of students] taking French at A-level in England, Wales and Northern Ireland dropped from 11,610 in 1976 to 4,840 in 1997' (cited in Johnstone, 2013, p.13). In her study, Graham (2004) found that many high achieving year 11 students, in spite of good GCSE results, were not convinced they were doing well in French. From her study, Graham considered that 'students do not feel that success in an external examination is necessarily the same as achieving linguistic proficiency' (Graham 2004, p.186). This perceived lack of self-confidence seems to further discourage students from continuing the study of languages at A-level, however another interesting point is made with regards to Graham's findings. When reflecting on the overall MFL learning experience prior to A-level, some students felt that the curriculum was too 'self-centred' (too much focus on personalisation) and, as Driscoll notes in this respect, 'it was interesting that these high-attaining students had found French to be 'difficult' but 'not intellectually challenging'' (Johnstone, 2013, p.14). This is indeed a paradoxical remark on behalf of students, one wonders exactly what students perceive as 'intellectually challenging', yet this is not the

sole instance where a similar remark has been made. Busse (2013) in her study on first year undergraduate students in German, also found that students perceived language learning tasks to have a 'low level of intellectual challenge in topics for writing and discussion' (p.446). Although in a different context, there is some similarity in the kind of communicative and application-based tasks that take place in MFL secondary school teaching and language teaching at university. It is arguably the intellectual inquiry and criticality that students may experience in other subjects in secondary school, for instance in English or English Literature, and more so in content modules at university, that students may feel is missing from the study of languages. This argument is further developed in chapter three which looks at the role of criticality in Modern Language programmes at tertiary level. The following section looks at perceptions and expectations that prospective students may have with regards to what the study of languages at HE entails as well as employability prospects after graduation, which for many students play a crucial role in selecting a subject area.

2.4.2 The perception of language degrees – employability and expectations

Foreign languages continue to be largely promoted as 'skills', and especially as skills that enhance employability (Canning, 2009). Although this argument appears to promote uptake, this image of the study of languages neglects, and possibly disguises, the skills that languages students acquire through the humanities side of their degree (Allan, 2006; Coleman, 2005). Furthermore, the promotion of languages as 'purely functionalist, utilitarian skills that will get young people good jobs at the end of their studies or schooling' is used as a way of recruiting students to 'largely literary programmes' (Phipps, 2007, p.36). Thus students opting for a degree in Modern Languages often enter with the aspiration of becoming fluent speakers and have little interest (or experience) in an in-depth exploration of literature, whereas students applying for a degree in English Literature would already have a clear picture of what the study entails. Arguably, Modern

Language students are being misled about the nature of language degrees.   Thus students entering university with the expectation of 'becoming fluent' may become irritated at having to study anything other than the language (Derham, 2003). Students may feel that their need for fluency is not met in content classes (Davis et al. 1992) and that such classes they are not relevant to achieving their aim.   It is then not surprising that academics delivering content modules also experience frustration when a lack of interest in literature is perceived from students.   There are, however, a number of students who do enjoy the learning experience in content modules and in fact prefer them over the language study that takes place concurrently at university.

> Although we can entertain the possibility that some or even most students will be 'converted' to recognizing the value of the content side of their degree programme (beyond any language acquisition which may result), it is important to explore the roots of this disjuncture and recognize that universities may need to adapt in view of students' expectations and prior experiences.
>
> (Gallegher-Brett and Canning, 2011, pp.175-76)

As the study of literature and culture is something significantly different from developing linguistic competence, it is vital that the discipline is appropriately presented to prospective students to ensure they are getting the right messages of what it means to study Modern Languages at university.   Additionally a separation between language and content modules only complicates the image of the discipline further, as the two elements seem to be somewhat unrelated to each other, and this is once again something that does not occur in the study of MFL in schools.

2.5 Modern Languages in the USA

The study of Modern Languages at tertiary level is now an integral part of the curriculum in many colleges and universities, however this has not always been the case. Modern Foreign Languages began to appear in universities in the United States toward the end of the 18th century and it was only in the 19th century that they became established as a formal part of the curriculum. It was indeed the rise of Modern Language study at university that lead to a more liberal conception of college education (Bagster-Collins, 1930). Modern Language study was originally defined in relation to classical languages in order to overcome the perception that it was not a true academic discipline. MFL departments therefore modelled themselves after two respected disciplines: classical studies and the philological study of languages (Klee, 2000).   Perhaps one of the most significant changes, which occurred in foreign language teaching in the USA, as well as in Europe, concerns teaching methodology and a shift in learning outcomes.

> In the 1950s, foreign language teaching centered on a knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and reading in the target language. Consequently, assessment took the form of translation exercises, vocabulary lists, dictations, and fill in the blank type exercises whose purpose was to measure linguistic gains. The emphasis was on *cognitive understanding* and rote reproduction of language rules *rather than on communicative and sociolinguistic competence.*
>
> (Paige et al., 2003, p.212, my italics)

Foreign language study hence remained modelled according to the classics following a grammar-translation method.   Culture learning was not an explicit learning outcome but rather viewed as 'an expected by-product resulting from the study of literature, geography and other [...] elements of the target culture' (ibid.). A decade later the audio-lingual method had gained popularity; this new methodology placed a much greater focus on listening and speaking, hence distancing itself from the strong focus on written texts. The audio-lingual movement 'paralleled language teaching methods, namely the discrete

testing in each of the four skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing' (ibid.). Approaches towards language learning and assessment then began to shift towards more communicative aims and started to take into consideration assessment of cultural learning.

> In the 1980s, with the advent of communicative language teaching, the humanistic concept of culture gave way to a more pragmatic concept of culture as a way of life.

> (Kramsch, 2006, p.13)

In the 1970s and 1980s 'culture became fully recognised as the context without which a word has no meaning' (Kramsch, 2006, p.213). Yet, while the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) originally issued Provisional Guidelines 'to expand the language education to explicitly include culture learning' (ACTFL, 1984; Kramsch, 1991, in Paige et al. 2003, p.213) these were subsequently eliminated from the final version (ACTFL, 1986). With regards to the role culture has played in foreign language pedagogy in the United States, Kramsch (2006) notes that 'it has always been an integral component of language teaching' (p.11) but until World War II it was understood as 'the literate or humanities component of language study' (ibid.). It was only after the war, following a 'communicative turn in language pedagogy' that culture teaching became 'synonymous with the way of life and everyday behaviours of members of speech communities, bound together by common experiences, memories and aspirations' (ibid.). The 'communities' however, were understood as being 'grounded in the nation', which became problematic with the advent of the 21st century.

> This unitary conception of one language = one national culture has become problematic. National standard languages have come to be seen as arbitrary constructions of the 19th century nation states as much as the social and political institutions that constitute national cultures. (Kramsch, 2006, p.11)

With regards to the research field associated with foreign language education in the U.S., the focus remains on second language acquisition (SLA), whereas in Europe 'language

educators are particularly concerned with the effects of globalisation and weakening of national institutions on the teaching of foreign languages.' (ibid. p.20). Hansen (2004) envisages a new place for culture in the future, and argues as follows,

> Foreign Language Studies must learn to conceive of culture as a open, multi-voiced and dialogical interaction full of contradictions, rather than as the deterministic, homogenous and closed structure that belonged to the era of the nation state'

> (Hansen, 2004, p. 9 in Kramsch, 2006, pp. 20-21)

The question of the role culture plays in foreign language teaching, as well as that of which teaching method may be most appropriate for the 21st century, continues to be addressed both theoretically and empirically. The recommendations made in the MLA (2007) report, discussed in the following section, encompass some of the challenges that foreign language teaching in the US has faced as a result of its historical background. The report identifies not only issues relating to pedagogy and the place culture occupies in the curriculum, but also exposes the disparity between faculty members responsible for teaching literature and culture in the upper-level and those teaching lower-level language courses.

2.5.1 Data emerging from the (2007) MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages Report

The Modern Language Association (2007) report identifies a number of areas for development within US Higher Education and suggests some recommendations including a call for greater integration of the study of culture within the curriculum and the need for alternatives to the two-tiered structure in Modern Languages. In reference to the traditional curriculum layout, it points out that a two-tiered structure 'creates a division between the language curriculum and the literature curriculum and between tenure-track literature professors and language instructors in non tenure-track positions' (p.2), hence

resulting in language instructors occupying the lower end of the hierarchy. Similar implications for staff contracts and hierarchical positions can also be observed in the UK, as discussed previously, in spite of differences in the two curriculums.

The report also proposes expected attributes of language graduates stating that 'the language major should be structured to produce a specific outcome: educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence' (MLA, 2007, p.3). The report specifically identifies the bifurcation of language and literature into upper and lower division, as is observable in many language department in the U.S., as problematic.

> It would be difficult to exaggerate the frustration this rigid and hierarchical model evokes among language specialists who work under its conditions. Their antagonism is not toward the study of literature—far from it—but toward the organization of *literary study in a way that monopolizes the upper-division curriculum, devalues the early years of language learning*, and *impedes the development of a unified language-and-content curriculum across the four-year college or university sequence.*
>
> (MLA, 2007, p.4, my italics)

The report argues that the two-tiered structure 'impedes the development of a unified curriculum' and suggests departments should consider restructuring the way language and literature (content / culture) are taught in Higher Education.

> Replacing the two-tiered language-literature structure with a broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole, supported by alliances with other departments and expressed through interdisciplinary courses, will reinvigorate language departments as valuable academic units central to the humanities and to the missions of institutions of higher learning. (ibid.)

Interestingly, the report suggests that adopting a new approach towards teaching language and 'literature' will result firstly in 'a more coherent curriculum', which will subsequently yield to a more enhanced position of the discipline among the 'humanities' and 'higher learning'. Perceiving the study of foreign languages as a 'humanities' subject can help

situate the discipline and clarify its identity. It is also important to understand how the study of language plays a relevant role in developing students' understanding of the more complex literary and cultural body of knowledge associated with this field of study. The recommendations made in the MLA (2007) report identify not only the issues relating to the two-tiered structure, which is discussed in greater detail below, but also suggest that language graduates should develop 'deep translingual and transcultural competence'. This recommendation is highly relevant to the research aims of this study and hence reference to the MLA (2007) report is made throughout the thesis in order to contextualise both the theoretical frameworks of intercultural competence and criticality (chapter three) as well as in the interpretation of the findings (chapters 5, 6 and 7).

2.5.2 The two-tiered structure – implications for staff and students

The separation of language and content in U.S. collegiate departments is manifested through the bifurcation of language in the lower-division / lower-level and literature (content / culture) in the upper-division / upper level of the four-year university sequence in undergraduate language degrees. The extent to which this structure is present differs significantly across institutions in the country and hence, while it remains an issue in many departments, one cannot argue that a full separation of the areas of the curriculum is a characteristic of all language departments across the United States. In the aftermath of the MLA (2007) report in fact a number of universities have attempted to reduce the extent to which a two-tiered structure affects the ability to teach language and content 'as a continuous whole'. Nonetheless, years after the report's publication, research suggests that at least some of the issues mentioned, have still not been addressed in many institutions. Zannirato (2014) explored the problems and conflicts inherent in two-tiered foreign language departments in U.S. universities through an empowerment evaluation based approach. He found that non-tenure track language faculty felt they had 'less control in relation to their professional lives' (in Norris, 2016, p.180). This finding

confirms the statement made in the MLA (2007) report regarding tenure and non-tenure track faculty.

> Research indicates that in doctoral-granting departments, the *teaching of first-year language courses* breaks down as follows: full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members teach 7.4% of first-year courses, full-time non-tenure-track faculty members teach 19.6%, *part-time instructors teach 15.7%,* and *graduate student teaching assistants teach 57.4%.* (Other undergraduate courses are taught by a much higher percentage of tenure-line faculty members in doctorate-granting departments [40.3 %].)
>
> (MLA, (2007, p.6, my italics)

After highlighting the disparity between tenure-track and non-tenure track language faculty and exposing implications for their empowerment, Zannirato (2014) suggests that departments should 'identify structural factors that are conflict-generating and disempowering and then collectively implement specific plans of action that reduce inequities among language and literature faculty' (Norris and Mills, 2016, p.9). Byrnes (2006, p.244), in Perspectives, also identifies inherent issues in the communicative orientation of language teaching in lower-level courses and argues that,

> because of a propensity to separate language from content, particularly literary-cultural content, such a focus may unintentionally sustain the long-standing bifurcation of FL programs into language courses and content courses with all the attendant negative consequences.

The separation of language and content referred to above, observable in collegiate foreign language departments in the US, differs in many ways to the way the issue has been perceived as problematic in the UK. In fact, in many institutions, upper-division courses are taught and assessed in the target language and even departments which do offer some literature / area-studies courses in English, will often also offer alternative courses in the target language. What is understood by 'language courses' in a U.S. collegiate context, refers to classes open to both majors and non-majors from absolute beginners to upper-

intermediate. In the upper-division the target language may be used as the medium of instruction, but the focus shifts towards the students' understanding and production of content. The feedback they receive on their language may be minimal and explicit focus on form is generally no longer present. There is however no standard model and indeed every department will differ in the extent to which they endeavour to integrate the two areas of the curriculum.

2.5.3 The purpose of transcultural / intercultural competence in Modern Languages

Language learning at university has the potential to influence the way of thinking of students with respect to identity and attitudes towards not merely a different system of communication but also notions of 'the foreign'. The process of developing interest in the language and culture studied is a valuable opportunity to question pre-established assumptions. Hence it is argued that 'the experience of the foreign always implies a reconsideration of the familiar' (Kramsch, 2009, p.5). As students enter university, they bring with them their own set of knowledge and beliefs and through the comparison with those of a foreign language and culture, this aspect of their identity, which Kramsch refers to as the 'familiar', is either explicitly or implicitly, challenged. The notion of intercultural or transcultural competence is perhaps even more relevant to students in the modern world, where identity is perhaps not as clearly definable as it was in the past. Kramsch (2009) notes that:

> In our times of increased migrations and displacements, when globalisation enhances what Pratt (1999) calls the 'contact zones' and the 'traffic in meaning' (2002) among individuals and communities, it is important that we look in richer detail at the lived experiences of multilingual users.   (Kramsch, 2009, p.2)

The recent AHRC project *Transnationalising Modern Languages (TML)* reflects the complexity behind understanding cultural identity in the modern world. The three-year project (2014-17), funded by one of the three AHRC's Translating Cultures grants,

examines the forms of mobility that have shaped the development of modern Italian culture and its interactions with other cultures across the globe. (http://www.transnationalmodernlanguages.ac.uk/).

Interestingly the term *transnational* also appears in Risager's work, offered as an alternative to the national paradigm (see Chapter 8) and in the MLA (2007) report, where the terms 'transnational' and 'transcultural' are employed.

It is by looking at the experiences of multilingual users that we can gain a better understanding of how the acquisition of more than one language shapes us as individuals. In questioning 'the familiar' students have an opportunity to view themselves, for instance, as 'Americans' from a different perspective. Kramsch argues that we 'only learn who we are through the mirror of others, and, in turn, we only understand others by understanding ourselves as Other' (2009, p.18). However, in order to see how others perceive us, for instance in the context of national identity, we must gain greater insight into which traits or characteristics define what others see as our own identity. When learning a foreign language and its culture the opportunity for comparison and hence to learn not only about 'the foreign' but also about 'our-selves' is constantly present. Perhaps one of the issues in language teaching is that there may oftentimes be an increased focus on language form that may interfere with the development of communicative fluency (ibid., p.28). With regards to the university system in the United States, we see that this may present a concern for lower-division undergraduate study, where the focus, in many institutions, remains predominantly to develop students' linguistic and communicative competence. When we look at the American university curriculum for Modern Languages, we find that the general purpose of foreign language instruction is to prepare students to read literature in the upper-level classes. However, as Kramsch (2009) points out, 'they are taught how to read monolingual foreign language texts *without any consideration of the other language (s) students might bring to the classroom*' (ibid., p.3,

my italics). A discussion on the role of culture and its particular place in the university curriculum in the USA needs to take into consideration the difference in curriculum between lower and upper-division courses. If we reflect on the role of culture in understanding language, we need to consider not only the culture of the TL but also the culture or cultures of the students' native language or languages. Even when language is not specifically taught in content, language itself embodies a cultural reference and oftentimes translations not only of texts but also of single words illustrate slightly different meanings, as they are inevitably associated to their cultural contexts. Kramsch (2003) relates an example of this from her teaching practice with undergraduates of German at Berkley. The lesson's topic was a discussion on the short story by Yüksel Pazaraya Deutsche Kastanien relating the experience of a boy of Türkish parents, born and raised in Germany, who experiences discrimination at school. The students had read the story at home and were therefore familiar with the content. Kramsch asked her students a few questions on the story and students gave their responses, however when she asked a particular question, this resulted in silence. The question was 'Who do you associate with the word Ausländer (foreigner)?'; this question resulted in silence and some brief answers from only some students, then Kramsch posed a further question, namely 'in America, who is an Ausländer?'. This question resulted in a long silence followed by a question, half asked to himself, by one student: 'Are there any Ausländer here in America?' (Kramsch, 2003, p.5). The reluctance of students to discuss the topic of foreigners raised questions about whether in America it is ever considered appropriate to consider someone a foreigner.

The anecdote given by Kramsch is a good example of how an aspect of language, in this case the German word 'Ausländer', may hold different connotations in Germany, but when translated into the English 'foreigner', it adopts a different cultural context. This is a practical example of how students can learn about their own language and culture through

the experience of 'otherness'. With regards to foreign language teaching in American universities, the above illustrates a students' unease in discussing a topic, which may seem controversial in America; this also indicates that students have not yet distanced themselves enough from their own culture and beliefs in order to understand that in a different cultural setting a discussion on foreigners or the use of the word 'foreign' to refer to immigrants may be the norm. With regards to the role of culture and a critical / reflective approach towards its teaching, Reagan (2002) and Reagan and Osborn (2002) argue that the language classrooms constitute an ideal space for the explicit discussion of cultural, political and ideological issues of language, power and identity. An explicit discussion would hence involve a greater focus on the critical discussion on culture thus transforming the language classroom into a space for reflection on intercultural linguistic exchanges. The points mentioned here are not only relevant to exposing a student perspective on foreign language teaching in American collegiate education, but are also linked to the discussion in chapter three on otherness and third spaces.

2.5.4 An integrated four-year, genre-oriented and task based curriculum - German at Georgetown

While a number of universities across the United States reflect the issues mentioned in the MLA (2007) report, there are some institutions, which have explored alternative ways of delivering a Modern Language curriculum informed by SLA and pedagogical research. Between 1997 and 2000 Georgetown University's German Department (GUGD), implemented a curricular reform resulting in a four year, genre-oriented and task-based curriculum (Pfeiffer and Byrnes, 2009, p.183). The research project resulting in the new curriculum implementation was known as Developing Multiple Literacies and was aimed to address a number of educational, academic, and administrative concerns which had been repeatedly raised by the departmental faculty (Byrnes, 2001). One of the aims of the curricular reform was to eliminate the distinction between educational goals for majors

and non-majors (Pfeiffer and Byrnes, 2009, p.183) and create a unified set of goals. The reform further resulted in a more 'unified and articulated curriculum that would overcome the division between language and content courses and that would support all students in attaining advanced levels of ability in German' (ibid. p.185). The present curriculum in place at GUGD is described as follows on the departmental website.

> The curriculum is content-based from the beginning of instruction and explicitly fosters learners' language acquisition until the end of the four-year undergraduate sequence of courses. That is, it does not differentiate between so-called "language" courses and "content" courses.

(GUGD website https://german.georgetown.edu)

An evaluation project was carried out between 2006 and 2008 to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the new curriculum. The study was aimed at evaluating the appropriateness, level of satisfaction, and perceived learning outcomes of the curriculum from the point of view of learners. All students enrolled in German classes during the spring 2007 term were asked to complete an on-line questionnaire asking them to rate the programme's delivery, learning outcomes and their learning experience (Pfeiffer and Byrnes, 2009, p.187). An alumni version of the questionnaire was also sent to former students who had studied at Georgetown before the implementation of the revised curriculum. The study found that 'ratings of post-1999 alums for all three categories - language abilities, cultural and literary knowledge and overall educational experience - indicated higher satisfaction levels than for those who completed their terminal degree in 1998 or earlier' (Pfeiffer and Byrnes, 2009, p.194). With regards to the department's decision to address the two-tiered structure of language and literature, the study found that 'current students and post-1999 graduates supported the appropriateness of the department's fundamental decision to eliminate the bifurcation between language and content courses and between service courses for non-majors and majors courses' (ibid. p. 197).

The findings reported in Pfeiffer and Byrnes (2009) provide an empirical basis in addition to the strong theoretical background supporting the rationale for a more holistic and coherent language and content curriculum. The curriculum in place at GUGD hence provides an example of how departments can address some of the issues and criticisms reported in the MLA (2007) report with regards to the bifurcation of language and content in U.S. foreign language departments.

Summary of Chapter 2

The chapter provides an overview of some of the timely issues concerning foreign language teaching in both the U.K. and U.S. Higher Education. While the separation between language and content is reported as problematic in both geographical contexts, the issue is inherently different. In British universities what is observed is generally a parallel teaching of language units alongside content, often taught at least in part in English, whereas in the U.S. the issue concerns the sequential structure of foreign language departments. The chapter provides a detailed description of how the separation between language and content remains problematic in both educational contexts as well as making reference to both empirical and theoretical sources, which offer recommendations for reshaping foreign language curricula and degree structures. Some reference is also made to the importance of intercultural competence and students' critical thinking, in relation to how it has been identified in language policy documents. The theoretical frameworks of intercultural competence and criticality, as well as their relevance to this doctoral study, are discussed in detail in chapter three.

CHAPTER 3   CRITICALITY AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

This chapter seeks to define the concepts of 'criticality' and 'intercultural competence' and subsequently explore the relevance of the two concepts to the study of Modern Languages in HE.   The concept of criticality is defined and understood according to Barnett's (1997) model, which was also employed in the Criticality project carried out at the University of Southampton as well as in Yamada (2008) and Romero de Mills (2008). The chapter further distinguishes between criticality, critical thinking and critical pedagogy in order to both situate the model within its theoretical framework and illustrate the rationale for selecting Barnett's (1997) model among other frameworks.

The model of Intercultural Competence adopted in this study is drawn from Byram's (1997) work on Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).   Both conceptual frameworks are defined and particular focus is placed on his Fifth Savoir (savoir s'engager - Critical Cultural Awareness), which Byram places at the centre of his ICC model arguing that it 'embodies the educational dimension of language teaching' (Byram, 2012, p.9 in Fuertes and Torres, 2015, p.63).   While the frameworks of 'criticality' and 'intercultural competence' have been developed independently, with the former aimed for Higher Education more generally and the latter specifically for foreign language teaching, more recently both frameworks have been explored for their relevance in informing language pedagogy in HE.   It can be further argued that there is some overlap in the two theoretical concepts, particularly between Byram's fifth savoir (critical cultural awareness) and Barnett's levels and domains of criticality, thus supporting a rationale for adopting both frameworks in this thesis.   As Yamada (2008) points out, language learning seen from the perspective of Citizenship Education, such as is reflected in Byram's works on Intercultural Citizenship, 'provides a realistic reference of how criticality development is connected to language teaching' (p.116).

The rationale for exploring both intercultural competence and criticality in this thesis is further supported by the research carried out for the Southampton Criticality Project (discussed in greater detail in section 3.1.4). The project explored both the contribution of Modern Language courses to students' development of criticality as well as the university's conception of intercultural competence / intercultural skill, thus bridging together the two conceptualisations in the context of Modern Languages in HE. It is argued that Barnett's work on criticality understood in the context of Modern Languages in HE is relevantly linked to Byram's concept of *Critical Cultural Awareness*, which includes critical reflection on knowledge (e.g. the texts or media studied, which may represent aspects of culture), on the self (through reflections on how our own beliefs and values have been shaped) and on the world (through comparisons between one's own language and culture and the language and culture studied). The three dimension of *knowledge, self* and *world* are drawn from Barnett's 1997 criticality model, further described in section 3.1.3.

The role of culture in language learning is furthermore discussed in this chapter, as it constitutes a broader theoretical framework from which specific concepts such as Byram's (ICC) have developed. The terminology of 'intercultural', indicating some kind of comparison 'between cultures' is also explored in order to illustrate its possible applications to language teaching. The chapter furthermore discusses how 'culture' has long been present in the foreign language syllabus, reference and policy documents, yet the extent to which intercultural competence is taught and assessed across the curriculum remains unclear and difficult to measure. Additionally, it considers the role of culture as specified in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning and ACTFL guidelines that respectively provide guidance on language learning in Europe and the U.S.A.

3.1 Defining 'Criticality'

The terminology of 'Criticality' is to be understood here as a specific understanding of broader concepts describing critical cognitive processes, which have been employed extensively in a wide range of disciplines and geographical contexts. Perhaps the most frequently employed term is what is usually referred to as 'critical thinking'. Criticality, on the other hand, can be understood as a far more specific concept drawing from both the fields of Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking. To gain a greater understanding of the term 'criticality' however, it is important to examine how the term 'critical' has been employed in Critical Pedagogy, associated with the works of Henry Giroux, Paulo Freire and Peter McLaren, among others. Critical Thinking, on the other hand, has often been attributed to the works of Chris Argyris (Argyris, 2010) and to Peter Senge's adaptation of it (Senge, 2006), particularly in the United States, while in the U.K. the concept has seen influences from the work of Christopher Hawkes (Evans, 1998) among others (Brookfield, 2012).

The use of the term 'criticality', as opposed to 'critical thinking' or other similar terms that refer to the development of such skills, is preferred here as it provides a broader conceptualisation than critical thinking. The term 'criticality' was employed in the Southampton project in reference to its framework, as well as in Barnett (1997), upon which the model is based. In this regard, Johnston et al. (2011) offer their own definition of criticality as comprising of 'critical thinking, critical self-reflection and critical action' (p.1). The term 'criticality' in contrast with other terminology, has furthermore appeared in doctoral studies investigating its particular role in Language Teaching in Higher Education (see Yamada, 2008; Romero de Mills, 2008; Thunnithet, 2011) which similarly make reference to Barnett's (1997) model.

An important role of criticality in Higher Education is arguably its academic function, which aims to develop students into individuals able to reach a certain intellectual depth and challenge pre-established world views. Barnett (1997, p.7) makes a distinction between 'critical thinking' and 'criticality' by arguing that 'critical thinking skills confine the thinker to given standards of reasoning within specific disciplines, whereas critique opens the possibility of entirely different and even contrasting modes of understanding'. Furthermore, he states that although 'critical thinking' has been 'a defying concept of the Western university' it has been 'confined largely [...] to formal knowledge' (ibid.). Hence he proposed the term 'criticality' to encompass his three domains: knowledge, the self and the world from which he suggests three forms of critical being, namely: critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action. (ibid.)

3.1.1 Criticality and Critical Thinking

Criticality and Critical Thinking are terminologies, which have developed from a broader area of critical thought, that over the years has seen contributions from a number of scholars. Perhaps some of the oldest contributions to critical thinking were those rooted in the Socratic syllogisms (see Chaffee, 2014) which require a valid relationship between premises and conclusions in order to have a logical argument. From this perspective, critical thinking could be understood as the skill of applying precise formulae in order to structure logical arguments. In the mid 20th century Hollenbach and De Graff carried out a research study in the USA to investigate critical thinking abilities in college[7] students. The researchers explored how critical thinking could be employed pedagogically and looked at ways to enable students to reflect on their learning. As the study took place in the 1950's, critical thought was understood from a Socratic perspective and hence entailed the ability to construct logically valid arguments. Ironically, Hollenbach and De Graff

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[7] 'College' in the USA refers to tertiary education and the term is often employed as a synonym for university or in reference to Community Colleges, also degree conferring institutions.

(1957) reported that many students at the college were 'prone to accept generalisations of others in a completely uncritical way' (p.127). The conclusions the researchers drew on the basis of their investigation, were that curricula and assessments needed to be amended in order to foster the development of better 'habits of thinking' (p.128). As interest in critical thinking from a pedagogical perspective started to increase, scholars gradually moved away from a rigid Socratic model and began to look at the process of learning. Harvey Siegel (1988), an American philosopher, for instance moved away from this model. He argued that two conditions were necessary for an individual to develop into a critical thinker; the individual should be able to 'evaluate claims', what he terms the 'assessment component' and possess what he called a 'critical spirit', which refers to the willingness to put critical thought into action (Siegel, 1988, p.33). Contemporary critical thinking is thus characterised by certain frameworks which defined how the concept was understood, given the context, hence a single definition of the term is unlikely to encompass the vast number of scholarly contributions in this field. Perhaps one of the reasons why the Socratic contribution to our understanding of 'critical thinking' is so meaningful, is the fact that it has led to the development of 'strategic questioning' as a valuable pedagogical tool. It has also been considered an excellent model for educators in spite of the apparent 'failure to teach anything' as the educational purpose of such method is largely to enable students to develop inquisitive minds (Jordan, 1990, pp.61-66).

Critical Thinking today often plays a significant role in Higher Education and there is a shared belief that anyone has the potential to become a critical being. However, as Bailin et al. (1999) point out, the mere ability of students to be able to solve certain problems themselves is not necessarily regarded as critical thinking; hence defining what constitutes critical thinking, particularly in higher education, can be quite challenging. In addition to the philosophical perspectives on Critical Thinking, the field has also seen contributions from cognitive and behavioural psychology, which in turn have attempted to explain

thinking processes from a different viewpoint. Barnett (1997), on the other hand, proposes a somewhat different perspective on critical thought. From his perspective, what is considered 'critical' may acquire a different meaning, depending on the nations, cultures and societies in which people live. He argued that everything we know is an outcome of social-construct (Barnett, 1997, pp.20-25) and hence he developed a 'conceptualisation' of the critical, which covers different degrees of complexity and levels of domain. This conceptualisation of Critical Thinking forms the Criticality model outlined in detail in Barnett (1997). As the term 'criticality' was employed by Barnett to describe a new understanding of critical thinking, its meaning is far more specific than the terminology of Critical Thinking, which has been used extensively in various different fields. As Barnett's criticality model specifically addresses Higher Education, the following section explores his contribution to the field and the specific role of criticality in the development of students at tertiary level.

3.1.2 The Role of Criticality in Higher Education

The place of criticality in Higher Education and the value that is placed upon its development may differ according to traditions and cultures, which help shape the objectives of specialist study at this level. Furthermore disciplines regard the development of criticality in HE students differently; while some areas of study may aim to foster its development, others may place less emphasis on this particular area. However, the understanding that Higher Education should foster the development of critical thinking can in many ways be identified with a broadly Western university model. Halstead (2004), for instance, notes that there are a number of differences between Western and traditional Islamic notions of education, where the latter focuses on certainty and unity, while the former proposes an uncertain and contingent nature of knowledge characteristic of a Western liberal education in the modern world. Similarly, it would appear that Higher Education in Asia does not generally place criticality at the forefront of its agenda. Levin

(2010, p.8) points out that the current focus in many Asian countries is on the 'mastery of content' rather than the 'capacity for independent and critical thinking'. It is therefore problematic to view criticality models for Higher Education as comprehensive, nor can one assume that criticality will transfer unproblematically for [...] international students who study outside their home country (Wildavsky, 2010). Hence it can be argued that the role of criticality in HE differs according to countries, ideologies and geographical locations. The Western model of criticality for HE has seen a number of contributions from both philosophy and psychology, which have led to a greater understanding of this concept. With regards to liberal education, some aspects of the development of criticality can be traced as far back as the Ancient Greek idea of Higher Education, comprising of critical examination of knowledge, devotion to the truth and rhetoric (Barnett, 1990; Burbles et al. 1999; Kerr, 1972). More significant contributions to its development were later seen through contributions made by Islamic scholars in the European 'Dark Ages' and later with the arrival of the Enlightenment and its focus on rationalism (Axelrod, 2002, pp.14-22). However it was not until the nineteenth century that a secular model of higher education gained influence, particularly in France and Germany (ibid.). As the idea of the autonomy of knowledge started to develop, as a result of Humboltian ideal, the development of the whole person through the ideal of 'Bildung' became prominent and in this view 'the pursuit of knowledge or truth [becomes] an end in itself' (Delanty, 2001, p.38).

The development of a secular liberal Higher Education has, to an extent, influenced the ethos of many Western institutions, with the exception of those with a strong religious affiliation (Johnston et al., 2011). The liberal approach views higher education as 'intrinsically worthwhile' (ibid. p.16) and being about: '(1) the pursuit of 'truth', through critical investigation; (2) the expansion of the student's outlook; (3) the development of the student's capacity for social and civic interaction; and (4) the development of the

student's general intellectual capabilities (Newman, 1989/1996; Whitehead, 1932a, 1932b, Nussbaum, 1997; Oakeshott, 1950/1989; Jaspers, 1960; Shils, 1997).

From a psychological perspective, criticality is viewed in the context of cognition, the transferability and the development of thinking (Johnston et al. 2011) hence 'cognitive psychologists usually talk of 'thinking skills' rather than 'critical thinking'' (ibid. p.41). With regards to cognition, scholars have identified certain processes as lower order thinking skills (LOTS) while others as higher order thinking skills (HOTS) (see Bloom et al. 1956; Anderson, 2001). McGuinness (2005) similarly describes thinking skills as encompassing 'higher order thinking' and, in reference to their pedagogical implications, argues that 'learners [...] (need) to go beyond the mere recall of factual information to develop a deeper understanding of topics, to be more critical about evidence' (p.107). With regards to the transferability of thinking, psychologists have suggested that thinking strategies and skills are transferable to unfamiliar contexts. Wineburg (1998) argued that the ability to adapt (transfer) knowledge may be a central characteristic of expertise, suggesting experts are able to utilise a number of sense-making strategies even without direct knowledge of a sub-field. Fostering the development of transferable thinking would arguably be very useful in HE, particularly for those students wishing to continue to postgraduate studies. Markman et al. (2001), in this respect, note that experts can rely on memories of past experiences to reach conclusions. Furthermore, with regards to the development of thinking, a number of cognitive psychologists have developed thinking skills frameworks. Perhaps one of the most recognised frameworks in the context of Higher Education is that of Bloom et al. (1956). This was an early contribution to the field resulting in a highly influential effort to develop a hierarchical taxonomy of thinking processes devised to facilitate the development of assessments in the sector. Bloom et al. (1956) subdivided knowledge into 'knowledge of specifics' and 'knowledge of ways and means of dealing with specifics' and subsequently divided skills and abilities into

comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. More recently, Anderson et al. (2001) have updated Bloom's original taxonomy with the main revision being placing 'creativity' at the highest level in the place of evaluation, now occupying the second highest position.

Figure 1 - Bloom's taxonomy (1956) and Anderson's (2001) revisions

Bloom et al. (1956) Anderson et al. (2001)

HIGER ORDER THINKING SKILLS (HOTS)	HIGHER ORDER THINKING SKILLS (HOTS)
EVALUATION	CREATING
SYNTHESIS	EVALUATING
ANALISIS	ANALYSING
APPLICATION	APPLYING
COMPREHENSION	UNDERSTANDING
KNOWLEDGE	REMEMBERING

The distinction between the cognitive processes proposed here, can arguably help educators reflect upon more effective ways to develop thinking skills in their students in order to enable them to work on the higher end of the spectrum, as they progress through their studies. Similar models have additionally been proposed by other authors; Mosely et al. (2005) for instance, propose an integrated model for thinking and learning with three main components: information gathering, building understanding and productive thinking. The model, to a degree, also relates to Bloom's taxonomy, particularly in the identification of 'productive thinking' as 'higher-order' thinking. The latter is in many ways parallel to Bloom's analysis, synthesis and evaluation, which, as Mosely et al. (2005, p.377) argue, 'should result in a productive outcome such as a deeper understanding of an issue, a judgement, solution or decision, or in a tangible product, such as an invention or work of art'. Significant contributions from cognitive psychology, such as those mentioned here,

allow us to gain a better understanding of how learning may be better shaped in order to enable students to develop higher-order cognitive skills.

3.1.3 Barnett's (1997) model of Criticality

Barnett (1997) designed a model of criticality different from Critical Pedagogy or Critical Thinking and identified it as central to Higher Education. He argued that there was a need for a new understanding of critical thinking in HE: 'in suggesting that we need a new concept of critical thinking, I am also suggesting that we need a new conception of higher education itself' (Barnett, 1997, p.2). He proposed a model of criticality composed by three domains (knowledge, the self and the world) and three forms of critical being: (critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action) (ibid. p.69).

Figure 2 - A higher education for critical being
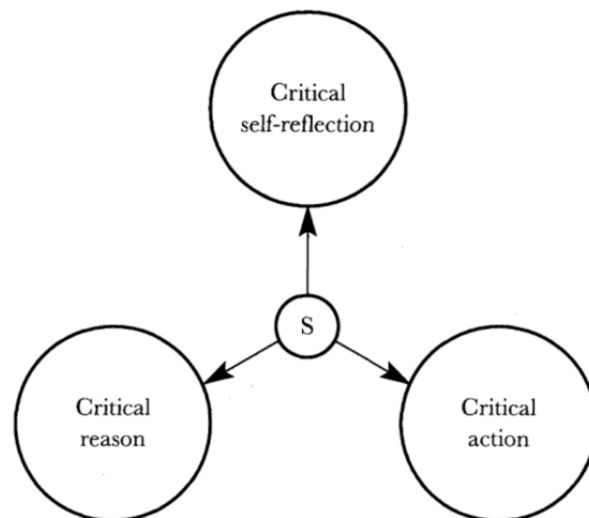
Source: Barnett (1997), p.70.

The figure above illustrates the role of the three forms of criticality in the development of the student persona. In reference to this model, Barnett (1997, p.70) suggests that a 'higher education for critical being takes on (...) [the configuration illustrated above] with

the student standing in a relationship to all three forms of criticality'. He further argued that the three domains should be brought together in order to achieve a 'unity of critical outlook' (pp.114-115). The interplay of these three domains would hence contribute to the overall development of criticality in the student.

With reference to curriculum implications, Barnett suggests that 'a curriculum for critical being [...] has to be one that exposes students to criticality in the three domains and at the highest level in each' (p.102). The table below represents Barnett's levels of criticality, which are numbered in ascending order from (1) Critical skills, the lowest level, to (4) Transformatory critique, the highest level.

Table 1: Levels, domains and forms of critical being

	Domains		
Levels of criticality	Knowledge	Self	World
4. Transformatory critique	Knowledge critique	Reconstruction of self	Critique-in-action (collective reconstruction of world)
3. Refashioning of traditions	Critical thought (malleable traditions of thought)	Development of self within traditions	Mutual understanding and development of traditions
2. Reflexivity	Critical thinking (reflection on one's understanding)	Self-reflection (reflection on one's own projects)	Reflective practice ("Metacompetence," "adaptability," "flexibility")
1. Critical skills	Discipline-specific critical thinking skills	Self-monitoring to given standards and norms	Problem-solving (means-end instrumentalism)
Forms of criticality	*Critical reason*	*Critical self-reflection*	*Critical action*

Source: Barnett (1997, p.103)

As outlined in the table above, Barnett regards critical thinking as a required process to achieve the upper stages of criticality which involve action. To a degree the criticality definition proposed here encompasses elements from Critical Pedagogy and employs principles of Critical Thinking as an initial stage of criticality development. Barnett's criticality model, on which the Criticality Project by the University if Southampton is

based, has made a significant contribution to Higher Education and is arguably particularly relevant here as it was employed in research into Modern Languages. The following section discusses its applications within the context of the Southampton project and reviews outcomes of the project in relation to this research.

3.1.4 The Criticality Project by the University of Southampton

The Criticality Project, titled *Development of Criticality Among Undergraduates in Two Academic Disciplines: Social Work and Modern Languages*, consisted of an empirical study carried out during a two-year research project, funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council, between July 2002 and June 2004 (Johnston et al. 2011). The aim of the project was to investigate the development of criticality in undergraduates in the two different disciplines at a UK university. The primary contributors to the research were Brenda Johnston, Rosamond Mitchell, Florence Myles, Peter Ford and the late Christopher Brumfit, whose contribution to the project was invaluable prior to his untimely death in 2006. The output of the project is best outlined in Johnston et al. (2011), as the book discusses the proposed framework as well as the data collection and its findings. The empirical study was aimed at gaining a greater understanding of university practices particularly with regards to the relationship between theoretical frameworks for criticality and their respective implementations in HE. As this research, among other areas, is concerned with the development of criticality in Modern Languages, this section reports the findings of the Southampton project in relation to this subject area and discusses any conclusions and recommendations made, as a result of the data analysis. With regards to Modern Languages, the project principally looked at two issues, namely 'expectations concerning the contribution of courses and activities promoting language proficiency development to student criticality and the institution's conception of intercultural competence/intercultural skill' (Johnston et al. 2011, p.115).

As a component of the empirical research, proficiency level descriptors for language modules were analysed and it was identified that at higher levels students were expected to understand 'virtually everything' in the target language and 'interpret critically virtually all forms of the written language', while in speaking they were expected to handle 'linguistically complex interaction' (ibid. p.116). Ironically, an important limiting consideration, as Johnston et al. (2011) argue, is that since content modules 'were mostly taught and assessed in English […] there was no sustained practice in writing critically in the target language in the academic genres associated with the various content fields' (ibid.). The findings also highlighted a difference between language and content modules in relation to criticality development. When comparing tasks set in language modules, the more extensive task assigned during the residence abroad period and assignments in content modules, it was found that there were some differences between how the nature of the assessments was able to develop criticality in Modern Language students.   It was found, for instance, that the residence abroad task required students to produce a significant piece of writing in the target language, for which the band descriptors for the highest level include having an excellent understanding of issues, originality and independent thinking. Furthermore, when comparing these performance descriptors, which stress originality, among other skills, to criteria used for essay assessments in 'content' courses taught through English, it was noted that 'the latter criteria were more elaborate, referring to critical evaluation and use of sources as well as to argumentation' (ibid., p.117). In this respect, Johnston et al. (2011) argue that although 'fostering of critical thinking was not absent from language-related activities […] general communicative proficiency […] were more prized' (p.118). In an earlier publication reporting findings from the project, Brumfit et al. (2005), in reference to language study, also noted that 'it is clear that the focus on criticality development itself is less central than in other areas of the ML curriculum, especially the 'content' courses' (p.159). This statement is further

supported in Mitchell and Johnston (2004) who found that 'in interviews both tutors and students talk most about critical thinking and engaging with the world when discussing content rather than language classes' (cited in Brumfit et al. 2005, p.159). The findings mentioned above are of great relevance to this investigation, hence the contribution of the Southampton project in gaining a better understanding of how the two elements of the degree programme place different cognitive challenges on students, is invaluable here. It also indirectly provides some information regarding how a traditional curriculum impacts the student experience through the setting of different goals and expectations between language and content modules. As the Southampton project aimed to primarily pursue two issues in Modern Languages, the second theme of interest concerns intercultural competence. With regards to this area, researchers at Southampton found that although the benchmark statement placed emphasis on intercultural competence, the institutional programme at the university paid less attention to it (Johnston et al. 2011). Descriptors of the different proficiency levels, referred to as stages at this institution, did refer to this aspect particularly at the higher levels, such as stages 6 and 7. Stage 7, for instance, notes that students should develop 'a thorough, in-depth knowledge of several aspects of the target culture' (ibid., p.118). Also, in addition to the input received in language classes, other elements of the degree programme, particularly the year abroad, may also provide opportunities for criticality development and a greater exposure to cross-cultural communication. This particular area has been recognized internationally as a field of research and appears to be growing in terms of its conceptual literature and implementation into practice as a result from substantial contributions to the field (e.g. Byram, 1997; Council of Europe 2001). Another area that has been numerously reflected in the literature in recent years, is the role of the year abroad in the development of intercultural awareness (e.g., Roberts et al. 2001; Murphy-Lejune, 2002; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005; Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2008, cited in Johnston, 2011, p.119). It would appear,

however, that explicit reference to the development of what the Council of Europe terms 'existential competence' (or savoir-être) is often rather limited. Researchers at Southampton observed that the assessment criteria for the project report, for instance, primarily focused on thinking skills but did not specifically measure self-reflection or the development of intercultural awareness (Johnston et al. 2011). On the other hand, developing knowledge of another culture, during the Year Abroad, appeared to facilitate engagement with intercultural aspects of final-year classes where students made some attempts to integrate self when discussing literature (ibid.). It would appear, from the findings of the project, that the content modules and the year abroad are perhaps the two of the three components of a Modern Language degree that seem to be more directly linked to fostering criticality and the development of intercultural awareness. Interestingly the process of acquiring the foreign language appears to be viewed as responsible for enabling students to engage with target language texts and develop arguments in the target language yet, arguably, little attention is placed on the outcomes of acquiring a foreign linguistic system, which, per se, could contribute to critical reflection. The precise relationship between the three components of the degree, namely language, content and the year abroad, is difficult to define; although the literature would seem to indicate that each component, to an extent, plays a role in the development of criticality, the curriculum and assessment tasks may not necessarily be designed to foster its development. The following section thus presents an overview of the literature on language and content modules with reference to students' development of criticality.

3.1.5 Developing criticality in language and content modules

Unlike many other disciplines in the humanities, Modern Languages is arguably more complex to define in terms of subject content and assessments due to its dual nature. There is mixed opinion among academics with regards to the exact relationship between language and content (often referred to language and culture) and the extent to which the

two should be integrated. Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) argue that 'fresh thinking is required to enable us to move out of the binary impasses of languages versus culture, literature versus languages, language elitism versus language popularism, structural versus communicative approaches' (p.xv). Arguably one of the implications of maintaining a curriculum in which language constitutes a separate element of study, is the risk of it being perceived as strictly 'skill acquisition'. Such an understanding of what constitutes the study of language can have serious consequences both for teaching staff and for the quality of the learning experience offered to students. According to Kelly (2000), a shift towards 'applied language' degrees, for instance, could result in language departments no longer offering 'language degrees' but rather language study associated directly with each separate discipline. This in turn could lead to a 'massive deskilling [...] (and) almost certainly lower rates of pay on short-term contracts which offer no opportunities to contest the shape and direction of higher education' (Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004, p.8). In addition to the pragmatic concerns for language educators, as Phipps and Gonzalez note, this could mean that languages would be 'uncoupled from [...] the central activities of languaging, being intercultural and living with supercomplexity' (ibid.). The terms 'languaging' and 'being intercultural' here refer to the two concepts that Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) propose to describe a new way of looking into languages as something to do and to be lived. However, in order for the study of language to enable learners to become 'active agents in creating their human environment' (ibid. p.2) arguably more needs to take place than the mere teaching of language skills. It is precisely this issue that seems to raise the question of whether language, on its own, can contribute to the development of criticality, particularly when there is no explicit attempt to make this an objective of instruction or assessment. Linguists have argued extensively on the potential of the study of language, particularly when this encompasses an exploration of different cultures, to develop critical self-reflection and intercultural competence (see Guilherme, 2002, Byram, 2008 and

elsewhere), but the question is whether this argument is still valid for a more instrumental purpose of language learning where the main focus is the mere acquisition of linguistic and communicative competence. As Phipps and Gonzalez (2004, p.2) argue, languages need to be perceived as more than skills; through language, people can become 'active agents' in shaping their human environment. They further argue that the foreign language student has the potential of experiencing the extraordinary opportunity to 'enter the languaging of others'. As Barnett (2000) puts it, entering other cultures is to re-enter one's own and hence to interpret the supercomplex variety of human experience. The importance of de-centering from one's own culture and view point through the process of learning a foreign language is further described in Dervin and Risager (2015). Authors contributing to the volume argue for acknowledging the multiplicy and complexity of identity in intercultural contexts (Zhu Hua, Tranekjær, Baynham, Kramsch, among others). They further emphasise the 'importance of the hyphen between self-other and of social relations in creating interculturality (Dervin and Risager, 2015, p.233). There is an emphasis on describing the transformation of identity and the emergent new aspects of identity resulting from interaction with the 'other'. As Dervin and Risager state, 'the authors agree that there is no *I* without an *other* and vice-versa' (ibid., italics in the original) and define culture or cultural identity in this postmodern era is proving to be increasingly complex. Kramsch (2015, p.211) distinguishes between 'identity' and 'subjectivity' and argues that there has been some confusion with regards to these terms in applied linguistics. She contextualises the interest in identity in applied linguistics within the broader geopolitical concern over the desire of ethnic minority groups, for instance, to be recognised as culturally diverse, which, as Taylor (1992) argues, have led to ethnic identity politics. Kramsch draws attention to the subjective effects of learning a foreign language and its influence on perceptions of identity. In relating to her own experience of having learnt German in adolescence and having also reached the stage of dreaming in

German, she understood there must have been more to language learning than using communicative strategies and aspiring to be part of the German-speaking community (Kramsch 2013, cited in Kramsch 2015). Alison Phipps, viewing the complexity of learning a foreign language from a postmodernist perspective, argues that language educators interested in studying subjectivity should:

> Document the subjective effects of language on the embodied perceptions, memories and emotions of speakers by using the methods and forms best fitted, in your reading and experience, to such documentations, fully aware of their contingency and fluidity.

> (Phipps, 2012, p.599)

It has been argued that when viewing the potential benefits of experiencing language learning as opposed to acquiring linguistic and communicative competence, the outcome of the time devoted to this activity would not be equally comparable. In this respect, Phipps and Gonzalez (2004, p.3) state that the outcome of studying modern languages can be the evolution of what they term 'intercultural being' i.e. 'the understanding of the varied and multiple reality of which we are part'. Hence the argument regarding how language and content contribute to the development of criticality is complex as it relies on a variety of factors. The concepts of languaging and intercultural being, to a degree, implicitly reflect the study of language, but are understood as grounded into the social experience, and the study of culture (as is often the focus in many content modules) through which one explores other cultures and in return can become more critical and reflexive about one's own world. As was noted in Brumfit et al. (2005), it appeared that the content modules presented a greater opportunity to develop the ability to compare and reflect upon different cultures and realities. Perhaps one of the concerns with language study is that reference to culture is often made in relation to 'cultural awareness' which, from a cognitive point of view, is aimed primarily at teaching about culture i.e. acquisition of knowledge, rather than developing the ability to critically reflect upon differences and

pre-conceived notions of reality. Byram (1989) also made reference to 'cultural awareness' in his earlier model for language and culture teaching (in Risager, K., 2004, p.160) while, in Byram (1997, p.63), the author makes explicit emphasis on critical cultural awareness in his fifth savoir, which he defines as 'an ability to evaluate critically and, on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries'. The conceptual framework proposed by Phipps and Gonzalez (2004, p.3) distinguishes languaging from language learning and suggests that, in reference to culture, language learning is concerned with 'learning about' cultures as opposed to 'living in and with' cultures. What they advocate for is a shift towards a deeper experience of language study, which can expose the learner to a number of opportunities that can foster the development of an 'intercultural criticality'. Similarly, in clarifying the term intercultural being, the conceptual framework they propose is contrasted with intercultural competence (primarily associated with Michael Byram's work). The proposed framework highlights the role of 'reflexive engagement with self and other' and 'reflexive sojourning'. In both instances the term 'reflexive' has been suggested as an addition to the intercultural competence model adopted from Barnett (1994) and Byram (1997). Another interesting difference between the two frameworks is the focus of skilling as a process as opposed to skills as outcome (Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004, p.29). The authors note that while the major contributions of Byram's works have more recently reached higher education, opening doors to new courses such as languages and intercultural communication, Modern Languages in HE face extreme pressure to address pragmatic issues of performance (ibid.). These concerns have meant that Modern Languages in HE seem to be moving on the one hand towards discovering new possible strands in the discipline that may be better suited in our postmodern society, while on the other, appear to be holding back from innovation in fear of not being able to cater for the market, of which a portion is arguably more pragmatically oriented. Authors who

advocate in favour of a discipline, which aims to foster the development of criticality, such as Phipps and Gonzalez (2004, p.169) see languages as a social issue. Languaging, they argue, 'involves encounters with others (...) but also, importantly, with ourselves, with our own expectations, false assumptions, likes and dislikes, and often deeply rooted unexamined opinions'. Many of the concepts that inform the authors' views of what should constitute a deeper understanding of the study of languages and cultures are largely influenced by the work of Michael Byram on Intercultural Competence, Intercultural Communicative Competence and Kramsch's work on Culture as well as contributions from other authors such as Karen Risager and Heidi Byrnes, which are also cited in Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) when discussing Culture in greater detail. The following sections explore the complexity of the relationship between language and culture, which include Byram's conceptualisation of Intercultural Competence and contributions from the authors mentioned above, among others, to our understanding of this complexity.

3.2 Teaching language or teaching culture?

The discussion concerning division or integration between language and content and, as discussed above, the role of the TL in this debate, brings us to question the precise relationship between 'language' and 'culture' and its implications for Modern Languages as a field of study. The word 'culture' itself is difficult to define and indeed different theoretical positions have emerged as a result of the wide range of meanings that can be drawn from this term. Geertz (1975) describes it as 'a system of inherited conceptions […] by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life' hence focusing on language (communication) as an integral element of culture. Byram, in reference to Geertz's definition, argues that 'such a view (…) clearly reinforces the argument that (…) language teaching inevitably involves teaching culture' (1988, p.43). In Byram (1994) he voices this view more explicitly,

stating that 'language teaching' is indeed 'culture teaching' and the two are inextricably linked.

> Since language and culture are inseparable, we cannot be teachers of language without being
>
> teachers of culture – or vice versa. (Byram et al. 1994, p.viii)

While this is one perspective on the role of language and culture in foreign language teaching, it is a view, which has been frequently debated. Risager (2007, p.180), for instance, argues that 'linguistic flows can go anywhere and link up with any form of context and discursive content (e.g. food traditions in other parts of the world)', hence the view that a language is inseparable from its associated culture (generally understood as the nation culture) has, in recent years, been repeatedly challenged (see Kramsch, 1993, 2009; Byram, 2008; Zarate, 2003; Risager, 2007).

While most language teaching generally incorporates some aspects of culture, it is interesting to examine the different theoretical positions which have influenced the literature on the teaching of language and culture in order to better understand rationales for particular curriculum designs both in higher education and in other educational contexts.

3.2.1 The inseparability of Language and Culture?

The question of whether language and culture should be perceived as inseparable, or whether the two can be understood as separate components within language teaching, has given way to a number of conflicting theoretical positions. While some scholars have argued that 'language and culture are inseparable' or that 'language and culture are intimately linked' (see Byram, 1989; Byram, Morgan and colleagues, 1994), more recently such assumptions have been questioned as the relationship between language and culture has proven to be increasingly more complex. Byram himself, in his 1997 publication, acknowledges the complexity of this relationship, as do Kramsch (2002,

2004) and Freadman (2001). As a result of this complexity, some authors (see Risager, 2006) have contested the assertion of the inseparability of language and culture and argue that the two can be separated in certain respects. This is not a view that is unanimously accepted, rather a difference in opinion exists among scholars, which is arguably also evident within the academic community, where some view the teaching of language and content as a continuous whole as favourable (e.g. Byrnes, 2002) while others don't see this as necessary or even preferable. Risager (2006, p.3) argues that it is important to examine the relationship between language and culture in what she terms a 'generic' and 'differential' sense. In a 'generic' sense 'we are dealing with language and culture as phenomena shared by all humanity'. Indeed Risager (2006) offers quite a different perspective and, as Michael Byram notes in the foreword, the author's 'main purpose is to demonstrate that there is no necessary link between language and culture'. Indeed, as Byram himself acknowledges here, Risager's work 'reveals some of [his] loose thinking that has been part of discussions of the relationship of language and culture debates in pedagogy - including [his] own' (in Risager, 2006, p.xi). Byram's foreword to Risager's book is helpful to expose the very nature of the complexity behind arguments advocating for the integration of language and culture, which are also present in the thesis of this study. One needs to consider however, that although Byram's earlier views on the inseparability of language and culture may have been perceived by some authors, like Risager, as somewhat limiting, to argue that 'there is no necessary link between the two' is likewise arguably a strong assertion. Risager nonetheless makes an important contribution to the field by exposing some of the shared beliefs among language educators with regards to culture, which can arguably no longer be taken for face value in a society, which is constantly faced with the rise of multiculturalism. Risager (2006, p.196) argues that the idea of the inseparability of language and culture may have developed from two different tendencies. Firstly, individuals tend to project their own personal language, culture and

identity onto the community and hence imagine that there is such a connection; secondly, this psychological tendency has been employed politically to build up nationalism where 'a single image of the nation and its people' is constructed and characterised by 'a common national culture' expressed through the 'national language common to all speakers' (ibid.). It is important to note here that this is one understanding of what is meant by 'culture' and prominent scholars such as Kramsch, Byram and Byrnes, among others, have also written extensively on this topic. Kramsch (2009) points out that 'Cultural studies scholars have suggested that in this age of migration, diaspora, and Internet communication, identification and ways of belonging have become more important than stable identities attached to fixed places on the map' (p.15). We can no longer assume that people residing in a nation feel a sense of belonging to a common nation culture generally associated with the lingua franca of the country. It should be pointed out that Risager's main criticism concerns an understanding of 'culture' as 'nation culture', yet arguments in favour of a language-and-culture integrated curriculum need not necessarily advocate for an exclusive teaching of a single nation culture.

While historically the association between a single nation / culture and a single language was not problematic, this association has been repeatedly questioned in recent years. Zarate (2003), for instance, points out the need for language teaching 'to respond to the particular challenges of European integration, as nation states as national identities fuse and change' (in Byram, 2008, p.97). Risager repeatedly makes reference to this issue throughout her work arguing that 'there can be no going back to the national paradigm' (Risager, 2003, 2006, 2007 in Byram, 2008, p.97). However, while identification of language with its nation culture, with the exception of some countries where this still may be a relevant association, for instance Japan (see Yamada, 2008, p.312), does not provide an adequate representation of modern TL communities, it can be argued that the issues relating to 'national paradigms' do not necessarily challenge an understanding of

'language' and 'culture' as inseparable. What is understood here as 'culture' need not be identified with the culture of any specific nation state, rather the argument seeks to understand language to have a 'meaning-making' function within the cultural context in which it is employed. Byrnes (2013, p.96) highlights a 'historically attenuated interest in meaning making' in the literature concerning the skill of writing in foreign language learning but foreshadows 'a future possibility of understanding language in general and writing in particular as *being centrally about meaning-making'* (my italics). With reference to the national paradigm, Kramsch (2009) points out that as a result of rapid change in society, the 'third place'[8] metaphor illustrated in her earlier work (1993) needs to be revisited. She argues that the spatial metaphor of a 'third place' now appears 'too static for a relational state of mind' which, as the MLA (2007) report states, ought to 'enable multilingual speakers to 'operate between languages' (MLA, 2007, p.3-4, in Kramsch, 2009, p.200). In reference to her earlier work on 'third places', Kramsch argues as follows:

> Predicated on the existence of a first and second place that are all too often reified in 'country
>
> of origin' and 'host country', third place can be easily romanticized as some hybrid position
>
> that contributes to the host country's ideology of cultural diversity.

(Kramsch, 2009, p.200)

This is also acknowledged in Risager (2006, p.199), who points out that a study of the relationship between language and culture needs to go beyond the traditional first-language bias and argues that more attention would need to be placed on the multilingual individual in a multilingual society. In some of her more recent work, Risager herself takes a slightly different perspective on the relationship between language and culture acknowledging that 'the relationship between language and culture is complex and multidimensional' (Risager, 2007, p.2). With reference to languages in Higher Education,

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[8]The notion of 'third place' and 'third space' is further discussed in section 3.3.4.

Risager argues that Modern Language Studies need to break away from a traditional national paradigm and re-define themselves under a transnational paradigm, which locates language teaching in a transnational and global context (ibid., p.1). In this regard, Risager maintains her position regarding the inseparability of language and culture. She argues that in order for a shift towards a transnational paradigm to take place language subjects also need to 'break with the traditional view that 'language' and 'culture' constitute an inseparable whole, and that language teaching must therefore work for maximum integration between teaching the target language and teaching in the target culture' (Risager, 2007, p.2). One of the issues inherent in Risager's argument is her understanding of the rationale for a language and culture integrated curriculum in Higher Education. Arguments in favour of a language and culture integrated curriculum need not advocate for the teaching of a foreign language within its nation culture, rather seek to understand language as having a semiotic function within the context and content in which it is being used. Language is hence viewed as having a 'meaning-making' purpose (see Byrnes, 2005). With this understanding of a language and culture relationship, the 'culture' may not necessarily be the nation culture, but rather any culture or cultural reference, which is conveyed through the text or discourse in which the language is employed.

In this regards a number of scholars have agreed that the assumption that a given target language is strongly linked to a single nation culture, is one that does not match the multilingual and multicultural society of today's world and this is likely to be even less true in the future. Risager (2007) clearly states that 'Modern language studies do not have to be nationally shaped' (p.3). Indeed the association, often taken for face value, was one that only developed in the later half of the 19th century, when it was thought that languages should acquire the aim of portraying a uniform image of the nation states (ibid.). Other authors, such as Roberts et al. (2001) have also explicitly disassociated

themselves from the national paradigm and emphasise, on the other hand, the practice dimension of both language and culture and argue that, languages ought to be studied as linguistic practice, while linguistic practice must be seen as cultural practice 'where the individual is not a 'culture bearer' but is actively creating culture' (Roberts et al., 2001 in Risager, 2007, p.145). Although the writers distance themselves from the national paradigm and endorse a more social-constructivist point of view, they do not argue against the concept of inseparability, rather they 'plead for language and culture as a unity, so as to thereby neutralise the traditional dichotomy between 'language' on the one hand and 'culture' on the other' (ibid.). Indeed, as similarly voiced in Byram (1989), the authors argue that 'language and culture are inextricably connected' (Roberts et al. 2001, p.83) and that 'cultural-learning is language-learning and vice-versa' (ibid., p.5). Risager (2007) in this respect points out that such an understanding of the relationship between language and culture is one that portrays the two concepts as constituting 'a single universe' (p.145). She argues that this understanding of the relationship clashes with the concept of the 'intercultural speaker', which places emphasis on the important role of the first language or languages. The concept of the 'intercultural speaker', greatly associated with Byram's work on Intercultural Competence, discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, places emphasis on the ability of the intercultural speaker, as opposed to the native speaker, to make comparisons between the first language and culture and the one studied. As can be recognised by the discussion outlined here, it is apparent that scholars differ in their opinions about this relationship. Risager (2007) describes these contrasting opinions as follows,

> I believe it is possible to identify a basic conflict between those who support the idea that 'culture pedagogy' is basically a linguistic discipline - an extension of language pedagogy (such as Galisson, Crozet and Liddicoat, and to a certain extent Kramsch) and those who support the idea that culture pedagogy is an interdisciplinary field in which approaches from linguistics / language pedagogy are integrated with approaches that come from (the rest of)

cultural and social sciences. The first group tend to believe that language teaching has one goal: work on the language, which in itself is cultural. The other group tend to believe that language teaching has at any rate two integrated goals: work on the language and something else, which can be defined as insight into cultural and social conditions, or critical cultural awareness, or understanding the other - a view of language teaching which also, by the way, makes it easier to link language teaching with other subjects in interdisciplinary cooperation. As must be obvious by now, I belong to the second group.

(Risager, 2007, p.160, 162)

The diverse opinions endorsed by scholars on this issue are reflected not only in the literature, but have implications for approaches towards foreign language curricula. As Risager mentions in the above, the second view could see the study of language taking place in parallel to, for instance, cultural studies. This understanding of the relationship between language and culture is one that is arguably recognisable in the approaches towards language studies taking place in Higher Education in the UK and to an extent in US institutions, particularly in those departments where a clear distinction between upper and lower division courses is recognisable. Although Risager refers to this second view as having 'two integrated goals', the degree of 'integration' actually taking place is debatable. Once language is perceived as independent of culture, or what she terms as 'something else', there is nothing compelling this 'something else' to be taught or assessed in conjunction with the 'language'. Indeed it is possible to teach culture, literature or critical cultural awareness in the students' first language, texts can be read in translation and such courses could certainly increase the level of interdisciplinary cooperation between departments. This understanding of a language-culture relationship also has direct implications for the 'so-called' content modules in language degrees, as, at least some of these, generally seek to guide students through an exploration of culture, often the nation culture or cultures where the target language is spoken (e.g in German Studies this may include Germany, Austria and Switzerland). While Risager (2007) argues that

viewing 'language teaching as having two integrated goals' may make it 'easier to link language teaching with other subjects in interdisciplinary cooperation', this position overlooks the possible pedagogical advantages of teaching content through the target language. It also does not take into consideration the role content modules play on students' preparedness to study at a university where all courses are taught and assessed in the target language.

The first view of culture pedagogy, on the other hand, takes into account that foreign languages as a discipline encompasses not just the language but also a significant body of literature comprising of cultural, literary, historical and media-related content. This body of knowledge, particularly when studied in the original and not in translation, can be critically explored both for its linguistic and cultural significance. A further implication of conceiving language teaching as separate from its associated content is the risk of language becoming marginalised in the HE curriculum as a skill which can be acquired divorced from its associated discipline. This is also relevant to arguments on the instrumental and educational purposes of language teaching discussed in chapter 2.

The American National Standards Foreign Language instruction in the 21st century (2006), emphasise the importance of accessing content 'through the foreign language' rather than as a result of interdisciplinary study where students may engage with similar topics in English. The National Standards (2006) theorise five Standards for Foreign Language Learning (known as the 5 C's of foreign language education) of which 'connections' is the third. With particular reference to establishing connections with 'other disciplines' and 'acquiring information', the document states as follows.

Connections
Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines *through the foreign language.*

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are *only available through the foreign language and its cultures.*

(National Standards, 2006, p.4, my italics)

The emphasis on recognising 'viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language' acknowledges the unique value of the content area of the discipline as well as what is potentially lost through the study of texts in translation.

In a talk[9] which took place at Princeton University on 12 November 2012 (available on youtube.com) Kramsch voiced her view in this regard, by stating that language teachers can facilitate students' understanding of texts in the target language by making them reflect on not only what is said, but what is not said. She argues that it is important for teachers to model questions such as 'what is the author not saying in this text' or 'what would you add to this text?'. She further emphasises the importance of building these critical thinking abilities in students so that they are able to look beyond the apparent meaning of the words and are able to understand the significance behind omission and word choice. She emphasises the importance of recognising the silences in texts and of words, which echo other words or that carry specific political references. This argument is specifically directed to language teachers and the focus here is indeed both linguistic (in understanding the form and semantic choices of the author) as well as cultural. This is an excellent example of how we can understand what is advocated in the Connections standard through 'viewpoints only available through the foreign languages and its cultures'. At the beginning of the talk, which took place at Princeton University, Kramsch is asked a specific question about the integration between language and literature from one of the language teachers in the audience. The question concerns how language

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[9] Conversation with Claire Kramsch.

teachers can help 'bridge the gap between literature and language studies'. The question is complex and Kramsch opens her response with the statement 'I've always been distressed by a gap that makes no sense, because literature is nothing but language'. This view is substantially different from that of many colleagues in the discipline, as mentioned previously, who may distinguish language 'form' from 'meaning'. Kramsch points out that she believes students need to be engaged in 'meaning-making practices'.

The debate concerning the inseparability of language and culture is one which is also relevant to the literature on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and particularly to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and methodologies in language teaching, which are based on a particular understanding of this relationship, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Content Based Instruction (CBI). The following section seeks to define these terminologies and illustrate how they have informed the theoretical positions taken in this research project.

3.2.2 'Culture' in Language Teaching

Historically the role of 'culture' in language teaching remained associated with the study of canonical literature and until the advent of the audio-lingual method, during the fifties and sixties (Lafayette, 2003). As alternative language teaching approaches to the traditional grammar-translation method gained popularity, 'culture' as well as 'communication' assumed a different meaning. A significant contribution was made by the proponents of the audio-lingual movement, who 'opened the door to the two most discussed topics in present-day second language learning and teaching: communication and culture' (Lafayette, 2003, p.54). The term 'communication' stressed the importance of oral skills and 'culture' began to be understood not only in reference to literary works, but also as including 'everyday patterns of living' (ibid.). Subsequently other alternative

approaches towards language teaching were proposed including Hymes' theory of communicative competence.

The concept of communicative competence is historically associated with a move away from grammar-centered approached in the literature of applied linguistics (see Austin, 1962; Halliday 1970; Savignon, 1972). The term 'communicative competence' however, is more closely associated with Hymes' (1972) communicative view of language. This conceptualization of language contrasted Chomsky's (1965) theory of 'linguistic competence', which did not 'account for how a language is used or the forms that occur in actual use' (Ingram, 1985, p.226). Hymes' conceptualisation of communicative competence highlighted the value of the social context in which language is employed placing emphasis on the appropriateness of communication. He made reference to 'rules of use', which help learners understand when it appropriate to speak, when not and how communication needs to adapt according to what we say, to whom and in which context (Hymes, 1972). Hymes' conceptualisation of communicative competence is particularly relevant to this study, firstly because it takes into account the role of culture, a concept of core importance to this thesis, and secondly because Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) makes explicit reference to his conceptualisation with the aim of building upon it and emphasizing the importance of these *other* aspects necessary for effective intercultural communication, beyond linguistic competence. As a result of Hymes' significant contribution to the history of language teaching, language pedagogy began to place greater emphasis on the role of culture in the syllabus. The following sections review the role of culture in CLT, CLIL and CBI as they provide insight into the application of theoretical models in language and culture pedagogy.

3.2.2.1 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is understood as a methodology, which draws upon the principles of communicative competence with an emphasis on 'language use' (Douglas Brown, 1997). CLT was an attempt to operationalise the theoretical concept of communicative competence and apply it throughout all levels of language programme design, from theory to syllabus design, to teaching techniques (Richards, 2002, p.22). CLT is thus primarily concerned with the 'engagement of learners in communication', which allows them to 'develop their communicative competence' (Savignon, 2002, p. 22). CLT is not confined to a given text or set of materials but it is rather 'an approach, grounded in a theory of intercultural communicative competence, that can be used to develop materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning' (ibid. p. 22-3).

While CLT can be understood as the overarching approach for adopting in practice theories of communicative competence, more specific terms are understood as features of CLT, such as 'task-based,' 'content based,' 'process-oriented,' 'interactive,' 'inductive,' and 'discovery oriented' (ibid. p 22). Of particular interest here is the focus on content, which has given way to two acronyms referred to in the literature of language teaching as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Content Based Instruction (CBI).

3.2.2.2 Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is defined as 'a dual-focused educational approach in which an **additional language** is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language' (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, p.1, emphasis in the original). CLIL is 'content-driven' unlike some of the other approaches towards language teaching, where the focus remains on language (ibid.). This methodology may be adopted both in school-based contexts, where students are taught a particular subject through a foreign language, such as is the case for English-speaking / English-medium schools in non-anglophone countries (for instance the case of International Schools in

Europe and the Middle East), or through students' second language, as is the case of immigrant students in English speaking countries or in bilingual education programmes. CLIL as a methodology does not significantly differ from other theoretical approaches, which also advocate for teaching language through content, such as bilingual education or English as an Additional Language (EAL), yet there are some fundamental differences.

> CLIL is content-driven, and this is where it extends the experience of learning a language, and where it becomes different to existing language-teaching approaches.
>
> (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, p.1)

The term 'CLIL' was adopted in 1994 (Marsh, Maljers and Hartiala, 2001) within a European context in order to better describe good practice already taking place in different school settings, where an additional language was being employed for teaching and learning practices (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, p.3). The necessary element in any CLIL-based pedagogy is that attention is placed both on content learning and on language learning, hence the mere teaching of a subject e.g. science in a students' second or foreign language, could not be considered a CLIL based approach, unless there is also an explicit focus on language.

> It is obvious that teaching a subject in a foreign language is not the same as an integration of language and content ... Language teachers and subject teachers need to work together ... [to] formulate the new didactics needed for a real integration of form and function in language teaching.   (De Bot, 2002, p.32)

While the extent to which a greater focus is placed on language or content may vary, it is critical that 'neither must be subsumed or the interrelationship between the two ignored' (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, p.28). The emphasis on integration of the two areas is supported by the rationale that 'content teaching' needs to support students' understanding of how 'language form is related to meaning' (Swain, 1988, p.68). The following section seeks to define a similar conceptual framework known as Content Based Instruction

(CBI). While some argue that the two approaches differ in some aspects, it should be pointed out that 'the term Content-and-Language-Integrated-Learning (CLIL)' has been well established in 'European discourse' (Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.1) while similar approaches in North America most often make reference to CBI. Cenoz (2015, p.12) in this regard points out the following,

> CLIL and CBI are often considered as two labels for the same reality (Coyle et al., 2010, p.9; Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.6; Van de Craen, Ceuleers, and Mondt, 2007, p.186). For example, Ruiz de Zarobe (2008, p.61, footnote) considers them synonymous, CLIL being the most popular term in Europe and CBI in the USA and Canada.

Reference is made to both approaches throughout the thesis particularly because the study comprises of a US - UK comparison, hence both conceptual frameworks are helpful in understanding the theoretical rationales for language and content integration within the context of foreign language teaching. Recognising that the two concepts are, to an extent, linked to their geographical setting is important in understanding from which educational context the theoretical frameworks developed and which authors are regarded to be more closely associated with each term respectively.

3.2.2.3 Content Based Instruction (CBI)

Content Based Instruction (CBI) has been defined as the 'concurrent study of language and subject matter with the form and sequence of language presentation dictated by content material' (Brinton, Snow, and Wesche (1989, p.vii) as well as more specifically for a Higher Education context, as the 'concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills' (ibid. p.2).

CBI based approaches regard the teaching and acquisition of content as complementing the teaching of language and hence do not separate the teaching of form from its content,

rather aim to teach language form through the subject area. CBI can therefore be understood as an approach in which 'language proficiency is achieved by shifting the focus of instruction from the learning of language per se to the learning of language through the study of subject matter' (Stryker and Leaver, 1997, p. 56). In American ESL Higher Education 'three basic models are used: theme-based, sheltered and adjunct along with several variations' (Reppy and Adames, 2000, p. 79-80). The 'theme-based' model is primarily concerned with developing competency in the second language through the teaching of themes or topics such as family, the environment or society (ibid. p80) and hence a greater focus is placed on language. 'Sheltered Content Instruction' (Blanton, 1992) refers to grouping ESL learners in college level content courses such as biology or history designed for non-native speakers of English. While the emphasis remains on the mastery of content, the course is 'taught by a language instructor who is responsible for teaching both the subject matter and language skills' (Reppy and Adames, 2000, p.80). The third model, 'Adjunct Language Instruction' involves pairing two courses (Brinton et al., 1989; Snow and Brinton, 1988), a content-area class (such as science or literature) and a sheltered language class. In this model 'content and assignments are closely coordinated and meant to compliment each other' (ibid., p.81) and therefore requires interaction and cooperation between instructors. These models have also been employed with adaptations and CBI as an approach has been influential in language teaching methodology beyond the EFL context. As can be observed from the models described above, the extent to which emphasis is placed on content can vary significantly but as long as the approach adopted aims to develop competency in both areas, it can still be considered a form of integrating language and content. CBI has in fact been considered 'an umbrella term' (Stroller, 2008, p.59) for methodologies which combine both language and content aims even where there are significant differences in the degree to which emphasis is placed on content or on language (Cenoz, 2015, p.10). As with CLIL, CBI

can be adopted as an approach in all educational settings including primary, secondary and higher education and the extent to which emphasis is placed on content can vary from 'total immersion' to simply referring to 'content-based themes in language classes' (ibid.). Met (1998) theorised a 'continuum of content and language integration' ranging from the most content-driven at one end (total immersion), followed by partial immersion and most-language driven at the opposite end, illustrated in table 2. While the emphasis on content or language may shift considerably, all programmes aim to combine learning across both areas.

Table 2: A Continuum of Content and Language Integration (Met, 1998)

CONTENT-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING:

A CONTINUUM OF CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATION

Content-Driven					**Language-Driven**
Total Immersion	Partial Immersion	Sheltered Courses	Adjunct Model	Theme-Based Courses	Language classes with frequent use of content for language practice

As previously mentioned, both CBI and CLIL make a case for the integration of language and content, hence the two approaches differ with regards to the context in which they have been operationalised into teaching practice rather than from a methodological point of view. Stroller (2002) describes the view of language and content in CBI as 'language as a medium for learning content and content as a resource for learning and improving language (p.109). Similarly Coyle et al. (2010) define CLIL as an approach where 'an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language' (p.1). The emphasis in both approaches can then be understood as understanding that languages are not learned first and then used, but that they are learned by being used (Genesee and Lindholm-Leary, 2013 in Cenoz, 2015, p.17, emphasis added).

The relevance of CLIL and CBI to this thesis is inherent in the research questions guiding the investigation, which seek to challenge the evident separation between language and content observable in both US and UK Higher Education. The theoretical framework behind both CLIL and CBI supports arguments for an integrated language and content curriculum. It also presents a challenge for language degrees, which offer content taught in English as well as those programmes where content modules are offered in the target language yet the focus remains almost exclusively on the content and little attention is placed on students' development of language. Similarly it challenges language teaching approaches, which seek to consolidate knowledge of form (for instance where grammar or writing skills are taught per se) before introducing students to language in use (i.e. through the concurrent teaching of language and content). The theoretical frameworks of CLIL and CBI are also relevant to Byram's conceptualisation of Intercultural Competence, discussed in the following section. The relationship between language and content, in the field of foreign language learning, can also be understood as a relationship between language and culture, since the content of foreign language programmes generally includes cultural and literary studies. Coyle et al. (2010) argue that if language development is understood as a 'sociological event' and 'semiotic encounter' (Halliday, 1978, p.139) then 'language, cultural understanding, cognitive engagement and thinking are all connected to the content and context of CLIL' (Coyle et al., 2010, p.39). Coyle et al. (2010, p.39) further explore the potential connection between CLIL based approached and cultural / intercultural competence.

> If we follow the idea that culture determines the way we interpret the world, and that we
> use language to express this interpretation, then CLIL opens an intercultural door, where
> learners can have experiences which they could not have had in a monolingual setting.

Coyle et al. (2010) also make reference to Byram (1997) arguing that as a result of the holistic view of language and culture evident in CLIL-based pedagogies, the approach makes an important contribution towards developing students' intercultural understanding. They argue CLIL helps students develop 'an ability to see and manage the relationship between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings, as expressed in a foreign language' (Byram, 1997, p.12 in Coyle et al. 2010, p.40). The methodological approaches of CLIL and CBI offer a rationale for integrating language and culture in language teaching and may also play a role in supporting students' development of intercultural competence, particularly in foreign language settings, where the 'content' includes a comparative study of culture, history and literary work, as is often the case in language degree programmes.

3.3 Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

While the study adopts Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), the theoretical framework informing the investigation also draws upon other authors, who have written extensively on intercultural communication and competence. The multitude of similar terms employed both in the context of foreign language education and elsewhere, which make reference to effective communication across cultures, firstly needs to be clarified, as these terms may adopt particular theoretical positions and often have developed from a specific disciplinary background. Among others, the terms cultural awareness, intercultural communication, translingual and transcultural competence as well as Kramsch's notion of third space (Kramsch, 1993) and symbolic competence (Kramsch, 2009) are relevantly linked to the discussion on Intercultural Competence and are therefore defined and discussed in this section.

3.3.1 Cultural awareness, Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Competence

Discussion about 'cultural awareness' started to take place in HE as it was felt that language graduates in particular would need to not only achieve a communicative and linguistic competence but would also need to possess the required cultural knowledge. The term refers to promoting 'sensitivity and respect towards cultural diversity and difference' (Nuffield Languages Inquiry, 2000, p.33). Although 'cultural awareness' promotes respect and understanding, it does not explicitly encourage a critical reconsideration of pre-established beliefs about our own and other cultures. Within the understanding of culture and what exactly constitutes understanding or competence of different cultures, other terms have been coined to encompass a different perspective.

While the term 'intercultural competence' is largely associated with the works of Michael Byram in the context of language education, it draws upon principles of the broader notion of 'intercultural communication'. Unlike Intercultural Competence, Intercultural Communication is not restricted to a specific discipline or pedagogical approach; the field was internationally established as early as the 1970s and was originally not associated with language education (Kelly, 2014). Among some of the first thoughts that later led to the development of theories on Intercultural Communication, was the work of a core group of American anthropologists. It was around the 1930s -1940s that the work of Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Gregory Bateson and Clyde Kluckhohn, among others, resulted in the formation of some key assumptions with regards to the discipline of intercultural communication in the United States (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2011). These anthropologists developed three core assumptions, namely: National character, Cultural personality and 'Culture at a distance' (Martin et al. 2014 in Jackson, p.18). The third assumption, in particular, led to a view that it was not necessary to travel to a foreign country in order to 'study' a foreign culture (Martin et al. 2014 in Jackson, p.18). Around the same time, Benjamin Whorf, a student and colleague of Edward Sapir, developed what became known as the 'Sapir-Whorf' hypothesis – the concept that 'differences in *the way*

languages encode cultural and cognitive categories significantly *affect the way people perceive the world around them'* (ibid. p.18, my italics).   The assumption formulated here led to the development of an important concept in the study of language and intercultural communication (Rogers and Hart, 2002).

The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence defines Intercultural Communication as follows,

> Intercultural communication refers to what transpires when people engage in communication with others whose experiences, assumptions, sense making, and behaviours are different.

> (Bennett, 2015, p.451)

As can be inferred by the definition, the term focuses on 'communication' between cultures and hence the skill of intercultural communication appears to highlight the cultural references which are revealed through the process of communicating with speakers from different countries or cultures.   Intercultural awareness, on the other hand, may be understood as an attribute of one's own behaviour and attitude towards the foreign culture.   The term Intercultural Communication Competence has also appeared in the literature. This has at times been referred to with the acronym ICC, which could easily be confused with Byram's concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence, also known as ICC. The former is drawn from the literature on intercultural communication and hence, unlike Byram's conceptualisation, does not stem from research into foreign language teaching and learning. Intercultural Communication Competence is defined in Chen and Starosta, 1998, as follows,

> Intercultural Communication Competence has been defined as the ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviours that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment.

> (Chen and Starosta, 1996 cited in Chen and Starosta, 1998, p. 28)

The concept of Intercultural Competence, which includes Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), relevant to this study is drawn from Byram's (1997) conceptualisation consisting of the five savoirs or factors included in the framework. This particular model is discussed further in this chapter in section 3.3.3.

While the field of intercultural communication was well instituted internationally, it was associated with different research paradigms and disciplines depending on the geographical location. In the US, for instance, the field became established in the communication discipline, while scholars in Europe emerged from applied linguistics, language education and related disciplines (Berry and Carbaugh, 2004; Kramsch, 1998).

The term *cultural literacy* has also more recently been employed in reference to graduate attributes or objectives of a language degree. This term, alongside *intercultural competence*, refers to a more applied and measurable knowledge of culture, expected to be far more developed than what is understood through the term *awareness* or *cultural sensitivity*. The scope is arguably no longer to develop attitudes of acceptance or tolerance but rather enable students to make comparisons and facilitate socialisation. Cultural literacy is understood to be 'the ability of not just knowing and negotiating the rules and values of other cultures but also being able to perform them' (Schirato and Yell, 2000, p.41).

In a shift towards a more critical understanding of the concept, the term 'intercultural competence' brings about different attitudes and behaviours towards 'otherness' and is indeed a concept, which implies a deep investigation of what is understood under the term 'culture'. As the concept of 'competence' implies the ability to gain a form of knowledge and be capable of applying it, intercultural approaches adopting methodologies, which draw from ethnography and anthropology, highlight the importance of including critical evaluation of one's own culture as well as the foreign culture (Seago, 2000, p.7).

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According to Kramsch (2001) an interest into intercultural communication in Europe stemmed from social and political challenges arising from extensive immigration into industrialised European countries. Additionally, there were concerns about promoting European unity through mutual understanding, which are reflected in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001; Byram and Zarate, 1997; Byram et al. 2002). The concept of intercultural competence is of particular relevance here, as it appears to be one of the theoretical concepts that could help increase integration between language and culture, bringing critical enquiry and reflexivity into the study of both components of a Modern Languages degree.

3.3.2 Defining Intercultural Competence

The term 'intercultural competence' is most often attributed to Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), his earlier model Byram (1989) and his later works, which build upon Byram (1997). While this study primarily builds upon Byram's model of intercultural competence and hence his works are numerously cited throughout the thesis, other authors have also made significant contributions to the field. Deardorff (2006) offers two models of intercultural competence, which were theorised following the findings of a research study involving a panel of internationally known intercultural scholars. The aim was to be able to identify and assess intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalisation. In her first model, Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence, the lower levels of intercultural competence are viewed as enhancing the higher levels, while the second model, Process Model of Intercultural Competence, aims to identify attitudes that facilitate intercultural competence (Spitzberg and Changon, 2009). While the models clearly illustrate the intercultural competence descriptors, the Pyramid Model (figure 3) locates at the highest level 'behaving and communicating effectively and appropriately', making no reference to

critical cultural awareness, through which students start to question their own beliefs and values. The Process Model (figure 4) similarly makes no reference to the critical dimension, while it does acknowledge both an 'external' and 'internal' outcome. The internal outcome appears to recognise ways in which internationalisation can affect the self, through the development of an 'ethnorelative view'.

Figure 3 - Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence
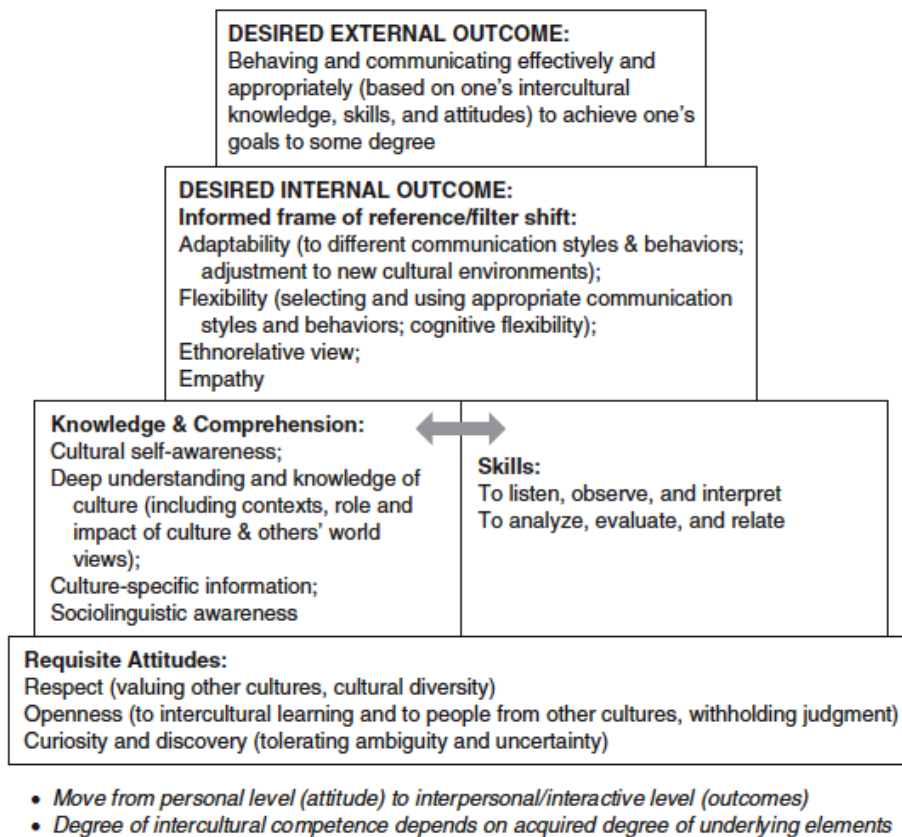
Figure 4 - Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence
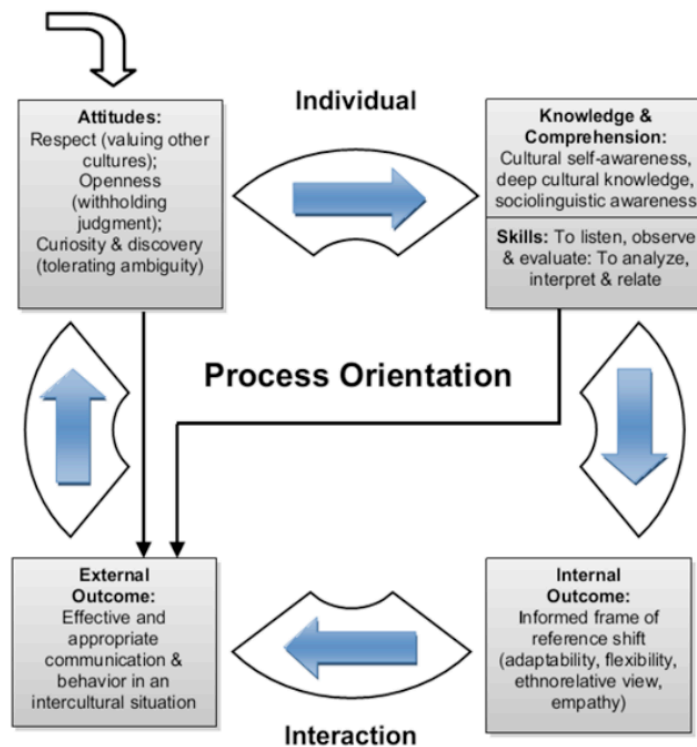
The work of Geert Hofstede further makes a considerable contribution to the field of intercultural competence. While Hofstede's conceptualisation was not aimed at informing the field of foreign language education, or higher education, his work explores ways in which people who hold different values and beliefs can effectively work together and establish trust relationships. In reference to culture, Hofstede (2009, pp.91-92) identifies five basic issues:

Identity: Individualism Versus Collectivism

Hierarchy: Large Versus Small Power Distance

Gender and Aggression: Masculinity Versus Femininity

Anxiety: Weak Versus Strong Uncertainty Avoidance

Gratification: Short- Versus Long-Term Orientation

Hofstede argues that understanding these five cultural dimensions, and how they differ across cultures, can lead to a greater awareness of acceptable behaviours. This can enable individuals to adopt an appropriate behaviour for different moral circles (ibid., p.94). Hofstede (2009, p.85) defines his understanding of intercultural competence as 'the ability to participate in the social life of people who live according to different unwritten rules'. While Hofstede (2009) adopts the same terminology of 'Intercultural Competence' as Mike Byram, his understanding and conceptualisation of the term is considerably different. Hofstede would appear to refer to the notion of 'integration' whereby an individual, for example an immigrant from a foreign country, is able to take part in the social life of his new nation. The focus is also placed on attitudes and behaviour rather than communication. Hofstede (2009, p.91) also states that 'in many cases, countries correspond with societies' and that 'almost all countries try to function as "moral circles"'. Equating countries with societies appears to mirror notions of a 'nation culture', which in our postmodern society, particularly in the Western world, are becoming increasingly more difficult to define. It is no longer possible to ascribe a single set of values and behaviours to a nation. Culture has become increasingly complex and the rise of migrations, internet communication, feminism, LGBT rights, among other factors, presenting challenges to Hofstede's binaries, which in the 21st century have become increasingly more fluid.

3.3.2.1 Byram's conceptualisation of Intercultural Competence

Emerging from an understanding that intercultural communication, through the study of a foreign language, could foster greater cultural awareness across Europe, Byram and Zarate (1997) proposed the term 'intercultural competence'. Intercultural Competence, can be understood as 'the ability to interact effectively with people of other cultures that we consider to be different from our own' (Guilherme, 2004, p.297). The concept of intercultural competence, as the term suggests, refers to an 'ability' to be acquired through

the process of studying a foreign language and the experience of 'otherness' that it entails.

Byram (1997) distinguishes between the experience of a 'tourist' and a 'sojourner' to illustrate the educational purpose of experiencing rather than encountering different cultures. He argues that,

> it is the sojourner who produces effects on a society which challenge its unquestioned and unconscious beliefs, behaviours and meanings, and whose own beliefs, behaviours and meanings are in turn challenged and *expected to change*. The tourist hopes for quite the opposite effect, first that what they have travelled to see will *not change,* [...] and second that their own way of living will be enriched *but not fundamentally changed* by the experience of others. (Byram, 1997, p.1 my italics)

Byram notes that while the 'tourist' remains generally 'unchanged', the 'sojourner' is able to 'acquire the capacity to critique and improve their own and others' conditions'. It is the qualities of the 'sojourner' that are embodied in the concept of 'Intercultural Communicative Competence', a term which specifically refers to 'the contribution of foreign language teaching (FTL) to the development of these attributes' (1997, p.2). Both the terms Intercultural Competence (IC) and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) emphasise the importance of interacting with people of other cultures yet the terms differ with regards to the language employed for communication (Byram, 1997, p.70). The former encompasses a broader range of competences that are not strictly confined to language learning, while the latter builds upon the concept of Communicative Competence and is hence to be understood as a competence developed through the acquisition of a second language.

> Where two groups have languages and cultures that are mutually incomprehensible, the linguistic competences of the mediator are of a different kind. The mediator needs to be bilingual (and bicultural) in the ordinary sense. It is to emphasize this fact that the distinction is made between 'intercultural competence' and 'intercultural (communicative)

competence', the latter referring to mediation between mutually incomprehensible languages. (Byram, 2014, p.87)

As the term 'Intercultural Communicative Competence' builds upon a significant concept in Second Language Acquisition, known as communicative competence or communicative language teaching, it is important to first of all clarify the origin of this concept and the rationale behind adopting this terminology to describe a particular function of intercultural communication that relates to the ability to mediate between cultures through a foreign language. Communicative competence developed as a concept in linguistics and saw major contributions being made by Hymes's critique of Chomsky, particularly in the context of the teaching of English as a second language, while authors such as Habermas were more influential in germanophone literature.

Hymes argued that linguists wishing to understand first language acquisition, need to pay attention to the way in which not only grammatical competence but also the ability to use language appropriately is acquired. (Byram, 1997, p.7)

The emphasis here is hence placed on sociolinguistic competence, something fundamental to the development of communicative language teaching. There are however, some concerns with Hymes' model, particularly in regards to the notion of transferring the process of first language acquisition and communication into objectives for foreign language teaching and learning (ibid.). These are explored more extensively in section 3.3.5, which discusses Byram's proposed Intercultural Speaker Model as an alternative to the idealised native speaker. Other contributions to the development of Communicative Language Teaching and the notion of Communicative Competence were made by Canale and Swain (1980) in North America, while van Ek (1986) developed a similar concept known as *communicative ability* in Europe. While the former developed from the theoretical framework of Hymes and others, van Ek makes no explicit reference to these

authors, rather his work was presented as part of a project for the Council of Europe (Byram, 1997, p.9).

The model proposed by van Ek (1986) was more influential as a starting point for Byram's concept of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) as it encompassed more than communicative and linguistic objectives and perhaps more relevant to the context of foreign language learning (ibid.). van Ek's 'framework for comprehensive foreign language learning objectives' (1986, p.33) emphasises that Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) 'is not just concerned with training in communication skills but also with the personal and social development of the learner as an individual' (Byram, op.cit.). The framework makes reference to 'social competence' and development of 'social responsibility', which are arguably not explicitly mentioned in the original discussions on communicative competence in Hymes' works and neither are they present in Canale and Swain's interpretation (ibid.) van Ek's model of 'communicative ability'(1986, p.35), on which Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence framework is based, comprises of six 'competences', which can be summarised as follows:

* *Linguistic competence:* the ability to produce and interpret meaningful utterances ... (p.39)

* *Social linguistic competence:* ...the relation between linguistic signals and their contextual - or situational meaning (p.41)

* *Discourse competence:* the ability to use appropriate strategies in the construction and interpretation of texts (p.47)

* *Strategic competence*: when communication is difficult we have to find ways of 'getting our meaning across'... such as rephrasing, asking for clarification (p.55)

* *Socio-cultural competence:* (having) a certain degree of familiarity with (the sociocultural context) (p.35)

* *Social competence:* involves both the will and the skill to interact with others, involving motivation, attitude, self-confidence, empathy and the ability to handle

social situations (p.65)

The competences theorised by van Ek, which played a significant role in the development of Byram's ICC model, were primarily those which focused on non-linguistic aspects, such as socio-cultural and social competence as they portray an understanding of communication as a 'human interaction' as opposed to the mere exchange of information. The ICC model aims to encompass this understanding of communication and proposes four aspects of interaction, namely knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating and skills of discovery and interaction (Byram, 1997, p.34). These factors relate to the initial four categories proposed in Byram (1994) known as: savoir-être, savoir-apprendre, savoirs and savoir-faire. An additional savoir was proposed in Byram (1997) known as savoir s'engager, which relates to critical cultural awareness, arguably the most important dimension in the process of becoming a successful intercultural speaker. As Byram points out,

in an educational framework which aims to develop *critical* cultural awareness, relativisation of one's own and valuing others' meanings, beliefs and behaviours does not happen without a *reflective* and analytical challenge to the ways in which they have been formed and the complex of social forces within which they are experienced.

(Byram, 1997, p.35, my italics)

The addition of the fifth savoir to Byram's original model hence brings together the desirable attributes of the intercultural speaker and places particular importance on a conscious critical reflection upon the learning experience. It furthermore acknowledges the fact that the relativisation of one's own beliefs is a process, which does not generally spontaneously take place through the mere experience of acquiring a foreign language or

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being exposed to different cultures. The following section defines in more detail the five savoirs and aims to explain their relevance to the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence and the Intercultural Speaker.

3.3.3 Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and Byram's Five Savoirs

Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competence is 'firmly based in foreign language teaching' (Byram, 2009, p.322) and builds upon what had become by the mid-1990s 'accepted theory of the "communicative approach" in North America and Western Europe (Savignon, 1997, 2000, in Byram, 2009, p.322). The model makes explicit reference to the Council of Europe and played an influential role in the writing of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), published in 2001 (ibid.). The model seeks to re-examine communicative competence drawing on theory other than applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, which 'had interpreted Hymes's definition of communicative competence in a way that underplayed the cultural situatedness of communicative competence' (Byram, 1997, p.8 in Byram, 2009, p.322). Other theories which informed the model include social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), cultural communication (Gudykunst, 1994) and Bourdieu's theory on social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990). While Byram (1997) theorises five savoirs as the five dimensions of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), as previously mentioned, the original model proposed in Byram and Zarate (1994) included only four savoirs, as the fifth (savoir s'engager - critical cultural awareness) was added in the Byram (1997) model (Byram, 2009, p.326). Byram's original model greatly influenced the writing up of the Common European Framework of Reference, although it was very much amended in the process (Byram, 2009). The document makes reference to Byram's earlier model, thus including the terminology of the four savoirs (Council of Europe, 2001, pp.103-106), yet, while Byram (1997) is cited in the references, 'there is no discernible influence. In particular,

there is no reference to savoir s'engager, which is the crucial educational dimension of intercultural competence' (ibid.).

The Five factors of intercultural communication are summarised in the figure below and form the basis of Byram's ICC model.

Figure 5 - Byram (1997) Factors in Intercultural Communication

	Skills interpret and relate (*savoir comprendre*)	
Knowledge of self and other; of interaction: individual and societal (*savoirs*)	**Education** political education critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*)	**Attitudes** relativising self valuing other (*savoir être*)
	Skills discover and/or interact (*savoir apprendre/faire*)	

The phrase Intercultural <u>Communicative</u> Competence was chosen by Byram (1997) to deliberately maintain a link to traditions in language teaching but 'expand the concept of 'communicative competence' (Byram, 1997, p.3). As Byram states, 'the link makes it explicit that our focus will be on the contribution of foreign language teaching (FLT) to the development of the qualities required of a sojourner' (ibid.). Byram distinguishes between Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) by emphasising that the latter requires the interaction to take place in the learner's foreign language and therefore is a competence developed within the context of foreign language education.

> It is [...] possible to distinguish Intercultural Competence from Intercultural Communicative
> Competence. In the first case, individuals have the ability to interact <u>in their own language</u>
> with people from another country and culture, drawing upon their knowledge about
> intercultural communication, their attitudes of interest in otherness and their skills in
> interpreting, relating and discovering. [...] On the other hand, someone with Intercultural

Communicative Competence is able to interact with people from another country and culture <u>in</u> <u>a foreign language</u>. [...] The relationship between Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Communicative Competence is one of degrees of complexity and the ability to deal with a wider range of situations of contact in the latter than in the former.

[...] The model does not [...] depend on a concept of neutral communication of information across cultural barriers, but rather on a rich definition of communication as interaction, and on a <u>philosophy of critical engagement with otherness and critical reflection on self.</u>

(Byram, 1997, pp.70-71, emphasis added)

Byram (1997) stresses the importance of the critical dimension in his ICC model by arguing that 'the inclusion in ICC of savoir s'engager / critical cultural awareness as an educational aim for foreign language teaching is crucial' (p.113). While the ICC model builds on Byram's earlier work, it is the focus on the educational and critical dimension to intercultural competence that Byram (1997) highlights here.

Byram's (1997) defines the five savoirs of his Intercultural Communicative Competence model as follows:

1. Savoir être - Attitudes, curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own. (p.91)

2. Savoirs. Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction. (p.94)

3. Savoir comprendre: Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own. (p.98)

4. Savoir apprendre/faire: Skills of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices, and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction. (p.99)

1. Savoir s'engager: Critical cultural awareness: an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. (p.101)

As mentioned above, the addition of the fifth savoir, namely savoir s'engager emphasises the importance of the critical element. As Byram (2009) argues 'the main development in the 1997 model from the work of Byram and Zarate (1994) is an emphasis on the pedagogical purposes of foreign language teaching [...] this is the "fifth savoir", referred to in English as critical cultural awareness and in French as savoir s'engager' (Byram, 2009, p.332). He further notes that the concept can be compared to the purposes of the German educational tradition known as 'politische Bildung', as it also aims to encourage learners to critically reflect upon beliefs, values and behaviours of their own society (ibid. p.323). Hence the model for Intercultural Communicative Competence is based on all five savoirs and places the fifth savoir, savoir s'engager, at the centre to represent its importance and inter-related nature with the others skills / abilities. The contribution of Byram's work on intercultural communication has been so extensive that it has been cited numerously by a large number of authors and his model of Intercultural Communicative Competence has arguably inspired a number of scholars to pursue more research into the socio-cultural aspect of language teaching. With reference to Byram's contribution to the CEFR, in spite of the numerous adaptations made in the document, references to Byram's concept of mediation (yet not the phrase intercultural speaker) are mentioned (Byram, 2009, p.326).

The particular aspect, which was included in the CEFR was the notion of 'mediation', described as the ability 'to act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly - normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages' (Council of Europe, 2001, p.87). While the CEFR does not fully develop the concept of mediation, it gives it a key role in its action-oriented approach and shows awareness of the diverse nature of mediation spanning the linguistic, cultural and social dimensions (Piccardo, 2012). In order to address the marginal role of mediation in the document, the Council of Europe is currently in the process of commissioning a text on the mediation function of schools (Coste and Cavalli, 2015 in North and Piccardo, 2016, p.456). The formal consultation launched by the Council of Europe describes the aim of the ongoing research as follows:

> While the status of the CEFR will remain unchanged, the Language Policy Unit intends to build on the dynamic created by its widespread use by incorporating specific relevant work on descriptors developed since its 2001 publication into an extended version of the illustrative descriptors that would complement the original set contained in the body of the CEFR text.
>
> We are therefore writing to you to invite you to take part in a formal consultation process concerning the proposed new version, which has been extended in two ways:
>
> 1. updating and filling gaps in the 2001 scales
>
> 2. creating new scales for mediation (plus online interaction, reactions to literature, and exploitation of plurilingual and pluricultural repertoires).
>
> (Council of Europe, 2017)

It is interesting to see the extent to which mediation has been recognised as playing an important role in language learning. Zarate (2003) further elaborates on the concept of mediation and describes the language learner as an individual who is 'between / entre

deux'.   Yet this description of the intercultural mediator, and indeed the term mediator itself, can be problematic.   Identity and culture are concepts, which in postmodernity have become super complex, and identifications with nation states can appear to be far too simplistic (Byram, 2009).   In consideration of this, the term intercultural speaker has sometimes been used as a substitute for intercultural mediator.   The term intercultural speaker can be understood in a 'minimalist way' as referring to 'someone who has some or all of the five savoirs of intercultural competence to some degree' (Byram, 2009, p.327); a more thorough employment of the term describes the individual as having to 'negotiate between their own cultural, social and political identifications and representations with those of the other' (Guiherme, 2004, p.434).   Furthermore, Guilherme (2004) highlights that the critical 'intercultural speaker' appreciates 'different narratives available, by reflecting upon how they articulate, how they are positioned and how their positions affect their perspectives' (ibid).

The emphasis placed on the critical aspect of cultural awareness throughout Byram's works on intercultural competence is unmistakable.   It is interesting to note that the major addition to the original model for Intercultural Communicative Competence also addressed the critical dimension.   We can thus see the close link between the literature on intercultural competence in foreign language learning and that on criticality in Higher Education.   A number of scholars have recognised the pedagogical values of integrating the study of language with the study of culture and the educational benefits that can be derived through comparisons and critical reflection.   Nonetheless, 'culture' and 'identity' as well as 'otherness' or 'second culture' have become highly complex terms in postmodernity, as mentioned above, hence authors such as Kramsch and Risager, among others, have attempted to expose this complexity and caution against a simplistic use of such terms (as previously discussed in section 3.2).

The following section discusses the theoretical concepts of 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993)

and 'third space' (Bhabha, 1990, 1994) as well as Kramsch's concept of 'symbolic competence' (Kramsch, 2009), which are arguably interconnected with Byram's conceptualisation of Intercultural Competence and the emphasis he places on the educational dimension of language learning.

3.3.4 Third Space, third place and symbolic competence

A concept which has frequently appeared in the literature on language and culture, is what has become known as 'third space'. The concept of 'third place' is primarily associated with Kramsch (1993), while the notion of 'third space' is attributed to Bhabha (1990, 1994). The terms have been extensively cited and discussed in the context of language teaching and developing cultural / intercultural competencies. Kramsch (1993) argued that as a result of the interaction and close study of the target language (TL) and target culture (TC), learners develop what she calls 'a third place' from which they are able to understand and mediate between the home and the target language and culture. (Kramsch, 1993, p.233-259)

The third place is understood to be a middle ground, a space of their own, that emerges between the original culture of the learner, and the one that is newly introduced.

> For most, it will be the stories they will tell of these through these tellings and the dialogues that they will have with people who have had similar experiences. In and through these dialogues, they may find for themselves this third place that they can name their own.
>
> (Kramsch, 1993, p.257)

It is from this perspective that they are able to experience cultural differences and can interpret or reinterpret, mediate, and create a new meaning from clashes between two cultures. (Kramsch, 1993, Byram, 1997, Bhabha, 1994). As Kramsch argues, this place allows the learner to discover that culture is not homogenous but rather fluid and constantly changing. In reference to the foreign language classroom, Kramsch (1993)

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argues that foreign language learners should be able to fully operate in a context where two or more languages and cultures are present. Where there is an interplay between their own and another culture, they may find themselves in no-man' s-land or, what she calls ' a third place' from where to be able to understand and mediate between the home and the target language and culture (ibid. pp.233-259). She argues that learners have to become mediators and be able to manage communication and interaction between people of different cultural identities and languages. They need to come out from their own perspective and take up another, in order to handle different interpretations of reality (ibid.). The notion of the foreign language learner as 'mediator' between cultures is a concept in many ways echoed in Byram's 'intercultural speaker' model, further discussed in the next section.

It is perhaps important to note here that while Kramsch's notion of a 'third place' is numerously cited in the literature and has been insightful in understanding the transformative function of studying foreign languages and cultures, very often learners do not simply find themselves in a place between two cultures only, but rather generally operate between several cultures. One needs to consider that the concept of a 'third place' discussed in Kramsch (1993) needs to be understood in line with our contemporary postmodern society. Kramsch (2009, p.200) for instance, argues that the term is perhaps not best suited to encompass the complex nature of the multilingual learner.

> [...] the term 'third place' or 'third culture' too often ignores the symbolic nature of the multilingual subject - both as a signifying self and as a social actor who has the power to change social reality through the use of multiple symbolic systems.

As an alternative, she proposes the term 'symbolic competence', a concept which builds upon the symbolic frame which she earlier called 'third place' (p.199).

By using the term 'symbolic competence' in language education, I wish to resignify the notion of communicative or intercultural competence and place it within the multilingual perspective [...]. Symbolic competence does not replace (intercultural) communicative competence, but gives it meaning within a symbolic frame that I had earlier called 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993) [...]. Multilingualism, always the norm in many regions of the globe [...] prompts us to rethink the notion of 'third place' proposed in the 1990s [...]. (ibid.)

Since the 1990s the rise in migration and telecommunication have redefined previous notions of national boundaries resulting in the development of cultural identities, which cannot be as easily described as pertaining to a single nation culture. The notion of a 'third place' is built upon an understanding of the 'existence of a first and second place that are all too often reified in 'country of origin' and 'host country' (ibid., p.200). As Kramsch notes, assumptions that the learner is merely meditating between two cultures, in our modern world, fail to acknowledge the multitude of cultures and languages or dialects that form part of an individual's linguistic and cultural identity prior to the experience of studying what, for many, is not a second language but rather an additional foreign language and culture.

Kramsch and Uryu (2014) further explore the concept of 'third spaces' and propose the term Intercultural Contact (IC) which refers to 'a state of affairs that occurs when people from different cultures come in touch with one another' (p.212). They argue that 'contact' can be voluntary or involuntary. 'In voluntary cases, one makes contact with another (others), driven by one's interest in the cultural Other (e.g. travel) [...] in contrast, in involuntary cases, intercultural contacts are often driven by rather negative elements such as power struggles' which, in both cases can lead to 'cross-cultural entanglements' (ibid.). The rise of migrations has also meant that many people do not solely identify with their nation state but rather have developed multicultural / multilingual identities, which can also affect their sense of belonging.

In individuals who speak more than one language and belong to more than one culture, IC could refer to multilingual / multicultural identities and subjectivities within one and the same person.

(Kramsch and Uryu, 2014, p.212)

With regards to the postmodern world, Kramsch and Uryu point out that dualities such as 'us / them' or 'native speaker / non-native speaker', have become more complex as a result of 'economic globalisation, large scale migrations and electronic modes of communication' (2014, p.213). Hence they similarly argue that the understanding of 'third spaces' originally theorised in Kramsch (1993) needs to be re-interpreted to encompass the supercomplexity of modern society. Third spaces may perhaps be better understood as 'zones of collaboration and learning', or to use Vygotsky's terminology, 'zones of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978, p.84, cited in Kramsch and Uryu, 2014, p.213). These spaces are meant to be zones which facilitate collaboration and learning with the aim of 'transforming conflict and disharmony into fruitful dialogue' (ibid.).

As is apparent here, more recent scholarly publications addressing intercultural competence and communication are generally very cautious about making assumptions about culture and are particularly wary with regards to ascribing one particular understanding of culture to a given set of individuals. While twenty or more years ago it may have been easier to define culture according to nation state boundaries and hence talk about a first language / second language or first culture / second culture, one needs to acknowledge that such a model does not encompass the complexity of linguistic and cultural identity of a postmodern society. With specific reference to foreign language learning, this cultural and linguistic transformation of societies means that the student body is now very diverse, thus national paradigms are increasingly less applicable to university students in today's world. The 'third space' perspective thus not only challenges traditional views of culture (Feng, 2009), but brings the learner to reflect upon

his own self-arguing that '"the other"' is never outside or beyond us' (Bhabha, 1990, p.4 in Feng, 2009, p.74).

The following section reviews the native-speaker and intercultural speaker models in the context of Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence framework and in light of the complexity of teaching and facilitating the exploration of language and culture.

3.3.5 The native-speaker (NS) and Intercultural speaker (IS) models

The term intercultural speaker was initially coined in the paper by Byram and Zarate (1994), written for a group of individuals working on what later became known as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* of the Council of Europe (2001). As discussed previously, the term intercultural speaker and the phrase intercultural competence were first used in Byram and Zarate (1994) and once again in Byram (1997), where the model of Intercultural Communicative Competence is discussed. Around the same time, there appeared to be a growing interest in the relationship between culture and foreign languages, reflected in publications such as Kramsch (1993) in the USA, Bredella (1992) in Germany and Risager (1993) in Denmark. While certain scholars took an interest in exploring the role of culture in foreign languages, classroom teaching in the mid-1990s in Western Europe and the United States was strongly influenced by the rise in popularity of the 'communicative approach' (Savignon, 1997, 2000).

The notion of the native speaker (NS) in foreign language learning, according to Byram and Zarate (1994), should be replaced by that of the intercultural speaker (IS), a mediator of both languages and cultures. But being a mediator implies building bridges between language and cultures, therefore in the process of learning a new foreign language and becoming an IS, the first language or other previously acquired languages cannot be suppressed; in fact, the speaker goes through a 'third way' or a hybridisation process, as House (2007, p.18) called it, where the 'old cultures' are still recognisable in the new one.

The native-speaker model has been perceived as the embodiment of the target language and culture for many years and has traditionally been considered the best model for students to mirror; however, more recently, the precedence of the native speaker over the non-native has been repeatedly questioned. Byram, for instance, argues that if the aim of language teaching is to develop intercultural competence, there may be more suitable models than the native speaker (NS); what he proposes is the model of an 'intercultural speaker' (IS). He states that 'the challenge to imitating the native speaker as a basis for teaching linguistic competence is (…) paralleled by the introduction of the concept of the intercultural speaker.' (Byram, 2009, p.321). The term 'intercultural speaker' refers to someone who has acquired the competence of 'some or all of the five savoirs of intercultural competence to some degree' (ibid. p.327). The term 'emphasises the differences from the cultural competences of a native speaker' (ibid.) as it requires specific competences as opposed to the more linguistic / communicative competences for which the NS might appear to be advantaged. That is not to say that a native speaker could not become an intercultural speaker, but rather that the embodiment of the savoirs that constitute this model would define an individual as an IS. The rationale behind the coining of this new term came from the notion that the experience of language learning should encompass attributes of intercultural competence and facilitate the development of these competences in learners; hence 'by proposing the "intercultural speaker" as a substitute for the native speaker, the model implies a prescription of what the learner needs to strive toward' (ibid. p.325). According to the intercultural speaker model, the teacher would be expected to endeavour to develop a critical cultural awareness, otherwise referred to as 'savoir s'engager' (ibid.) in learners. It's interesting to note that Byram employs the word 'critical' cultural awareness which, by definition, requires the learner to question, evaluate and reflect upon what can be considered 'cultural', why we may have different views on culture, how culture affects identity or how we perceive our own

culture / identity and how others may perceive it differently. The ability to develop critical inquiry brings a new purpose into the study of languages; as mentioned previously, some studies (see Busse, 2013; Graham, 2004) found that when students reflected upon the experience of language learning, they expressed a concern about traditional language tasks lacking in 'intellectual challenge'. The intercultural speaker model and pedagogical implications of incorporating intercultural competence in the curriculum may be able to address some of these concerns.

The traditional notion that the 'native speaker' be a more authentic / superior model to that of a non-native with similar linguistic proficiency can be traced back to Chomsky's work on linguistic theory which, since its origins, has often been uncritically accepted by leading scholars in the field (Bhatt, 2002). As maintained by Chomsky's paradigm, a native speaker provides the sole source of reliable linguistic information and the ultimate goal of the second language learner is to achieve the 'intrinsic competence of the idealized native speaker' (Chomsky, 1965, p.24). The very notion of an 'idealised native speaker' is problematic both for the self-confidence and self-efficacy of learners (as aspiring to a native speaker model may appear unachievable) as well as for those non-native speakers wanting to gain access to the profession. As a result of Chomsky's influence, the native or non-native status of individuals is, as Faez (2011) suggests, 'mistakenly perceived to be a strong determiner of their ability to perform well in various occupations and functions as a source of privilege for some and as a discriminating factor for others' (p.231). She furthermore notes that:

> …the issue becomes especially significant in the teaching profession where these labels tend to either open doors of opportunity or function as a gatekeeping device for gaining access to the profession. Many employers believe that native speakers are better teachers than nonnative speakers and, thus, do not even consider nonnative individuals for teaching positions (Clark and Paran, 2007; Mahboob, Uhrig, Newman, and Hartford, 2004; Moussu and Llurda, 2008).

The central question is who is a native English speaker? Who is a nonnative English speaker? Who is preferred over whom? Why this distinction? (Faez, 2011, p.231)

Interestingly many job adverts for language tutors in Higher Education do make reference to the desirable applicant being either a native speaker or having near-native competence in the foreign language. Higher Education institutions recruiting teachers of English also appear to favour native speakers over applicants who have studied the language but are not native. Unfortunately, while Byram's conceptualisation of an Intercultural Speaker appears to be much more fit for facilitating students' development of intercultural competence, the influence of Chomsky as well as an understanding that language education should enable student to achieve near-native competence in the foreign language, still appears to dominate both students' and educators' view of the purpose of the discipline.

3.4 Criticality and Intercultural Competence in Modern Language degrees

While the concepts of criticality and intercultural competence have been developed independently, there is arguably a relevant link between the two, particularly in the context of Higher Education. Barnett's (1997) model of criticality is in fact specifically aimed for Higher Education as is evident from the title of his book *Higher Education a Critical Business*. Although Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) does not specifically address language degrees, the fifth savoir, *critical cultural awareness,* makes reference to the educational dimension of language learning and focuses on a shared aim: the critical. The educational experience of exploring a foreign language and culture, particularly when it involves comparisons between one's own culture or cultures and 'the foreign', can build a context from which a higher form of critical thinking can originate. Houghton and Yamada (2012), both former doctoral students supervised by Professor Emeritus Michael Byram of the University of Durham, U.K., address the relationship between the two concepts. In the introduction they refer to

the British Government's attempts to reverse the decline in language study in schools and note Michael Shackleton's[10] call for English speakers to develop both in the areas of intercultural understanding and foreign language learning. Houghton and Yamada (2012) argue that 'this pinpoints the concept of interculturality as an important nexus between interculturality and criticality' (p.2) and further explore the relationship between these two concepts. In this regard they cite Shackleton's explicit reference to developing different world-views, an argument that has been made by a number of scholars who have explored the relationship between language, culture and the educational experience of learning a foreign language. He argues that 'to understand what people are thinking about you also have to get a sense of them and how they see the world' (Shackleton, 2011, cited in Houghton and Yamada (2012, p.2). What is highlighted here is the need for language learning to deliver more than a code for communication but also develop the ability to compare different word views and understand how other people think, which can arguably be best fostered through critical explorations of cultures.

Houghton and Yamada (2012) report the findings of two doctoral studies on criticality development in foreign languages in HE based on Barnett's (1997) framework. Yamada's study was conducted in a beginners level Japanese language classes at the university of Durham, and Houghton's study was carried out in an upper-intermediate English language class at a Japanese university. Yamada's study comprised of inserting focused lessons into the existing textbook-based syllabus. The findings of the study indicated that while criticality can be fostered in other ways, 'its development can be intensified through targeted instruction in focused lessons' (p.153). Interestingly, students' initial theories or assumptions did not seem to present a 'terminal-point', as they could be challenged by later encounters with different opinions or viewpoints. It was found that while direct teacher/ researcher intervention played a role in criticality development, certain learning

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[10] Manager of the European's Parliament's communications operation in the UK

activities / tasks appeared to 'stimulate the thinking of the learners' and when these revolved around the three dimensions of language awareness, cultural awareness and the learning process, the experience seemed to help intensify criticality development (ibid.). The specific concepts of criticality which emerged from this study included skepticism, inquiry, suspension of judgment, comparison and contrast, and the importance of the cultural dimension.   Both the Criticality Project of the University of Southampton and Yamada's study supported Barnett's (1997) theoretical model of criticality to explore its development in students studying a foreign language.

With regards to the development of Intercultural Competence in Modern Language degrees, Guilherme (2000), also a former doctoral student of Michael Byram, explored the critical dimension   (critical cultural awareness) of the ICC model in the teaching of English in a Portuguese secondary school. Guilherme (2000) draws upon Byram's (1997) ICC model as well as literature on Critical Pedagogy, thus establishing a relevant link between the two theoretical frameworks in the context of foreign language education.

3.4.1 The role of the year abroad in the development of Intercultural Competence and Criticality

With regards to the development of Intercultural Competence specifically, studies also highlight a tendency in Modern Language degree programmes to rely on the year abroad experience. While graduate attributes often include intercultural competencies and hence encourage students to undertake a study abroad programme, it would appear that reliance on this experience alone is not sufficient to adequately develop student's intercultural learning (Holmes et al., 2015). The effectiveness, for instance, of the year abroad experience to enable students to reconsider pre-establish beliefs has been previously questioned in the literature. Coleman (1996) argued that during residence abroad, stereotypes of the host community are not always disarticulated, rather they may even be

reinforced. Romero de Mills (2008) and Johnston et al. (2011) similarly found that on the year abroad some stereotypes were challenged, but students didn't seem to be able to associate their experience to their cultural (i.e. content) studies when encountered with an unexpected version of the host society. The failure of students to be able to draw connections between the knowledge gained in culture modules at university with their actual hands-on experiences of the foreign would appear to further indicate that the year abroad on its own is not sufficiently effective in developing students' intercultural competences. It has been previously argued that intercultural awareness and development is unlikely to occur on its own, rather students require an 'intercultural education' in order to maximise the benefits (Byram and Dervin 2008; Byram and Feng 2006; Jackson 2008 in Holmes, 2015). Holmes et al. (2015) report on a study on students' and teachers' perspectives on a programme designed to develop Erasmus students' intercultural understanding prior to going abroad. The project investigated how a small group of Erasmus students in Italy and the United Kingdom, about to undertake their year abroad, developed intercultural learning through a pre-departure programme. The findings of the study indicated that students 'engaged with the IEREST materials' demonstrating that the materials in this pre-departure programme 'helped students to develop, in various ways, understandings of interculturality and intercultural encounters' (ibid. p.27). The findings challenge the British Academy Position Statement on Valuing the Year Abroad (2012), which argues that intercultural understanding 'can only really be learnt through a substantial period of residence and work in the foreign environment' (p.5). The document also claims that as a result of the Year Abroad experience, students are:

> potential ambassadors for the UK in foreign countries, acting therefore as intermediaries for
> and between cultures and societies often returning with a more nuanced and critical
> understanding of their own. (ibid.)

While the Year Abroad certainly has a potential to play a significant role in students' development of intercultural competence, in order for students to fully benefit from the experience, some degree of explicit preparation, such as pre-departure programmes with an intercultural focus, can arguably increase the extent to which students are able to reflect upon differences and challenge both their own and others' understandings and beliefs about cultural practices.

The following section reviews ways in which attributes of intercultural competence are reflected in frameworks for teaching foreign languages both in the USA and in the UK. These include the National Standards (2006), the ACTFL (2012) Proficiency Guidelines (both relevant to the US context) and the CEFR (2001) with reference to the European / UK context.   While these may not make explicit reference to Byram (1997), what is highlighted here is the similarity in the way the learning aims are described in the documents with reference to intercultural learning.

3.4.2 The American Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (2006) - "The Five Cs."

The National Standards (2006) was not intended as a curriculum guide, rather it was designed in order to describe 'what students should know and be able to do—in foreign language education' (National Standards, 2006, p 2).   It is aimed primarily at the K-12[11] sector but can also inform language teaching in Higher Education.   The document identifies three main reasons why students may choose to study a foreign language: 1. To find a rewarding career in the international marketplace, 2. They are interested in the intellectual challenge and cognitive benefits, 3. They seek greater understanding of other people and other cultures (ibid.). With these reasons in mind and an understanding that foreign languages have something to offer everyone, the standards identify five main goal

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[11] K-12 refers to the US obligatory education years starting from Kindergarten (Reception in the UK) to Grade 12 (the final year of High School).

areas for foreign language education, known as 'the five C's': (1) Communication; (2) Cultures; (3) Connections; (4) Comparisons; and (5) Communities.

The document places emphasis on the intercultural dimension by noting that foreign language learners should ultimately develop competencies across the five goal areas so that they know 'how, when, why and what to say to whom' (ibid.). Byram and Met (1999), in reference to the earlier version of the National Standards (1996, p.64), in this regard, note that 'in contrast with previous conceptions of culture in language teaching, cross-cultural appropriateness is more clearly defined'. Each goal area in the document is defined with a set of standards and sample progress indicators are given for K-12. The standards for the five C's are defined as follows:

1. Communication

Communicate in Languages Other Than English

Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

2. Cultures

Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the *practices* and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the *products and perspectives* of the culture studied.

3. Connections

Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information

Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their *knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.*

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and *recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.*

4. Comparisons

Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of *language* through *comparisons* of the *language studied* and *their own.*

Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of *culture* through *comparisons* of the *cultures studied and their own.*

5. Communities

Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World

Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and *beyond the school setting*.

Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

(National Standards, 2006, p 4, my italics)

While the document acknowledges the importance of developing effective communication skills, it similarly highlights the importance of intercultural knowledge, particularly evident in standards 3.1 and 3.2, which focus on *comparisons* between one's own language and culture and the one studied. The terminology employed in the five C's echoes Byram's (1997) ICC model in numerous ways. Standards 2.1 and 2.2, for instance adopt the terms 'practices, products and perspectives' which mirror Byram's definition of the fifth savoir:

> Critical cultural awareness: an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, *perspectives, practices* and *products* in one's own and other cultures and countries.
>
> (Byram, 1997, p 63, my italics)

The intercultural dimension of language teaching is particularly articulated through the 'comparisons' and 'cultures' standards as they make reference to both comparisons between perspectives, practices and products as well as emphasise intercultural learning through comparisons between the language and culture studied and their own. The comparison standards also make reference to terminology, which appears in Byram's savoirs, particularly *Savoir comprendre*:

> Savoir comprendre - Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event *from another culture,* to explain it and *relate it* to documents or events *from one's own.*
>
> (Byram, 1997, p 61, my italics)

The National Standards (2006) evidently demands more from language learners than the mere achievement of communicative competence. As Byrnes (2008) argues,

> It embraces the lively exchange of ideas, the appreciation and understanding of others' history, belief systems, ways of interacting, and customs, and the opportunity to re-evaluate and enrich one's own positions and those of others in communities of various sizes – dispositions, beliefs,

and praxes that are highly suited to an age of migration and globalization.

(Byrnes, 2008, p.104)

From the goal areas theorised in the National Standards (2006) it is evident that 'culture' plays a dominant role as it is incorporated across the different sections of the document (Phillips, 2003, p.163). The role culture plays across the goal areas is also interesting to note, as it is not an acquisition of cultural knowledge which is encouraged, rather the focus is placed on the intercultural dimension. Phillips (2003) argues that,

> Many members of the business and government community who support the study of other languages and cultures do so out of a desire for students to become citizens who can live and work in a world with fewer misunderstandings.   (Phillips, 2003, p.165)

While the National Standards (2006) do not provide a curriculum guide and hence do not seek to define what students should be learning specifically, they can assist language educators in designing a curriculum in such a way that it supports students' development across these five goal areas.

The following section looks at another document, which informs language teaching within the United States. The ACTFL (2012) Proficiency Guidelines, unlike the National Standards (2006) seek to provide a tool for educators to facilitate assessment of competencies across the different proficiency levels. In this way it can be compared to the way the CEFR is adopted in European contexts to describe what competencies students should demonstrate across the hierarchy of language proficiency levels.

3.4.3 'Culture' in the ACTFL (2012) Proficiency Guidelines

The role of culture in the American Council on the Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines is expressed more implicitly, but can be recognised in the proficiency descriptions offered for the skills of Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading. As previously noted, the document is intended as an assessment tool.

> The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines are descriptions of what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in real-world situations in a spontaneous and non-rehearsed context. For each skill, these guidelines identify five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice.

> (ACTFL, 2012, p.3)

The proficiency levels are often illustrated in the form of an upside-down pyramid, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 6 - ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: Levels of Proficiency[12]
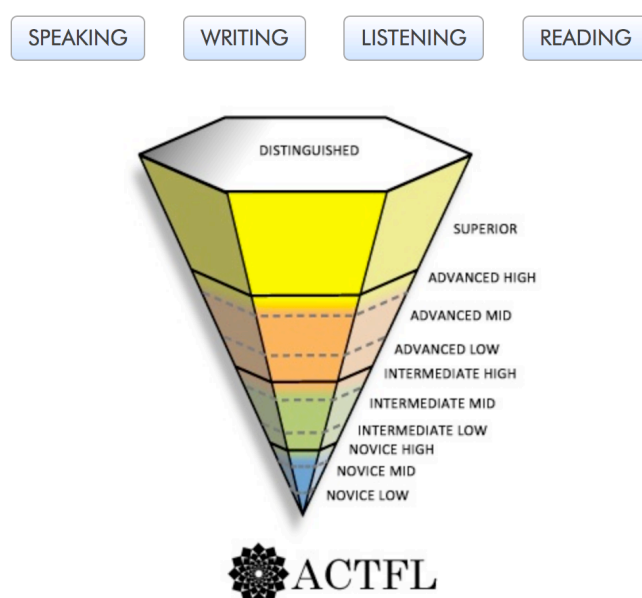
Within the description of what students are able to do with language, the implicit reference to intercultural competence, particularly with reference to savoir apprendre / faire, can be recognised.

The description of Speaking at the Distinguished Level, for instance, makes reference to communication which is 'culturally appropriate'.

> Speakers at the Distinguished level are able to use language skillfully, and with accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness. They are educated and articulate users of the language. They can

---

[12] Source: https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012/german

reflect on a wide range of global issues and highly abstract concepts in a *culturally appropriate manner*. Distinguished-level speakers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse for representational purposes, allowing them to *advocate a point of view that is not necessarily their own*. They can tailor language to a variety of audiences by *adapting their speech and register in ways that are culturally authentic.*

<div align="right">(ACTFL, 2012, p.4, my italics)</div>

In addition to placing emphasis on communication which is 'culturally appropriate', the guidelines also make reference to students' ability to advocate points of view, which are not necessarily their own. This is interesting as it implies that by this level students have been able to distance themselves from their own values and beliefs imbedded in their native culture, have recognised that different points of view exist and have been able to distance themselves both from the perspective of the native culture and from the one studied. In a way, it could be argued that this competence describes a certain ability of students to view the world from a third place. The descriptor also highlights students' ability to 'adapt speech and register' so that it is 'culturally authentic'. Once again this draws on theories of intercultural competence. As Byram (1997) points out, 'even the exchange of information' relies on 'understanding how what one says or writes will be perceived and interpreted in another cultural context; it depends on the ability to decentre and take up the perspective of the listener or reader' (p.3). The skill of adapting speech according to the audience or context as well as the ability to take on different perspectives, can be viewed as intercultural competence attributes observable in foreign language communication. While the ACTFL (2012) Proficiency Guidelines and the National Standards (2006) were theorised for different purposes, the two documents are intended to complement each other and hence parallels can be observed in the language used to describe students' competencies across the four skills and levels.

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines underlie the development of the ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners (1998) and are used in conjunction with the National Standards

for Foreign Language Learning (1996, 1998, 2006) to describe how well students meet

content standards.   (ACTFL, 2012, p.3)

It could be argued that the two documents together provide similar guidance to the CEFR (2001) as it is employed in European foreign language education.   The CEFR (2001) in fact provides both a description of what language education should entail, as well as a 'framework for reference' which is adopted in a variety of language teaching contexts to assess students' competencies in foreign languages.

3.4.4 The role of culture in the CEFR (2001)

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) aims to provide language educators with a common basis 'for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe' (Council of Europe, 2001, p.1). It aims to describe in a comprehensive way 'what language learners have to learn' in order to use language 'for communication' and defines the knowledge and skills required in order to 'be able to act effectively'. Aside from competency in the language, the document 'also covers the cultural context in which language is set'. The framework furthermore 'defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning' (ibid.). From the definition, it is clear that the aim of the document is twofold; first it provides guidance to language educators both in relation to what should be taught, how it should be taught and subsequently it includes a framework to effectively measure achievement so that both communicative and cultural competencies are assessed.

Since its publication, the CEFR has been adopted as an assessment tool in a wide range of context, both in English language teaching in HE, FE as well as in private language schools and other contexts (such as the British citizenship exam) as well as for the teaching of Modern Language courses, which are not part of language degrees (such as Institution Wide Language Programmes or Languages for All).   In reference to the extent

to which the CEFR has transformed language teaching in Europe, particularly in relation to how competencies are assessed, Byrnes (2007, p.641) notes that it is 'one of the most ambitious examples of the gradual formation, shaping and reshaping, and, most recently, implementation of language education policies'. The first section makes reference to Byram's (1994) terminology of the four savoirs, although these are articulated somewhat differently. Section 5.1 described the general competencies of an individual learner as follows:

> The general competences of language learners or users [...] consist in particular of their *knowledge*, *skills* and *existential competence* and also their *ability to learn*.
>
> (Council of Europe, 2001, p 11, italics in the original)

The terms in italics are references to Byram's (1994) four savoirs. The French terms adopted in Byram (1994) are also found in the CEFR document, these include the following: 1. savoir (knowledge - 5.1.1), 2. savoir-faire (skills and know-how - 5.1.2), 3. savoir être (existential competence - 5.1.3) and 4. savoir apprendre (ability to learn - 5.1.4) (ibid. p.12).

As previously mentioned, while Byram's work was influential, the understandings and definitions of the savoirs offered in the CEFR document differ from those in Byram (1994) or Byram (1997) and include contributions from the other authors, who also played an important role in drawing up the framework. While no reference is made to Byram's fifth savoir (critical cultural awareness), reference to intercultural learning more generally are present throughout the document. For instance savoir-faire is understood as including knowledge of 'what practical skills and know-how the learner will need/be required to possess in order to communicate effectively in an area of concern' (ibid. p.104). Savoir-faire is further understood as comprising of 'intercultural skills and know-how', which are defined as follows,

• the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other;

• cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures;

• the capacity to fulfil the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations;

• the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships.   (ibid. p.104-5)

The second component of the CEFR document concerns the Common Reference Levels to be employed for assessing students' competence in a foreign language. As is specified in the document, one of the aims of the framework is 'to help partners to describe the levels of proficiency required by existing standards, tests and examinations in order to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications' (ibid., p.21). The levels are subdivided into six broad levels.

Figure 7 -The Common Reference Levels

A Basic User	B Independent User	C Proficient User
A1 (Breakthrough) A2 (Waystage)	B1 (Threshold) B2 (Vantage)	C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency) C2 (Mastery)
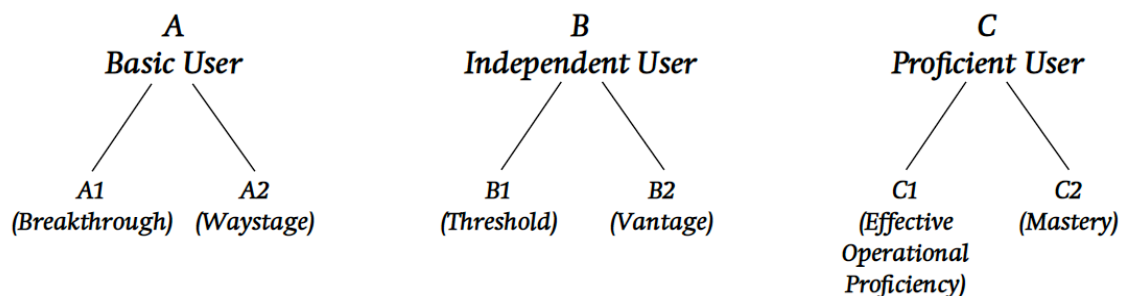
(Figure reproduced from Council of Europe, 2001, p.22)

The subdivision of the levels serves to facilitate a common assessment of language competence across Europe. While the document makes reference to intercultural knowledge, the common reference level descriptors measure competence largely on the basis of students' ability to communicate. At Basic User A1 - Breakthrough, for instance, students are expected to be able to do the following:

Can <u>understand and use familiar everyday expressions</u> and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can <u>introduce him/herself</u> and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and

things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and

clearly and is prepared to help.

(Council of Europe, 2001, p 24, emphasis added)

As is evident in the above description, no reference is made to intercultural skills. This

does not significantly vary in the level description of higher levels (see level description

for Proficient User C2 - Mastery).

Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can <u>summarise information</u> from

different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent

presentation. Can <u>express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely,</u>

differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

Even at the highest level of proficiency, no reference is made to cultural comparisons,

perspectives or viewpoints; neither does the description make reference to critical thinking

skills of any kind. Rather, from the descriptor, it would appear that what is being

highlighted is the students' capacity to approximate native-speaker fluency in the target

language and learners are still being assessed against a native-speaker model of linguistic

competence. While the common reference levels are helpful in ensuring fair assessment

of similar communicative competencies across Europe, arguably more attention should be

placed on how the intercultural dimension could be made more explicit in the level

descriptors so that students are not merely assessed against descriptors of communicative

and linguistic competence.

Concluding remarks

The chapter has reviewed the literature on Intercultural Competence and Criticality as

these are the two main theoretical frameworks from which the research questions guiding

the investigation were formulated. The two theoretical models were also employed in the

data analysis and hence the thesis is situated within this theoretical framework. The

chapter has also presented an overview of the debates concerning the relationship between language and culture, how this relationship is understood from a theoretical perspective and how it emerges from policy documents. The literature on intercultural competence and criticality as well as the CEFR and ACTFL frameworks similarly support an educational view of language learning. Recent changes to the CEFR in similar fashion emphasise the need for language learning to be understood as comprising of more than the acquisition of linguistic and communicative skills, thus further supporting the rationale for this study.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

As the overarching purpose of the study was to gain a greater understanding of the implications of diverse curricular structures in Modern Language Degree Programmes on the student experience, particularly with regards to the development of criticality and intercultural competence, it was necessary to adopt a research design that would address all the relevant factors.

The chapter, therefore, provides a detailed account of the thought processes, which led to the selection of an appropriate research design and formulation of the research questions. It further describes the research context, the data collection process and the methods adopted for the analysis. Finally it reports ethical considerations and limitations of the research method adopted.

4.1   Planning procedure and research aims

The complex relationship between language and content and its relevance in the Modern Language curriculum is arguably one that has not been researched extensively enough to support a hypothesis testing approach, thus, while a mixed-methods design is employed, the investigation is guided by an overarching exploratory focus.

Little is known about the implications of particular curricular structures on the student experience in particular on how these may have implications for the development of criticality and intercultural competence in undergraduates. Much of the literature on the separation between language and content is based primarily on theory with only few relevant empirical studies; similar projects have also mostly employed exploratory approaches (see Gieve and Cunico, 2012, Romero de Mills, 2008, Houghton and Yamada, 2012, Guilherme, 2000, Busse, 2013).   Additionally, as the universities included in the study are not equally comparable (i.e. they differ significantly in cohort size, entry tariff, geographic location and curriculum), it is not possible to generalise findings beyond the

participants' groups themselves. However, while the aim of the investigation remains exploratory, there was a scope for the collection of both rich qualitative data as well as quantitative data, which could be collected from a larger number of participants in a shorter time frame.

The study primarily aims to explore ways in which the separation between language and content may have implications for students' development of intercultural competence and criticality. While specific aspects of the American and British degree programmes are explored as features of curricular structures (e.g. the extent to which the TL is employed across the curriculum), it should be highlighted that these add to our understanding of the complexities behind structuring a more holistic curriculum rather than forming a key part of the investigation. The findings of the thesis are hence to be interpreted in relation to students' development of intercultural competence and criticality.

 In light of the exploratory nature of the investigation, a mixed-methods design was adopted in order to first gain an overall picture of students' views on the phenomenon, through an initial questionnaire, and subsequently explore the issue in further depth through follow-up interviews. The research design is described as an *interview study facilitated by a preceding questionnaire survey*, as described in Dorynei (2007). Advantages of employing this particular design included the ability to gain an initial picture of the phenomenon through the analysis of the survey responses, and subsequently select a purposive sample for the interview study, thus increasing the representativeness of the cases (Duff, in press) and the reliability of the results through larger sample sizes (Dörnyei, 2007, p.172).

A smaller interview-study with key faculty members across all four universities was also carried out. The purpose of the staff interviews was firstly to gain a better picture of the curriculum, in order to contextualise the student responses, and secondly to gain a teacher perspective on the phenomenon. There are hence aspects of this inquiry (those resulting

from the survey) that may be analysed statistically in order to explore relationships between variables and gain a general overview of students' responses, while other areas, where the aim is to interpret and contextualise social phenomena, for which qualitative data are usually better suited (McKay, 2006).   The following section describes the epistemological beliefs which informed the rationale for the research design employed in the study; this is followed by a discussion on qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research.

4.1.1 Epistemological beliefs

Employing a mixed-methods design involves drawing upon two distinct research traditions hence offering the advantage of deriving positive aspects from each method. As has been discussed elsewhere, qualitative research, on its own, may be questioned for being 'ultimately the product of the researcher's subjective interpretation of the data' (Dörnyei 2007, p.38), and not being scientific or critical (Cohen et al. 2000, p.181), this weakness can arguably be at least in part overcome by mixing methods. As the broader aim of this research is to gain a greater understanding into the student experience in Modern Languages, it is appropriate to acknowledge my own epistemological beliefs and the role they play in the interpretation of the data, particularly in reference to the interview study.   My interest into the experience of students in Modern Languages and the rationale for a USA - UK comparison originated from both personal and professional perspectives. I was myself an undergraduate student of Modern Languages at an American university in California where indeed there was a noticeable difference between the 'lower-division' and 'upper-division' classes where language started to be taught in content almost exclusively from 300 level (third year) classes onwards. The first two years (100 and 200 level classes) were driven by a communicative / linguistic orientation and were assessed on the basis of communicative and linguistic competence based objectives. That is to say that these classes, to a certain extent, compare to an ab-initio route in the UK as students

could enrol in higher level classes based on their competence even from the first year of study. Nonetheless a clear division is present, and to find that a similar dichotomy also exists in the UK's Higher Education system, and is arguably more pronounced, prompted me to reflect upon the reasons behind the division between language and content and how the structure might affect the student experience. Aside from my own experience as a student, teaching German and Italian in HE both in the USA and subsequently in the UK further led me to question rationales behind this divide.

4.1.2 Qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods research

Quantitative and Qualitative research can be defined both in relation to the way in which data is collected and analysed as well as in terms of how the research is carried out. As described in Dörnyei (2007, p.24),

> Quantitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data […] analysed mainly by statistical methods (while) Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended non-numerical data […] analysed primarily by non-statistical methods.

As the two research types stem from different traditions and hence reflect their individual paradigms, proponents of each type have often expressed antagonistic views, resulting in what is described in the literature as 'paradigm wars'. Adoption of particular research types, paradigms and methods furthermore has been traditionally associated with given fields of inquiry. Some disciplines have been more inclined towards qualitative or quantitative approaches and this tradition has characterised research since its philosophical origins. Historically 'the positivist / empiricist orientation' has been characteristic of the natural sciences while quantitative research and the 'constructivist / phenomenological orientation' has generally been characteristic of the social sciences and qualitative research (Cherryholmes, 1992; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). However, more recently, scholars across a number of disciplines have started to question the rationale behind this dichotomy and

hence have opted for more integration between the two approaches to research. As Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.17) suggest there is 'no fundamental clash between the purposes and capacities'.

Perhaps the characteristics of the research approaches, which were most influential in deciding which research type to follow for this particular project, were indeed the theoretical orientations they propose. Bryram (2008) describes the theory orientation for quantitative research as 'deductive, theory testing', while the orientation for qualitative research as 'inductive, generation of theory' (p.22). While the former generally refers to hypothesis testing and sees the generation of theory formulated a priori, the latter seeks to explore a phenomenon and allows for theory to be subsequently generated. The deductive approach is generally characteristic of quantitative research; Merton (1967) argued that this approach is principally used to guide empirical enquiry. The inductive approach, on the other hand, is more characteristic of qualitative research as it allows the researcher to infer implications of the findings for the theory behind the study. Findings from the data collection and analysis are fed back into theory and the interpretation is associated with a certain domain of inquiry (Bryram, 2008). In relation to the present study, a deductive approach did not present itself as a realistic option as, although the literature review on language and culture is extensive and some previous studies exploring the phenomenon of the separation of language and content modules in Higher Education have been carried out, I have not come across any US – UK comparative study which similarly explores this phenomenon, nor does it appear from the literature review that this particular issue has been extensively explored in either of the two geographical contexts. In light of the above, the study arguably best benefits from an inductive theoretical orientation, which as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, guides the overall purpose of the investigation.

Within the literature on qualitative and quantitative research methods, a particular

terminology appeared to best encompass the philosophical basis for the different approaches, i.e. the terms explanatory and exploratory research. This is indeed the terminology also adopted by Byram (2008) when referring to the different purposes or aims of research. The terms refer to the different epistemological beliefs derived from their philosophical basis. While the concepts of 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' are terminologies commonly employed in research methods textbooks and adopted by most researchers when describing the methodology employed in their studies, the terms arguably are best suited as a description of the types of data being generated rather than approaches to research. The terms explanatory and exploratory, on the other hand, appear to better describe the purpose behind the research tradition and paradigms of quantitative and qualitative research respectively.

4.1.3 Explanatory / interpretive (erklären) versus exploratory research (verstehen)

The interpretive nature of qualitative research can be attributed to an earlier distinction between two purposes of research, i.e. to explain / interpret or to explore. The origins of these two English terms can be traced back to the philosophical concepts in German tradition known as 'erklären' and 'verstehen' originating from 19th-century German discussions, which to an extent can be attributed to the writings of Max Weber (1864-1920) on the distinctive character of the Geisteswissenshaften (the human sciences) as opposed to natural sciences. The tradition distinguishes between verstehen (interpretative understanding) and erklären (law-governed explanation) as two ways of approaching research (Hammersley, 2004). The German word verstehen is generally translated as 'to understand' and is often contrasted with 'to explain' erklären. A researcher who engages in erklären, tries to explain a phenomenon, while engaging in verstehen constitutes looking for the perspective from which the phenomenon appears to be meaningful and appropriate (Smelser and Baltes, 2001). The distinction between 'explanation' and 'understanding' was made by Von Wright (1971) in reference to the social sciences

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(Byram, 2008, p.91), hence the formulation of the concepts have seen contributions from a number of authors.

The concepts of explanatory and exploratory research, which seem to best encompass the perspective from which research is approached, influenced the overall design selection for this particular project. The traditional paradigmatic dichotomy of methods, on the other hand, was seen as problematic particularly as it was thought that in light of the study's research aims there was a scope for both types of data collection and analysis methods while maintaining an overarching exploratory focus. Mixed-methods research offers an alternative to the traditional separation between the two types of research. While the positivist paradigm underlies what is referred to as quantitative methods, and the constructivist paradigm underlies qualitative methods (see Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Howe 1988; Lincoln and Guba, 1985), advocates of mixed-methods research, on the other hand, would argue that this methodology follows what some have called pragmatism, hence a new paradigm (Plano Clark and Creswell, 2008, p.9). As there have been several attempts in the social and behavioural sciences to 'make peace' between the two major pragmatic positions underlying the different methodologies, pragmatically oriented researchers and theorists now refer to mixed-methods, which contain elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (ibid.). While the dichotomy between the two paradigms is arguably far from justified (Crotty, 1988), the view of qualitative and quantitative research as matters of degrees or a continuum instead of a dichotomy has gained ground (Dörnyei, 2007). On the other hand, a potential risk of adopting a mixed-methods approach is that it can result in the researcher 'attending too little to philosophical ideas and traditions […] (resulting in inquiries that are) insufficiently reflexive' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, p.107). Dörnyei similarly highlights this issue as a potential weakness of mixed-methods; as Janice Morse points out, in an interview by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), one should be cautious of using mixed-methods research as a 'substitute for sharp conceptual thinking

and insightful analyses' (p.334 cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p.46). Particularly where the project gives priority to the qualitative study, developing a detailed reflexive and deep interpretation of the findings is necessary to address the potential weakness of this methodology, as identified in the literature.

4.1.4 Adopting a mixed-methods approach

A mixed-methods approach appeared to be best suited for this investigation as it allows the researcher to employ both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. As Miles and Huberman (1994) argue, in the case where the aim of the study is not clearly situated within one paradigm, it may be advisable to explore aspects of both approaches, since 'quantitative and qualitative inquiry can support and inform each other' (p.310). Dörnyei (2007) points out that, although many scholars are more inclined towards either qualitative or quantitative research, he personally encourages his own PhD students to try to integrate both methods as students have generally produced 'high quality research findings' thus confirming the viability of the approach (Dörnyei, 2007, p.49). There is a difference of opinion among scholars regarding mixed-methods, but, as Duff (2006) states, one could argue that the terms qualitative and quantitative are 'overstated binaries' (Duff, 2006, p.66, cited in Dörnyei, 2007, p.20). In reference to this, Dörnyei comments that he does 'not see qualitative and quantitative methodologies as necessarily mutually exclusive' (2007, p.20), indeed one can support or complement the other. Dörnyei's position on mixed-methods research, as well as the very nature of the project, played their role in the process of selecting an appropriate research approach. Another factor to note is that this methodology appears to be gaining popularity in applied linguistics. Magnan, (2006), for instance, reports that between 1995 and 2005, 6.8 per cent of the research papers appearing in The Modern Language Journal used mixed-methods, compared to 19.8 per cent of qualitative papers. Hashemi and Babaii (2013) further note that mixed-methods as a methodology has been recently 'acknowledged and

advocated in applied linguistics' (Dörnyei, 2007; Hashemi, 2012, cited in 2013, p. 828). The methodology, for the reasons outlined, hence seems to be well suited for studies in applied linguistics and in recent years it has gained popularity. Aside from the flexibility that it offers to the researcher, in terms of data collection methods available, the methodology also served well to somewhat come to terms with what is often referred to as the 'paradigm wars' or the dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research methods 'which has been singled out for criticism by several scholars.' (Newman and Benz, 1998; Ridenour and Newman, 2008; Sale, Lohfeld, and Brazil, 2002; Sechrest and Sidana, 1995; Tarrow, 2004, cited in Hashemi and Babaii (2013, p. 828)

Byram (2008), in reference to research on cultural dimensions of foreign language education, notes that indeed studies may have more than a single research purpose.

> One can look at possible causal relationships between teaching techniques / methodologies and knowledge about other cultures, or between learning about other cultures and understanding one's own […]. There is other work that attempts to *understand* from the perspective of the learners, their experience of other cultures and groups, or of the teaching and learning process […]. The focus in all of this is 'what is'. The two need not be mutually exclusive. Research that looks for cause and effect can also seek to interpret and understand how those involved, whether teachers or learners, experience the process and themselves theorise about it.
>
> (Byram, 2008, p. 92, emphasis in original)

Byram makes an important point here in outlining the two distinct purposes of research in line with the approaches traditionally described as qualitative and quantitative. His perspective on research, as outlined above, is particularly helpful to support the rationale for a mixed-methods study as he acknowledges that there may indeed be research, which may benefit both from identifying causal relationships as well as seek to understand, explore and interpret a phenomenon through qualitative methods.

4.2 Selecting a mixed-methods design

The literature on mixed-methods research has seen contributions by a number of authors, who in turn may have employed slightly different terminologies to refer to similar data collection methods. Tashakkori and Creswell (2007), perhaps among the most frequently cited authors in mixed-methods research, define this approach as: 'research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study or program of inquiry' (p.4). According to their categorisations, the researcher has the option to conduct a study involving the simultaneous collection of both kinds of data or one data collection method may be employed to follow up on initial findings gained through the other. With regards to research designs, the classification proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, pp.59-79) is also helpful as it offers 'four broad categories within which more specific models can be developed: Triangulation, Embedded, Explanatory and Exploratory' (Richards et al. 2012). Depending on the particular design the researcher adopts, data collection may take place either concurrently or one stage may precede the other. Triangulation is an example of how data can be collected concurrently for the purpose of 'convergent validation' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2008); on the other hand, the latter two examples are sequential designs in which one stage precedes the other. Mixed-methods designs additionally, often describe the sequence and priority of the data collection procedure. This is generally expressed following the typology suggested by Morse (2003), where upper case / lower case letters denote priority and the symbols '+' and '->' describe whether the design is concurrent or sequential. These typologies are further described later in this chapter in relation to the design adopted for this study.

In reference to this research project, the evaluation of the possible options as proposed by Creswell and Plano Clark were influential in gaining a better perspective of how mixed-methods studies are conducted, as they illustrate clear examples of how qualitative and

quantitative research can be combined and structured. However, a possible shortcoming of this model is that the particular labels 'explanatory sequential' and 'exploratory sequential' appear to be somewhat restrictive as the terminology seems to prescribe a particular purpose to the overall research aim i.e. either explanatory or exploratory, hence it was preferred not to adopt these particular labels. A similar model is described in Dörnyei (2007) and referred to as 'Interview study facilitated by preceding questionnaire survey (quant → QUAL)' (p.172). This terminology is arguably better suited for the purpose of this study as it refers specifically to the research design and data collection method while allowing for more flexibility in the overall purpose of the investigation.

This design allows the researcher to initially carry out a questionnaire survey to collect responses from a larger sample from which interview participants can subsequently be selected according to their responses or traits. The questionnaire survey hence constitutes the quantitative component of this study as responses are collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire, which can be analysed statistically, while the interview study constitutes the qualitative component. This design offers the researcher the advantage of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data without specifically framing the study into a particular paradigm. The conceptual implications and philosophical background of the different paradigms are further discussed in the next section, in relation to their relevance to the chosen approach.

4.2.1 Rationale behind the selected research design

In recent years, there has been a growth of interest in mixed-methods research resulting in it being among the most marked trends in approaches in research (Richards et al. 2012, p.301). As Richards et al. argue, in applied linguistics / language studies 'the products of this new development are thin on the ground […] (but) it seems very clear that mixed-methods research will continue to grow in importance and that an understanding of it will be essential, in our field as elsewhere' (ibid., pp. 301-302). Incorporating both qualitative

and quantitative principles 'researchers can bring out the best of both paradigms' (Dörnyei, 2007, p.45) with the potential of increasing validity (ibid.). Studies that strictly adhere to a specific paradigm generally interpret findings according to that particular tradition i.e. qualitative or quantitative. Although this helps clarify the positionality of the researchers, it can also place limitations on the flexibility of the interpretation.

With reference to the present study, the investigation is driven by an over-arching question that seeks to better understand the implications of a traditional division between language and content as well as exploring how degree structures may better facilitate the development of intercultural competence and criticality. As the latter aim is exploratory in nature, the collection and analysis of data through qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, is arguably better suited for this purpose. Findings from the questionnaire, on the other hand, can yield some insight into the implications of the division as students perceive it, as well as describe students' views on their programme. The questionnaire results can furthermore inform the interview study as they allow the researcher to gain initial insight into attitudinal views of respondents, thus partially addressing the first research aim, while semi-structured interviews, occurring in a subsequent phase can allow more spontaneous responses as well as keep the interview focused on the aims of the study.

In this study the initial quantitative questionnaire also served in part to select a purposive sample for the student interviews. As Dörnyei (2007) points out in reference to one of the advantages of this particular design is that 'in a mixed-methods study the sampling bias can be cancelled out if the selection of the qualitative participants is based on the results of an initial representative survey' (p.45), this can increase reliability and the extent to which findings can be generalised. Small samples are a common weakness of qualitative studies as it is often not possible to conduct such in depth studies with large groups of participants, on the other hand, a frequent criticisms made by qualitative researchers of

quantitative studies is that they are often 'overly simplistic' as they fails to capture the meanings that people attach to their lives and circumstances (Brannen, 2005). The phenomenon being researched in this study presents various complexities as it handles concepts, which need to be firstly well defined and understood. For instance one may question what constitutes 'culture' in foreign language teaching, or similarly 'acquiring a foreign language' or what constitutes 'integration' between language and content, as well as what can be understood under the terms 'student experience'. Each of these constructs is complex and the literature itself often presents multiple understandings and definitions for such terms. It is hoped that the findings of this study may help increase transparency between the theoretical framework and its possible applications to practice in Higher Education. The following section described in greater detail the research design adopted in this study.

4.2.2 Dörnyei's Interview study with preceding questionnaire

Within the typological organisation of mixed-methods design, several combinations and design types have been proposed; while these may illustrate to the researcher how qualitative and quantitative data collection may be combined, the terminology currently employed to describe mixed-methods designs is arguably 'chaotic' (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003b in Dörnyei, 2007). Specific research designs have, in some instances, been attributed to certain authors, however 'the most widely accepted typological principles have been those of sequence and the dominance (Dörnyei, 2007, p.169) which are generally represented with a simple symbol 'to produce a straightforward visual representation' (ibid.).

· 'QUAL' or 'qual' stand for qualitative research.

· 'QUAN' or 'quan' stand for quantitative research.

· Capital letters denote priority or increased weight.

·Lowercase letters denote lower priority or weight.

·A plus sign (+) represents a concurrent collection of data.

·An arrow (->) represents a sequential collection of data

(Johnson and Christensen 2004, p.418)

While the above principles of sequence and dominance are helpful in designing a mixed-methods study, theoretically conceived typologies can be difficult to implement when designing new research projects. Creswell et al. (2003), for instance divided the function of integration into three classes: triangulation, explanation or exploration, while Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) argue that it was important to determine at what stage in the research project the integration between the two data collection methods occurs. As Dörnyei notes, it is perhaps important to highlight that proposed mixed-methods design are to be understood as sample designs and are not meant to be prescriptive. As he states, the exemplar-based typology listed is merely 'selective' rather than 'comprehensive' as it 'only includes the most prominent basic combinations' and argues that the selection is intended to familiarise researchers with the concept of mixing 'so that they can then produce their own made-to-measure variations' (2007, p.170).

From this standpoint, it may be argued that although the research design of this study is based upon Dörnyei's Interview Study with Preceding Questionnaire (quan->QUAL), it also includes some adaptations necessary to meet the aims of this research project.

The typology of the design proposed by Dörney employs the questionnaire primarily to facilitate purposive sampling for the interview study, while in this investigation it plays a more central role. Furthermore, Dörnyei also mentions some drawbacks of this design, for instance the difficulty in maintaining anonymity of the questionnaire responses, if the researcher wishes to select particular individuals for the subsequent qualitative phase

(Dörnyei, 2007, p.172). The design implementation for this project addresses, to an extent, this particular drawback. Aside from those participants wishing to take part in the follow-up interview, who were asked to enter their university email addresses in order for the researcher to be able to contact them, all other responses were completely anonymous. A further alteration to Dörnyei's design relates to the selection process for the follow-up interview. While the selection was purposive, to an extent, the sample was limited to those participants who expressed interest in taking part in a follow-up interview, as it was impossible to contact those who did not provide an email address. While this increased the ability to maintain anonymity of responses, it also restricted the researcher to a smaller number of responses to explore, hence sampling for the interview was at times purposive and in those institutions, where the response rate was lower, it included all those students who expressed interest in being interviewed.

Ethical considerations related to the design, administration and sampling of the questionnaire are further discussed later in this chapter. The survey responses in this study form an important element and, although the interview study takes dominance as it provides more rich data, which can yield insight into the phenomenon, the quantitative results can likewise add to this understanding. The purpose of the questionnaire survey here, was in fact not merely to identify participants for the interview based on their traits, but rather also served as a research instrument providing valuable data for the study. Furthermore, including selected interviews with key members of staff was considered beneficial to gain an overview of the context and the curriculum of the departments involved in the study. It was also interesting to examine the rationales of different members of staff behind decisions to offer modules taught in the TL or in English as well as explore their views on the Modern Languages curriculum with reference to the integration or separation between language and content and the perceived outcomes in relation to the development of criticality and intercultural competence.

The writing up of the semi-structured interview questions, both for the student sample following the questionnaire and the staff interviews were informed both by the questionnaire results and more generally by the research questions guiding the study. With reference to the research questions postulated in this study, the questionnaire survey is best matched to elicit data in support of the first two research questions:

RQ1: In what ways do current degree structures affect the student experience in relation to ICC and criticality?

RQ2: What curriculum models appear to best develop criticality and intercultural competence in students?

As the wording suggests, RQ1 lends itself well to quantitative data as well as qualitative, since the questionnaire findings could yield an indication, for instance, of the different attitudinal differences towards the integration / separation between language and content. RQ1 however also draws upon the qualitative data analysis from the interview study, which is more suitable for describing the 'ways' in which degree structures may affect the student experience in relation to ICC and criticality. Similarly, RQ2 is best answered both through the quantitative and the qualitative data analysis. The aspect of the question which seeks to identify which curriculum models (i.e. more or less integrated) appear to best develop criticality and intercultural competence can certainly benefit from a statistical overview of student responses, while the qualitative study is necessary to best explore the reasons behind the different responses to determine whether these are in fact resulting from curricular approaches and degree structures as opposed to other external factors. The final research question,

RQ3: Is the development of criticality and IC facilitated through more integrated programmes and if so, in what ways?

is guided solely by an exploratory aim and hence can best be answered through the qualitative analysis of both the student and staff interview study. The objective here is to take a closer look at the analysis and explore which approaches employed across the institutions under study appear to be best matched in order to facilitate the development of the above mentioned concepts. The smaller interview sample, conducted with selected members of staff, can furthermore add to the understanding of how curricular structures and approaches may be linked or best matched to foster the development of intercultural competence and criticality.

The following sections in this chapter give an overview of the geographical setting and profile of the institutions involved in the study. Context is particularly relevant here, as the study involves different types of institutions with a diverse student body, two of which are located in the USA and two in the UK. The rationale for selecting the four particular institutions is further discussed in section 4.3.1 where the profiles of the participating institutions are described. To maintain confidentiality of the institutions, the name of the universities and their precise geographical location or other specific information, which would easily identify them, is omitted throughout the thesis. Rather, the description of the institutions aims to present a rationale for this selection and illustrate the curricular differences between them, which may affect perspectives on the student experience. The practicality behind establishing communication with the departments involved, selecting participants for the interview study and the questionnaire are further discussed in sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2 as well as in 4.6 in reference to the ethical considerations. The next section overlooks the context and the instruments employed in the data collection process.

4.3   Context

The decision to conduct a comparative study involving both UK and US institutions was drawn from the similar recommendations made in reports on the situation of foreign

language learning at tertiary level in both countries. The most apparent similarity the two countries share, is that in both contexts universities are faced with the challenge of offering foreign language degree programmes in English speaking countries. A further similarity between the two educational contexts is the influence that classical languages have had on degree structures and methodologies, which is still recognisable in many programmes (see chapter 2). Recent research on foreign languages and the precise relationship between language and culture has also appeared as a timely topic in both countries and the development of theory has seen contributions being made from both British and American scholars (see Kramsch, Byram, Byrnes, Holmes, Brumfit, Kelly, Phipps, Guilherme, among others) with some examples of scholars from both contexts actually working together on the question of language and culture (e.g. Levine and Phipps, 2011, Zarate, Levy and Kramsch, 2008).

The rationale for selecting institutions in both contexts is hence supported by the aim to explore the phenomenon in two Anglophone countries, in which scholars have been actively involved in researching both intercultural competence from its theoretical perspectives as well as the implications of the language – culture dichotomy on Modern Languages in Higher Education.

4.3.1 Profiles of universities participating in the study

The universities participating in this study differ considerably from each other and have been selected on the grounds of the approaches adopted for the delivery of the undergraduate curriculum in German studies as well as for pragmatic reasons such as familiarity with the geographical context and location of the institutions. As the study aims to compare the experiences of undergraduate students in UK and US universities in relation to the research questions posed here, two of the institutions are located in the UK while the other two are located in the United States. In the selection process, efforts were

made to select a university in the UK representing a rather traditional curriculum often observable at many older and well-established institutions in the country, and another institution driven by a conscious effort to try to increase relevance at least with regards to the use of the Target Language across the curriculum. Similarly, the institutions in the US were also selected on the basis of the curricular structures present at the time. In line with the research questions guiding this study, it was useful to compare experiences of students in a degree programme where the bifurcation of language and content was observable (at least to a degree) with those in a programme where the curriculum had been entirely redesigned to address this issue.

To ensure the identity of the universities would be kept confidential, throughout the thesis the universities are identified through the following pseudonyms: Universities A and B (based in the UK) and Universities C and D (based in the USA). The descriptions outlined below are provided in order to gain a better picture of the institution profiles and curricular approaches hence any information, which could be used to identify the institutions, such as precise geographical locations, is omitted here.

4.3.1.1 The UK universities

There are a number of differences between the two UK universities involved in the study; University A is a public university, which was established towards the beginning of the 20th century and hence is classed as an old university. The university offers a wide range of degree programmes including Medicine and Dentistry. It is not part of the Russell Group universities although degree programmes in Modern Languages, at the time of the data collection, very much mirrored the curricular structures of Russell Group institutions and hence followed a traditional separation between the delivery of content modules and that of language tuition. Undergraduate students opting for a degree in German had the option of studying German only (single-honours), German and a second language or

second subject (joint-honours) or up to three languages. Depending upon the particular degree path chosen, students could take a greater or smaller number of content courses associated with German Studies. With regards to language tuition, student entering at advanced level would have three classes per week, a written class, structured as a seminar on the topics of German grammar, translation and writing skills, two oral classes and a fortnightly grammar lecture, also focusing on similar aspects. In the first two years of study, the only component that was exclusively taught in the Target Language was the oral class, while both English and German were used in the grammar and written elements. Content courses were all taught and assessed exclusively in English although the texts in many of these modules would be in German, hence students were expected to be able to read and interpret these in the original.

University B is a much larger institution and ranks very highly both nationally and internationally. It belongs to the prestigious Russell Group and its Modern Languages department continues to rank as one of the highest in the country in the university league tables. Although university B maintains many traditional aspects of a British Modern Languages curriculum, the German section has made an attempt to extend the use of the Target Language to content courses and argues that this is an aspect of the curriculum that students particularly like. As mentioned on the university's prospectus, students are required to take core language modules focusing on the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in year 1, 2 and 4. The third year is spent abroad, as is also the case for university A. It is the attempt to extend the use of the target language beyond the language tuition component that provided a rationale for including this particular university in the study as well as the university's extensive amount of research being conducted on the topic of intercultural competence taking place in the School of Education.

At the time the data collection was carried out, both university A and university B

maintained a traditional separation between language and content, which was also partially reflected in the teaching staff. The teaching of language, particularly of the oral component was generally carried out by the Lektoren / Lektorinnen (Tutors), who were for the most part native speakers of German. With regards to the teaching of writing, in university A this was often carried out by academics teaching on the content modules as well and this was also the case for at least one member of staff at university B. Some language teaching, generally not the oral class, was also carried out by doctoral students who may or may not have been native speakers of German. Teaching of content modules, on the other hand, was for the most part undertaken by research active staff on permanent contracts, hence reflecting the hierarchical differences as reported in the literature (see Chapter 2).

4.3.1.2 The US universities

The two US universities selected for the purpose of this study are both very well established institutions with an international reputation for excellence. University C is located on the East Coast of the country, while university D on the West Coast. University C was purposively selected for its very innovative and untraditional German studies curriculum, while university D reflected a more traditional two-tiered structure as the one described in detail in the MLA report.

The German department at university C has removed the traditional structure of lower-division and upper-division courses and has opted for a curriculum which aims to integrate the teaching of language and content as much as possible. As mentioned on the department's website, the department aims to enable students to become 'culturally literate users of German (by) engaging students with diverse content areas within an integrated curriculum, whose pedagogies reflect the best available knowledge regarding the multiple links among language, culture, and ways of knowing' [from German Department Website

- Undergraduate studies]. The university's website furthermore has a section specifically describing the curriculum. Unlike the two UK universities described above, content courses are taught 'through the medium of the German language itself' and, as mentioned in the section on curricular goals, students in a German degree programme are furthermore given opportunities to 'critically explore their own assumptions in terms of that world, and learn to value the multiple perspectives' [from German Department Website - Curriculum - Goals]. The rationale for selecting this institution is evidently the department's efforts to endorse a curriculum which is aimed not only to effectively integrate language and content in a unified way, as well as the emphasis it places on critical explorations of student assumptions on the world which appear to encompass the very concept of the development of criticality and intercultural competence of interest to this study.

The final institution, university D, was selected on the grounds of having a somewhat traditional American curriculum and approach towards the teaching of foreign languages. Its German department is very well established and there is no doubt that the programme is in many ways excellent and effective at producing outstanding German Studies graduates. At the time of the data collection, the programme offered a portion of content courses taught in German as well as a portion taught in English. As described on the department's website, the German language programme consisted of courses which were set according to proficiency levels. These included a first year elementary German, a second year intermediate German and a third year advanced German conversation and composition class as well as Business German.   Students also had the option of completing a first year intensive course over the summer [departmental website - the German Language Program]. While the curriculum was perhaps less innovative from the standpoint of integrating language and content, university D similarly emphasised the important role of critical thinking and cultural literacy as a component of the degree. The departmental website describes five main objectives of the degree which include the

following: 1. linguistic proficiency 2. cultural literacy 3. information and media competence 4. critical thinking and interpretive skills 5. life-long learning.   Of particular interest are the categories of cultural literacy, defined as comprising of 'cultural competence in the target culture(s); cross-cultural awareness; and recognition of the dynamic relationship between language, culture, and meaning' and *critical thinking and interpretive skills*, comprising of 'the ability to interpret a number of short texts and artefacts of the target culture; awareness of diverse ways of creating and interpreting meaning; and reflection on students' own culturally-determined perspectives, assumptions, and values' [departmental website - The German Language Program]. The fact that these concepts were outlined as degree objectives constitutes an interesting characteristic of the programme, which lends itself very well to the aims and research questions of this research.

4.3.2 Selecting the participants

The participants for the study were primarily students and a small number of faculty members. The student participants were undergraduate students of German who were either German majors (single-honours), double majors (joint-honours) and in the US institutions German minors[13] were also included. While participants in the two UK institutions were all finalists (fourth year students) and had all spent their third year abroad, it was impossible to single out finalists in the American institutions as a result of the degree structure and flexibility in enrolment. While in the UK students are required to take certain modules in a given year of study, no such requirement exists in US institutions, rather certain classes have enrolment pre-requisitites which, if satisfied, allow students to enrol on the module. In an attempt to gain as many responses as possible from

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[13] In US universities undergraduate students have the choice to major in a particular subject area and also complete a certain number of classes (modules) in a different subject. The number of credits for a minor is lower than those required to declare a major in a subject. Both the major and minor appear on the degree certificate and university transcripts.

seniors (finalist students) in the US institutions, the survey was made available to all students enrolled in upper-level content courses, those generally taken by students who are at least not first year students (with some exceptions). This approach was somewhat effective in returning a number of responses from finalists students, although not exclusively. Considering the size of the department and the response rate, all students enrolled in upper-level classes were asked to take part in the study as most would have experienced both some of the lower-level language classes and some of the higher-level content courses. While not all participants were finalists, having experienced both types of courses, they were still able to comment on their experiences. Even among the UK sample, which included only finalists students who were either single or joint-honours students, particularly in university B where the German programme was extensive enough to offer a wide range of topics, themes or specialisms, the experiences of the participants in content courses differed considerably. Some students for instance had no experience of culture / literature modules as all their content courses were in interpreting, while others had an extensive experience of these.

The rationale for targeting finalist students was to elicit responses from participants who could also comment on the contributions of the year abroad. Furthermore, being more mature and having already completed several years of study, they could comment on a wider range of classes and experiences from their degree programme. A shortcoming of including first year students for such a study would be that they would only be able to refer back to a limited number of modules to describe their experiences. Hence attempts were made to gain most of the responses from finalists, where possible.

4.3.2.1 Rationale for situating the study within German Studies

The decision to situate the empirical study within German departments or sub-faculties resulted both from the researcher's own familiarity with German studies first as a student

and subsequently as a member of staff, as well as from the identification of innovative work in relation to the German studies curriculum, which was not equally available in departments / sub-faculties of other Modern Languages. In particular the German curriculum in place at University C was one which presented a unique model both within the institution and in comparison with other universities in the United States. This became apparent also in one of the student interviews (see chapter 5) where a student from University C describes the different approaches towards the language and content curriculum of German and Russian. Another factor contributing to the decision to situate the study within German Studies included the fact that a number of key authors who made significant contributions to the field of intercultural competence, the relationship between language and culture and the literature on language degrees have a background in German Studies e.g. Claire Kramsch, Mike Byram, Heidi Byrnes, John Klapper, Alison Phipps, Jim Coleman.

The following sections describe the selection of the participants for the questionnaire survey and later for the interview study carried out at all of the four institutions described above.

4.3.3 Sampling methods for the questionnaire survey

According to Dörnyei (2007) sampling strategies in quantitative research can be divided into two different groups (a) probability sampling and (b) non-probability sampling (p.97). The first group is preferred from a scientific perspective as it increases the representativeness of the sample and its generalisability (ibid.). Probability sampling includes a number of procedures, which include: random sampling, stratified random sampling, systematic sampling and cluster sampling (ibid.). As this research is not per se concerned with the generalisability of the findings but rather seeks to explore the views of a particular population, probability sampling simply would not suit this purpose. This is

not unusual in applied linguistics, in fact most research in this field employs 'non-probability sampling' (ibid, p.98). While this is generally not viewed as problematic in qualitative research, from a quantitative perspective such sampling techniques are viewed as 'less-than-perfect compromises' as they lack representativeness (ibid.). Non-probability sampling includes the following sampling strategies: quota sampling and dimensional sampling, snowball sampling and convenience or opportunity sampling (ibid.). The sampling for the questionnaire in this study follows the latter strategy as members of the target population are selected according to certain criteria and on their willingness to volunteer (ibid. p.99). Yet, as Dörnyei (2007) argues, 'convenience samples are rarely completely convenience-based but are usually partially purposeful' (p.99). In spite of the fact that convenience sampling may be best suited here, regardless of how principated a non-probability sampling may try to be, the generalisability of this strategy remains nonetheless negligible (ibid.) and hence constitutes a limitation of this method.

4.3.3.1 Participant numbers

The student questionnaire was made available to all students registered in upper-division German courses at the two US universities and all students in their final year (studying towards a single or joint-honours degree in German) at the two British universities. The number of responses differed between the institutions, however it should be acknowledged that both university A and D had a much smaller number of undergraduates studying towards a German degree in comparison to Universities B and C, which could have affected the number of responses obtained. The total number of questionnaire responses from all four universities was 56. The table below illustrates the number of responses received from each of the institutions. As the researcher was not involved in teaching any of the students participating in the study, there was no captive audience and it would have been unethical to take up the host-lecturer's lesson time to ask students to complete the

questionnaire. However, since students had to complete the questionnaire in their own time, this may have been the most likely factor for a rather low response rate. On the other hand, the number of students who expressed interest in the follow-up interviews was higher than expected with nearly half of the overall participant numbers expressing interest. The interviews hence played a significant role in the data collection process, resulting in very rich qualitative data.

The table below provides an overview of the number of questionnaire responses obtained from the four universities as well as the number of students who expressed interest and then took part in the follow-up interviews.

Table 3: Overview of student participants

Universities	Questionnaire responses	Interviews
University A (UK)	9	4
University B (UK)	20	7
University C (USA)	17	8
University D (USA)	10	2
Total	56	21

4.3.4 Sampling methods for the interview study

The interview sample from which the participants were selected constituted a naturally occurring group, as the study was promoted within specifically selected university modules. At universities A and B (UK based) students enrolled in final year language classes were informed of the study and in universities C and D the study was promoted in all upper-level classes (in which a higher percentage of finalists students is generally found). The sampling method conforms therefore, to an extent, to a 'naturally occurring

group design' (Brown 1988, p.155) where the aim is to draw comparisons between 'the performances of students in naturally occurring classrooms' (ibid). In the majority of cases, students completed the questionnaire made available online and expressed interest in taking part in the follow-up interview by indicating this at the end of the survey. In Universities A, B and C this method was used to arrange a convenient time for the interview, however in university D this was not possible as none of the survey respondents expressed interest in the interview. As a result an announcement was made in one of the classes and a reward of a $5 Starbucks gift card was offered for students wishing to take part in the interview. Even this method was not particularly effective but two students agreed to participate. In this instance sampling was merely opportunity sampling as it was not possible to purposively select participants from the questionnaire responses. In spite of this, the responses elicited in the two interviews were insightful and provided a very good illustration of how the bifurcation of language and content evident in university D affected, to an extent, the curriculum and student experience in the university. The responses also confirmed some of the findings from one of the staff interviews at the same institution. These are discussed in detail in the analysis chapters, which follow.

4.3.4.1 Staff and student interview participants

The number of staff and students who expressed interest in the interview study differed across the institutions. For the most part this was probably related to the difference in department sizes between the universities. With regards to staff interviews in particular, at University A specifically, workload and the timing of the investigation also played a role. The table below summarises the interview responses obtained for both staff and student interviews across the four universities.

Table 4: Participant numbers for staff and student interview

Universities	Student interviews	Staff interviews
University A (UK)	4	0
University B (UK)	7	2
University C (USA)	8	3
University D (USA)	2	2
Total	21	7

4.3.5 Field relations

Establishing a relationship of trust with the participants was imperative in order to ensure the viability of the project and honesty of the responses provided. The first point of contact was made via email with department heads and senior lecturers in German Studies of the four universities, which accepted to take part in the study. Members of staff were made fully aware of the nature of the research project, the purpose of the research (i.e. a doctoral study) and potential benefits to the institution. A detailed information sheet and consent form was also provided at the time of the interviews (see appendix 4). Staff were overall very supportive and encouraged students to take part in the study.

One of the potential issues of conducting interviews concerns the personal involvement on behalf of the researcher regarding how subjects in the study may be affected by existing relationships. In order to address this issue as well as reducing social desirability bias (Dörnyei, 2007), while one of the universities included in the study was the researcher's host university, none of the students taking part had any prior personal involvement with the researcher. This made it easier for the researcher to maintain neutrality both during the

data collection and in the data analysis stage. Research studies have at times included participants who had prior personal involvement with the researcher (for instance where the researcher is also the lecturer / teacher of the student population being researched) and such approaches may lack objectivity. However, while it is important to retain neutrality, it is also often necessary for the researcher to have interest and knowledge of the subject area, context and type of participants being selected for the study. In this case familiarity with the graduate attributes of German Studies students, ML degrees and possible experiences students may have lived through was very helpful both in the preparation of the interview guide questions and in carrying out the interviews with staff and students.

4.4 Methods of data collection

4.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires constitute a very versatile data collection tool and have therefore been employed extensively across a wide range of contexts. Questionnaires can be defined as 'any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from existing answers' (Brown, 2001, p.6 in Barnard and Burns, 2012, p.31). An advantage of this particular instrument is its ability to collect large amounts of information fairly quickly and in a readily 'processible' (sic.) form (Dörnyei, 2007, pp.101–2). As questionnaires can be employed to collect factual, behavioural and attitudinal information in a non-evaluative way (ibid, pp.102-3), they can lend themselves well both to exploratory and explanatory research. Questionnaires, as Brown (2001) argues, also have the capacity to elicit individuals' reactions to, perceptions of and opinions of an issue or issues (p.6).

There are different types of questionnaire designs, some which may be optimal for qualitative data analysis, such as the open-ended questions, where participants respond in writing, and those requiring participants to select answers from a range of options, known

as closed-ended (McKay, 2006, p.37). Rating scales, such as those observable in Likert-type questionnaires, are widely used, since they give the researcher 'the freedom to fuse measurement with opinion, quantity and quality' (Cohen et al 2000, p.253). While closed-ended questionnaires have the disadvantage of producing data, which may be too narrow or biased (Oppenheim, 1992, p.115), they offer the advantage yielding quantifiable data, which can be statistically analysed and employed to compare results between groups. The narrow results or bias which could be inherent in the quantitative results is not perceived as a significant drawback since the study also included semi-structured interviews aimed to follow-up on a portion of the respondents' answers to ascertain their validity and explore responses in greater depth.

The questionnaire survey adopted for this study was composed exclusively of closed-ended questions with the exception of a comments box to allow participants to clarify their responses, if they wished. As the research design also included follow-up interviews, the closed-ended questions were helpful in providing data, which could be statistically analysed and allow reasonable and valid comparisons to be made between results (Johnson and Weller, 2002). The questionnaire survey preceding the interview study was subdivided into the following seven thematic areas each with a set of questions relating to the subtopics. The thematic areas, illustrated below in Figure 1, are drawn from the literature review, which informed the research questions guiding the investigation.

Figure 8 - Questionnaire thematic areas

1	Degree of integration (between language and content).
2	Target language across the curriculum.
3	The relationship between language and content.
4	Development of criticality.

5	Intercultural competence.
6	Comparing language and content modules.
7	Student satisfaction.

The questionnaire aimed to explore the diverse responses to the seven thematic areas depending upon the different institutions under study. As discussed previously, the questionnaire aims to address the first two research questions and thus is interested in primarily two concepts: the more general relationship between degree structures and the student experience and students' perception of their development of criticality and intercultural competence in the different institutions. While the former is concerned with all aspects relating to the student experience, and thus the thematic areas 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 are more relevant in addressing RQ1, the latter is better answered by responses to thematic areas three and four.   The questionnaire also included classification questions asking students to identify their university as University A, B, C or D and for the US institutions an additional question relating to expected year of graduation was included as it was impossible to single out finalist students from the rest of the cohort. The question relating to year and semester of graduation was particularly helpful when selecting samples for the interview study. All the questions relating to the seven thematic areas were attitudinal and required students to select the option that best described to what extent they agreed with each statement. The options ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6) and for some questions an additional option of N/A was included as degree programmes and students' background differed significantly between institutions that some questions could not be universally applicable. These included experience of study abroad and therefore all questions relating to study abroad and questions relating to comparing language and content, thematic area 6, as in US institutions some students could not comment on language classes as they had little or no experience of them, as US degree programmes do

not make certain lower-level language classes compulsory if a student enters with the competences necessary to begin their studies at upper-level.

As the aim of the questionnaire was to explore student views or attitudes towards the particular educational experience of their degree programme, the questionnaire can therefore generally be viewed as attitudinal, as the scope was to explore beliefs, expectations and attitudes towards the curriculum as students experienced it. To increase the reliability of the questionnaire responses and reduce bias, careful attention was paid to formulating the survey in order to avoid double-barrelled questions or negative constructions (Dornyei, 2007). Attempts were also made, where possible, to ask shorter questions and simplify the terminology (ibid.). Furthermore, to verify the comprehensibility of the questionnaire and to ensure the instrument functioned as intended, the questionnaire was first piloted with a small number of finalist students in an Italian degree programme at University A.

As the research aimed to explore responses from finalists students of German, it appeared relevant to pilot the questionnaire with a different group of students that had however been exposed to a somewhat similar learning experience. Email contact with the Italian faculty was established and their support was invaluable in encouraging students to take part. The pilot version of the questionnaire was exclusively administered online and a comment box was added at the end of each set of questions to allow student to comment on any issues of wording or comprehensibility they may have come across when completing the survey. None of the students who completed the pilot questionnaire reported any such issues and indeed the responses appeared to have effectively captured students' attitudes and beliefs towards the questions in each of the thematic areas. Piloting of questionnaires, as argued in Dörnyei (2007), is an essential part of quantitative research not only to ensure the viability of the instrument but also to 'avoid a great deal of frustration and possible extra work later on' (p.75). The pilot results served to confirm the effectiveness and

comprehensibility of the questionnaire.

While the qualitative data forms a significant part of this study, the questionnaire can also be viewed as a major instrument not only for its ability to elicit responses from a wider range of participants, but also because it is heavily informed by the literature review and the research questions guiding the investigation. Indeed even the interview guide, particularly for the follow-up student interviews, was informed by the questionnaire responses and predominantly fell into the thematic areas described above. The pilot phase confirmed the comprehensibility of the survey, as none of the students reported any difficulty in understanding the questions, yet some adjustments to the wording were made to increase comprehensibility of certain terminologies. Furthermore, to avoid wording affecting the response of the participants too greatly, wherever possible, a multi-item scale was employed with matched questions using slightly different wording but addressing the same point. Multi-item scales (see appendix 1) can also ensure that 'no individual item carries an excessive load, and an inconsistent response for one item would cause limited damage' (Skehan, 1989, p.11 in Dörnyei, 2014). While this generally worked effectively, there were a number of responses, which varied for instance between agree or strongly agree on the matched questions. Hence it can be argued that this method enhanced and confirmed the validity of the findings. Furthermore, while the survey follows a Likert-scale and hence asks students to indicate to what extent they agree / disagree with a given statement, it was decided to include a six point scale to avoid students selecting a middle option of "neither agree nor disagree" and thus increase the reliability of the responses.

Adjustments to the formulation of the questions included alteration of the wording when administrating the questionnaire in the USA and in the UK respectively in order to increase comprehensibility and match the wording to the specific context. Some of these included substituting the words 'language modules' and 'content modules' with 'lower-level language classes' and 'upper-level content classes' as well as 'year abroad' with

'study abroad'. In some instances adjustments were also made to spelling, for instance in the word 'programme / program' to match British or American English respectively. Furthermore, as concepts such as 'language' and 'content' could have led to misunderstanding, a clarification of the terms was included in the questionnaire invitation document (see appendix 6). As a result, two different versions of the questionnaire were produced, one specific for the US context and one matched to the UK context of the institutions involved in the study. The different wording of the questions did not affect the inherent content of the questions posed and the thematic areas remained the same across all institutions.

The thematic areas were useful for the researcher, to facilitate the analysis, as well as to the participants to help clarify the aim of the different sets of questions. These also functioned as page titles, which allowed the questionnaire to appear more professional. The design of the questionnaire layout, as Sanchez (1992) pointed out, is often overlooked, and as Dörnyei (2003) argues, 'producing an attractive and professional design is half the battle in eliciting reliable and valid data (p.19). An important feature of the questionnaire administration procedure within this study was the collection of the data via the internet. Although a paper version was available and it served to increase the overall number of responses, the majority of the participants in all four institutions completed the questionnaire online made available through surveymonkey.com. Some of the advantages of collecting data via the internet include the following: reduced costs, convenience of administration, automatic coding, high level of anonymity, international access and access to specified populations (Dörnyei, 2007, p.121). While the advantages are numerous, there are also some potential drawbacks such as technical issues, which may arise and sampling issues (ibid.). As the study included four institutions of which two were located in the USA, it was essential that participants would have remote access to the survey. While the researcher did visit each of the institutions, the visits were short

and the main purpose was to establish a rapport and conduct the majority of the data collection but not necessarily to complete it. It hence was important to be able to continue collecting responses even after the researcher had left the sites. With regards to sampling, while Dörnyei (2007) argues that it is not possible to apply any systematic, purposive sampling strategy when adopting online questionnaires (p.122), this did not present a concern in this particular study. The limitations in sampling were related to the students' willingness to take part in the interview as the final question of the questionnaire asked students to enter their email address if they wished to take part in the follow-up interview. Since a large number of participants did not express interest in the interview, purposive sampling was limited to those participants giving consent. While this may be perceived as a drawback, it would be unethical to select participants for an interview without prior consent, as they may feel compelled to take part. Hence, while limiting the extent to which purposive sampling may be applied, the online questionnaires did not make this impossible, indeed the software enables the researcher to select a particular email address / contact detail from the final question and view the participants answers, thus facilitating the purposive sampling procedure, particularly when a large enough number express interest in taking part in the interview. The administration of the online questionnaire employed in this study was also fairly similar to that of a traditional paper-based questionnaire, while having the advantage of a high-level of anonymity, hence meeting the ethical requirements of this type of research.

4.4.2 Interviews

Interviews have been employed very frequently within qualitative research as they can be very versatile and capture rich data from the participants. Interviews are employed regularly outside the research context as a frequent part of social life, a communication routine, (Dörnyei, 2007, p.134) and as a result the method works so well that it is 'the most often used method in qualitative enquiries' (ibid.). Qualitative interviews are

generally conducted as a one-to-one 'professional conversation' (Kvale, 1996, p.5) and have the purpose of obtaining 'descriptions of the lifeworld of the interviewee' (ibid, p.5-6). The literature primarily identifies three types of interviews: structured, unstructured and semi-structured (Dörnyei, 2007, p.135). The appropriateness of a particular interview type to the research study is related to its 'fitness for purpose' (Cohen et al. 2000, p.270). While structured interviews have a greater capacity to elicit data, which can be more easily compared between participants, the tight control characteristic of this interview type allows little flexibility for variation or spontaneity. This can impact on the richness of the data collected. Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, retain some of these structural elements, generally referred to as 'interview guide' or 'guiding questions' (Dörnyei, 2007, p.136) but also allow the researcher some of the flexibility characteristic of unstructured interviews in order to follow up on interesting developments (ibid.). As Dörnyei (2007) points out, the semi-structured interview is suitable when the researcher has already established a good enough overview of the phenomenon yet does not wish to limit the breadth and depth of the respondent's story (p.136). Within applied linguistics, most of the interviews conducted belong to the semi-structured type (ibid.). Unlike structured interviews, which employ a rigid protocol, when the researcher plans to conduct semi-structured interviews, as Richards (2003) advises, it is important to 'decide on what the interview is setting out to achieve' and 'identify the big questions' (p.69). Including these key questions in the interview guide can help the researcher ensure that the participants address the issues relevant to the research aims of the investigation.

In line with the sampling technique adopted, and the aim of the research project, all interviews employed in the study were semi-structured, thus allowing both a clear structure for the interview questions but equally fostering the collection of rich data, invaluable for a qualitative analysis. This interview method is commonly employed in Applied Linguistics and, as Dörnyei (2007) states, it 'offers a compromise between the

two extremes' (p.136) (i.e. structured and unstructured). Although it includes 'a set of pre-prepared guiding questions', the format is 'open-ended' and 'the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner' (ibid.). This approach is also preferred within an interpretive research tradition (Radnor, 2001) as it facilitates the collection of rich data and while allowing the researcher to elicit responses relevant to the research aims.

The interview duration averaged between 20 to 30 minutes, allowing participants enough time to reflect upon their responses, correct false-starts and even elaborate extensively on questions which they found particularly relevant to their own experience. When conducting the interviews, it was important to ensure that participants did not feel pressured to end their responses abruptly to meet a designated time frame but at the same time avoid removing participants from their regular activities for a period longer than necessary. While all interviews followed a semi-structured design, there were a number of differences present between them. The interviews conducted in the USA, for instance, included questions related to the bifurcation of language and content in lower and upper levels, and interviews conducted in the UK referred to the parallel teaching of language alongside content modules. Hence the formatting of the guiding questions was different in order to make some of the questions relevant to the participants' context. The interview questions also differed considerably between those of staff interviews and student interviews. While the student interviews were follow-up interviews drawing primarily from the questionnaire responses, no questionnaire was administered to the staff as the rationale for the staff interviews was guided by slightly different objectives. Depending upon the staff members' role within the department / German section of the School, the guiding questions were altered slightly to address the lecturer's / professor's role and familiarity with particular modules e.g. language or content. It was also preferred to conduct one-to-one interviews as opposed to group interviews or focus groups in order to

avoid 'certain types of participants to dominate the research process' (Dörnyei, 2007, p.146) although in three instances the participants themselves asked if it was possible for them to be interviewed in pairs or groups of three as a result of the limited time they had available. This was an ad hoc decision and hence there was no time to alter the interview guide, which had been originally designed for one-to-one interviews, yet the data resulting from the small group interviews was comparable in richness and depth with respect to that obtained in one-to-one interviews. A noticeable disadvantage however was the clear dominance of one participant over the others in at least one instance, and the difficulty in ascertaining truth both as a result of the influence of one participant to portray a particular view that becomes 'accepted' or 'agreed on' by the other members and by the wish to portray a particular opinion or image (Wallace, 1998, p.127). The extent to which the three group interviews reflected these issues is further discussed in the analysis chapters.

4.5 Data analysis

The data resulting from both the student questionnaire survey and the interviews were analysed and interpreted adopting respectively appropriate coding techniques. The questionnaire results were analysed with SPSS version 24 while the student and staff interviews were qualitatively analysed. In line with a mixed-methods approach towards the analysis, data gathered through the interviews were analysed by identifying specific patterns or themes from the responses and summarising key statements as well as describing in detail responses, which were particularly descriptive and enlightening. Key features were identified and the relationship between the interview and questionnaire data was described in detail.

4.5.1 Questionnaire data

The questionnaire data were first approached by visually examining the raw results of the descriptive statistics of all the variables. This was helpful to visually notice differences

between the results of the four institutions as well as gaining an overview of what kind of statistical procedures might be most appropriate for the analysis. The questionnaire responses were compiled on the basis of interval data and a numeric code was attributed to the responses: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (slightly disagree), 4 (slightly agree), 5 (agree), 6 (strongly agree).

An initial visual analysis of the descriptive statistics was helpful to identify trends in the data as well as identify differences between the responses obtained across the four universities. Particularly with regards to the first two thematic areas, Degree of integration and Target language across the curriculum, the quantitative data provided a clear view of the student perspective. Correlation analysis using Pearson product-moment was carried out for some of the variables to establish if there was a significant relationship between responses to particular questions. Regression analysis was also employed where statistical significance between variables could be established. Descriptive statistics were then used to produce graphs and bar charts of data through SPSS, which helped interpret the results and draw comparisons with the interview findings. Data analysis and results of both quantitative and qualitative data are discussed in chapter 5, while chapters 6 and 7 provide a discussion on the findings in relation to criticality and intercultural competence respectively.

4.5.2 Interview data

The interview data analysis, unlike quantitative analysis, cannot be summarised as one phase but rather took place as an ongoing process of coding and recoding themes and the interpretation of the data itself, in line with a qualitative methodology, played a role in the generation of theory. The interviews were audio recorded digitally and later transcribed in Word documents so that they could be more easily coded. While the transcription took place after the interviews, the audio recordings were often listened to again to inform the next set of interviews. This approach allowed the researcher to initiate some pre-coding

procedure while the interviews were still being conducted. One interview hence informed the next, allowing the researcher to see whether certain responses appeared to be recurring and explore in greater detail certain statements or opinions that may have been common to several participants. Certain themes that were manifested in some of the interviews, for instance students' preference to be taught in the Target Language, were noted and followed up in subsequent interviews in order to better explore the variety of reasons behind given statements or opinions. This method allowed for more rich qualitative data to be gathered in the interviews, however, while the original interview guide remained the same for all students interviewed, the emergence of certain themes resulted in greater focus being placed on those areas where students had a tendency of describing in great detail the rationale for their preferences and experiences. The interviews were also strongly informed by the questionnaire responses so, depending upon how students answered particular questions, a different degree of emphasis was placed on following up certain questions. For instance, a minority of students expressed a preference for being taught content in English rather than German. Since these results were surprising and did not reflect the views of the majority of the participants, it was interesting to explore what factors, personal or related to the curriculum and / or the learning environment, may have played a role in influencing this preference.

4.5.2.1 Coding

The interview analysis was conducted as a continuous process beginning with the actual recording of the interviews, followed by a pre-coding phase during the transcription process and resulting in more structured codes informed by the analysis. Unlike quantitative research, analysis of qualitative data is ongoing and can take place concurrently with the data collection process.

The analysis of the interview transcripts was informed by the steps for qualitative content analysis described in Dörnyei (2007), which include transcribing the data, pre-coding and

coding, creating memos, vignettes, interview profiles and other forms of data display, interpreting the data and drawing conclusions. Themes which emerged as surprising or recurring were highlighted for follow-up. For instance if more than one student identified preference for being taught content in the Target Language, each student would be asked to elaborate on this point and if the view differed from the majority of responses, particular emphasis would be placed on the reasons given by the student, which would subsequently aid the researcher in the analysis. This process was helpful in keeping track of the response pattern, while still gathering the data, and begin to interpret some of the findings while the data collection was still taking place. This also meant that although the same interview guide was employed for all semi-structured interviews, additional questions were asked where the students' response differed from the norm or where a new theme appeared to emerge from the responses. The interview transcripts were named using the pseudonym that the participants chose for themselves at the time of the interview. The interviews were reread following the transcription process allowing the pre-coding process to take place. The data was then explored in greater detail and specific statements were linked to the different categories identified. Each broader topic was then subdivided into subtopics and statements to be used in quote included in these categories. This was a useful procedure as it allowed for a quick reference when discussing the results in the analysis chapters. While some of the categories were directly drawn from the research questions informing the study, others reflected themes, which emerged during the coding process. In defining content analysis, Dörnyei (2007) distinguishes between 'manifest level analysis', being more applicable to quantitative data as it seeks to describe the surface meaning of the data, and 'latent level analysis', which concerns a 'second-level, interpretive analysis of the underlying deeper meaning of the data' (p.246). Latent level analysis describes very well the analysis process carried out here as it is concerned with 'coding for themes, looking for patterns, making

interpretations and building theory' (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2005 in Dörnyei, 2007, p.246). As Dörnyei (2007) argues, even the transcription stage already contains interpretive elements, which then become more structured once all of the interviews have been transcribed and carefully analysed. The stage of 'building theory', as mentioned above, plays a key role in qualitative research as it is a characteristic of an inductive approach. While the theoretical frameworks of Byram's model for intercultural competence (1997) and Barnett's criticality framework (1997) greatly informed the coding process, additional themes emerged in the analysis and hence new codes were created to fully capture findings, which may play a role in the theory-building process. Particular attention is placed on the emerging new themes and how they can inform existing theory in chapters 6 and 7, which discuss students' development of criticality and intercultural competence respectively.

4.6 Ethical considerations

As the research study involved gathering data from human participants, it was important to ensure the appropriate ethical guidelines were followed throughout the duration of the study. Preserving anonymity and confidentiality of the institutions and members of staff and students taking part in the study is an essential step in observing these guidelines. As Oppenheim (1992) argues, a basic principle of research is that there should be no detrimental effect on the participants. Ethical considerations guiding this study were informed by the criteria outlined in the British 'Data Protection Act', which regulates the need to ensure consent to collecting data and how it is used afterwards (Wiles et al., 2005), as well as by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and complied with the requirements of the home institution's Research Ethics Committee.

The BERA's Ethical Guidelines highlight not only the importance of ensuring certain practices take place, such as maintaining confidentiality and anonymity as well as informed consent, where appropriate, but also highlight the important role of the

researcher's character.   The guidelines state that,

> educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for any persons involved in
>
> the research they are undertaking. Individuals should be treated fairly, sensitively, with dignity,
>
> and within an ethic of respect' (BERA, 2011)

A further consideration was made with regards to the two US institutions involved in the study. While the above mentioned refer to research conducted in the UK, it was important to ensure that the study also met ethical requirement for conducting research in the USA. As Dörnyei (2007) points out, generally when conducting research in the United States, researchers would need to submit a detailed research plan for approval to an Institutional Review Board (p.66). Educational research, however has 'enjoyed a special status with respect to formal ethical oversight' (ibid., p.65) and hence 'has been singled out for exempt status in the USA in the Code of Federal Regulations for the protection of Human Subjects' (Johnson and Christensen, 2004 in Dörnyei, 2007, p.65).

The guidelines below are taken from the Georgetown university website, which provide a comprehensive explanation of the application process.   The guidance document on Categories for Exempt Review states as follows:

> Research conducted in established or commonly accepted *educational settings*, involving
>
> *normal educational practices*, such as (i) research on regular and special education
>
> instructional strategies, or (ii) *research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among*
>
> *instructional techniques, curricula,* or classroom management methods.   (Georgetown
>
> University Website, Categories for Exempt Review, emphasis added)

Prior to commencing the data collection, contact was established with the Institutional Review Board committee at university C to establish whether the research study would indeed be considered exempt from the review. As the study had already been reviewed by

the researcher's home institution's ethics committee and this was a research project based in the UK for a doctoral thesis, the advice received was that a formal IRB review was not necessary. It was also made clear that as an external researcher I would need to inform the participants of my study either in person, by visiting the seminars / lectures or through a member of staff of the institution as the university would be unable to provide me with student email addresses. Fortunately, thanks to an outstanding support on behalf of the faculty members and an enthusiasm for my research study, I was welcomed to the lectures and seminars and was allowed to speak to the students either in the first five minutes or last five minutes of the sessions. I also took this opportunity to leave information sheets about my study with a link to the online survey for students to pick up. Throughout the study all students taking part in the questionnaire had the option to remain completely anonymous as only those students wishing to take part in the follow-up interview were asked, at the end of the survey, to indicate whether they would be interested to take part. Those who wished to take part in the interview provided their university email address as the only contact method. All correspondence initiated by the researcher was also made through the researcher's own university email account thus ensuring a greater degree of professionalism.

Ethical guidelines, as outlined in the BERA (2011) document, refer to a number of considerations including the following: voluntary informed consent, openness and disclosure, right to withdraw, children, vulnerable young people and vulnerable adults, incentives, detriment arising from participation in research, privacy and disclosure. All interview participants in the study were given an information sheet describing the purpose of the investigation, how their responses would be kept confidential, who would have access to the data, their right to withdraw at any point and the benefits of taking part in the study. To encourage students to take part in the interview study, a souvenir from London was offered to the American students and a souvenir from Hollywood to the British

students. In many cases the incentive was effective in encouraging participation, however it was still difficult to motivate a larger number of students to take part.   This type of incentive was chosen both for the interest it may have drawn from the participants as well as its ethical nature. Accepting the incentive would not advantage or disadvantage the participants in any particular way. All interview participants were asked to sign an informed consent and were given the opportunity to ask questions. All efforts were hence made to ensure that as much as possible about the aims and purpose of the study was made clear, the interview procedure was described in described in detail as well as the extent to which answers would be kept confidential.   To ensure all participants were informed of the aims of the study, an email was sent to the Head of German or in some cases individual lecturers to forward to the students they were teaching and / or paste the information and link to the survey on the module VLE website. This method was effective first of all in ensuring transparency of the aims of the study as faculty members would have access to the same information as the students and also helped increase credibility and access. The support received from members of staff across all four institutions was invaluable in promoting student participation in the research study.   With regards to the research setting, I had been teaching first year undergraduates of German at university A and this was one, among other reasons, why I chose to focus on finalist students of German in all four institutions. This allowed me to be seen only in my role as a researcher even at my home university. As a benefit to the staff and students taking part in the study, any published results will be made available to all participants and the German departments taking part in the research.

4.6.1 Confidentiality, storage and quality criteria

The research project in question is not funded by any organisation, nor are there any professional or personal relationships, which could lead to a potential conflict of interest. Rather ethical considerations relevant here, focus on ensuring confidentiality and

anonymity of the participants and institutions is maintained as well as ensuring participants are not disturbed from carrying out their normal duties or activities. The objective is to ensure no harm is done to the participants at any stage and that they are fully aware of the purpose of the study and their rights as individuals taking part in research. One measure in place to ensure participants are fully informed, is to debrief them by giving them a written description of the aims of the study and ensure they complete an informed consent form. The purpose of the 'informed consent' is for students to reflect upon the aim of the study and to be fully aware that they have the right to withdraw at any point or to refuse to take part in the study all together. Participants further need to 'understand the process in which they are to be engaged, including why their participation is necessary, how it will be used and how and to whom it will be reported' (BERA, 2011, p.5).

According to Dörnyei (2007, p.69) the researcher has the responsibility to ensure that the participants are fully informed of the following:

- As much as possible about the aims of the investigation and the purpose for which the data will be used.

- The tasks the participants will be expected to perform during the study.

- The possible risks and the potential consequences of participating in the research.

- The extent to which answers will be held confidential.

- The basic right to withdraw from the study at any point.

To ensure the following ethical points were met, before commencing the data collection, staff members who agreed support the research project were sent an information sheet outlining the aims and methodology of the study via email. Some staff members chose to publish the document on their university VLE platform so students would be informed of the study and the dates when the researcher would be visiting the university. This was a very effective way of both informing prospective participants about the study without

having to personally contact students.

A further ethical consideration concerns the storage of confidential data, particularly that which was drawn from student and staff interviews. As Dörnyei (2007) argues 'one particular threat to confidentiality is posed by the storage of data, particularly audio and video recording as well as their transcripts' (p.68) hence it is particularly important for the researcher to store data securely and ensure that access is restricted. The data from this study comprised both questionnaire responses (numerical data) as well as audio recordings of the interviews along with their transcripts. The data was stored securely in an encrypted folder located on the researcher's home university's system. If there is no longer a need to store the data securely (i.e. all the relevant analysis has taken place and there is no need to revisit the data), measures will be taken to ensure all the data collected from the study is destroyed. As Dörnyei points out, this practice is preferable to 'prevent the abuse of data storage' (2007, p.68). The next section describes the extensive process of obtaining permissions to conduct the data collection for this study with reference to the ethical approval requirements previously discussed.

4.6.2 Researcher integrity and potential benefits to participants

Aside from conforming to guidelines in place for regulating research involving human participants, equally important are the attributes of researcher integrity. The role of the moral character of the researcher, indeed imbedded in the Greek term 'ethos' meaning 'character', is arguably not a mere legal issue of 'complying with regulations', but rather equally concerns human honesty and truth (Dörnyei, 2007, pp.66-67). The value of researcher integrity is acknowledged in all respects in the Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association (AERA, 2011), which open with a description of the researchers' general responsibilities. Among these, some specifically relate to character, such as the following:

- Education researchers do not falsify or fabricate data, data sources, findings, claims, or credentials.

- Education researchers [...] are alert to and guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their knowledge, expertise, or influence.

- Education researchers disclose relevant sources of financial support and relevant personal or professional relationships that may have the appearance of or potential for a conflict of interest

(AERA, 2011)

The guidelines are extensive and comprehensive and the above examples serve merely to illustrate the emphasis that is placed on researcher integrity. As Dörnyei (2007) argues 'at the heart of research ethics lies the moral character of the researcher' (p.66). Research ethics however do not merely concern the protection of participants from harm; equally important is ensuring that those who participate in the research study can 'benefit from our research' (Dörnyei, 2007, p.67). This aspect is also reported in the researcher's institutional ethics review form as it is an important aspect to keep in consideration. For what concerns this study, among the benefits students may draw from participating are building awareness about their own degree programme, an opportunity to reflect on their learning experience and to discover topics of discussion in research as well as experiencing first hand what it means to conduct an empirical investigation. By participating in the study, students were also given the opportunity to learn how to conduct empirical research, which may in turn help them at a later stage of their academic career. Participants and colleagues in the institutions taking part in the study will also have access to the data relevant to their own institution as well as journal articles or conference papers which report the findings of this study. While informing participants of the nature of the investigation is imperative, providing too much information may lead to bias or influence participant responses, hence it is important to ensure that the information provided does

not lead participants to feel they are expected to give a particular response as opposed to another. This was taken into consideration both when writing the information sheet as well as in the creation of the research instruments.

4.6.3 Issues of validity and reliability

As the methodology adopted in the study includes both qualitative and quantitative data, issues of validity and reliability, with regards to the legitimacy of the findings, are addressed here.   In qualitative research, the literature distinguishes between four kinds of validity, namely internal, external, ecological and construct validity. (Bryman, 2001, p.30). Internal validity is concerned with soundness, integrity and credibility of findings (Richards, Ross and Seedhouse, 2012, p.328), external validity, on the other hand, is more concerned with the extent to which findings may be generalised beyond the specific research context (ibid.).   Qualitative studies, which are context-bound, are typically criticised for their weakness in this particular area (ibid.). Ecological validity is concerned with the applicability of the findings to people's everyday life while construct validity addresses the degree to which the research instruments measure the construct under examination (McKay, 2006; Dörnyei, 2007). While in a quantitative approach, issues of validity can be addressed through 'careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatments of the data' (Cohen et al. 2000, p.105), addressing validity in qualitative studies takes other factors into consideration. In qualitative data analysis particular attention is placed on 'trustworthiness' (Lincoln and Guba (1988, p.218), where 'credibility' refers to the value of truth in the study and transferability and the 'applicability' of the findings to different contexts are comparable to the concepts of internal and external validity relevant to quantitative research. The richness and depth of the data generated, and honesty in interpreting it on behalf of the researcher aim to address these issues (Cohen et al., 2000).   With regards to reliability, the issue relates mostly to the ability to replicate the study (ibid., p.117) and, with regards to quantitative data,

reliability checks can be made through statistical procedures such as correlation and variance. While replicating the study is possible, as the results can only be generalisable to the participant population itself, one would need to replicate the study with a similar selection of participants within German Studies at the same institutions in order to seek similar results. It is possible that similar findings may also be obtained across other language degrees, as the literature suggests, yet often curricular structures may differ hence resulting in a diverse student experience. Among other factors to consider is also the role of specific staff members and their unique contribution to the learning experience. As is discussed in further detail in the following chapters, in at least one institution the unique approach adopted by one member of staff played a significant role in fostering students' development of intercultural competence and criticality. This poses yet another challenge for any researcher wishing to replicate the study with the aim of obtaining comparable findings. Aside from the issues relating to replicability, it is possible to carry out inter-reliability checks to verify the consistency of the qualitative data analysis conducted by the researcher (Biklen and Bogdan, 2007). In order to check the reliability of the coding employed in the analysis of staff and student interviews, the researcher left time between the initial coding stage and a later more in-depth analysis, which examined all data categorised using the initial codes.

4.6.4 Limitations of the selected approach

As with most research that is primarily qualitative in nature, perhaps the greatest limitations of the study concern the rather small sample sizes and non-probability sampling. Yet since qualitative research is generally not concerned with generalisations, development of an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and hence obtaining trustworthy results (Dörnyei, 2007) takes priority. For the most part the quantitative and qualitative data presented similar findings suggesting trustworthiness of the data collected

and indicating that the research instruments adopted were effective in accurately documenting staff and student views on the phenomenon.

Summary of Chapter 4

The chapter outlines the research design adopted, discussed the rationale behind employing a mixed-methods approach towards the data collection and described the stages of both creating the research instruments (questionnaire and interview guide) as well as approaches employed for analysing and coding the data. The chapter also discusses how the research design effectively elicited data in line with the research questions guiding the investigation. The first two research questions are best answered by data obtained both through the student questionnaire and the interviews, while the third research question can be best answered drawing primarily from the qualitative data, as it is exploratory in nature. The distinction between qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as the rationale for adopting a mixed-methods approach towards the data collection is discussed extensively. The chapter also provides a description of the participants and institutions selected for the study, while omitting information that would identify them. Ethical considerations, validity, reliability and limitations of the results are also discussed in order to describe the procedure of obtaining, analysing and securely storing the data collected throughout the investigation.

The following chapter provides an overview of the results of the analysis for all the data collected and presents these results according to the data collection method (i.e. questionnaire or interview data), the participating institutions and, for the interviews, whether the data was obtained from staff or students. The discussions chapters which follow (chapters 6 and 7) make reference to the data reported in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter reports both the quantitative data collected through student questionnaires and the qualitative data derived from student and staff interviews across all four institutions taking part in the study. Results are displayed in tables with descriptive statistics, graphs, correlations and regression analysis. Data derived from the interview study are reported in quotations selected from the transcriptions of the staff and student interviews. The quotations reported serve to illustrate the emergence of particular themes or provide examples of evidence for a particular statement. While the research questions guide the presentation of the data in this chapter, more explicit reference to the extent to which the empirical study addresses and provides evidence or a starting point for further investigation in relation to the research questions, is discussed in chapters 6, 7 and 8. The chapters which follow also address the findings in relation to the specific areas of Criticality and Intercultural Competence respectively and make cross reference between theory drawn from the literature, the empirical findings of this study and generation of new theory resulting from the investigation.

5.1 Questionnaire data

Students who volunteered to take part in the study were given the option to complete the questionnaire online, or fill out a printed version, if this was more convenient for them. In the majority of cases students completed the online questionnaire made available through surveymonkey.com. Out of the 56 returned responses 42 were recorded online and 14 were paper-based. The questionnaire data was then transferred to SPSS for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were first of all processed in order to identify both differences in responses between the four universities as well as patterns in the data. The data was hence analysed both as a whole, including all 56 responses, as well as individually. Correlation tests and regression analysis was also employed to test for

significance between variables.   Graphs and bar charts were then produced and reported in this chapter, where relevant, to better illustrate findings.   As has been discussed in chapter 4, the questionnaire was primarily aimed to address the first two research questions:

RQ1: In what ways do current degree structures affect the student experience in relation to ICC and criticality?

RQ2: What curriculum models appear to best develop criticality and intercultural competence in students?

This section of the chapter reports specific findings that help answer the first two research questions guiding the investigation; findings related to RQ1, which look at implications for the student experience more generally are reported first and these are followed by findings relevant to RQ2, which more specifically concern criticality and intercultural competence.

5.1.1 The student experience across all four German Studies programmes

The aim of the first research question was to explore whether students across the four different universities would have different views on ways in which their curriculum was delivered. The literature review informed the research question as well as the formulation of the items in the questionnaire. One of the areas students were asked to comment on, was the perceived relevance between the tasks and topics adopted in their language and content modules.   Other areas included the perceived need for greater integration, the use of the target language across the curriculum and students' preference for being taught content in the target language or in English.

5.1.1.1 Relevance between language and content modules - topics and tasks

In the questionnaire, students of all four institutions were asked to rate to what extent they agreed that their degree programme provided integration between the language and content areas of the curriculum. From the scatterplot below (Figure 8), computed using mean scores for each university, we notice that as scores for variable 1.1 (perceived integration between language and content) rise, so do those for variable 1.3 (similar feedback in language and content modules), thus highlighting a relationship between the two. The graph indicates that students in universities A and B on average slightly agreed that their programme had a good degree of integration between the two strands of the curriculum. Mean scores also fell between slightly disagree and slightly agree with regards to the similarity in feedback. Scores for university D and C were considerably higher for both variables, which indicates not only a greater perceived integration but also similarity in the feedback they received in both the language and content courses. The finding provides some initial evidence in response to RQ1, as it suggests that one area in which curricular structures may affect the student experience concerns the kind of feedback students receive in the different modules they study. The data further suggest that, where the curriculum is perceived to be better integrated, students receive more similar feedback across the different courses they take. This finding was further explored to test for significance through a correlation test and regression analysis.

Figure 9 - Scatterplot of mean values for integration and feedback
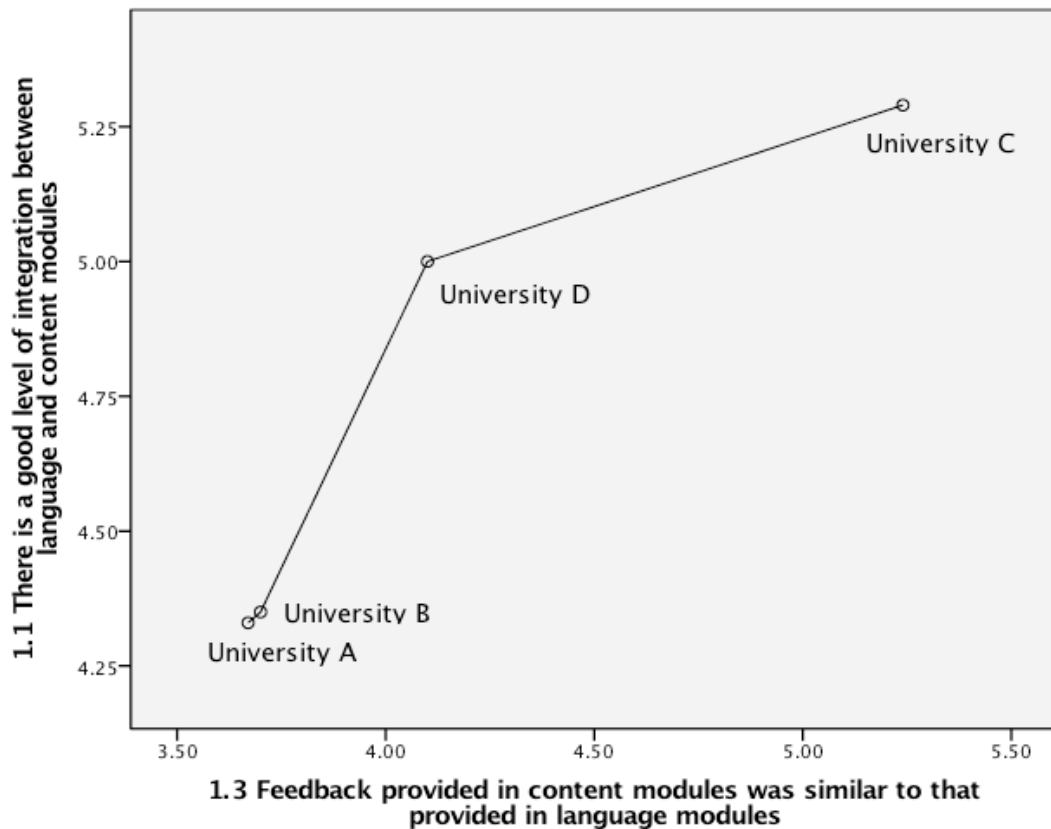
The correlation test illustrated below (Figure 9) includes data from all 56 questionnaire responses across the four universities, and resulted in a strong positive correlation significant at p=.000, thus identifying a strong relationship between students' perceived integration and the similarity of feedback received in language and content modules.

Figure 10 - Correlation test for integration and feedback

Correlations

		1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	1.3 Feedback provided in content modules was similar to that provided in language modules
1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	Pearson Correlation	1	.558[**]
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	56	56
1.3 Feedback provided in content modules was similar to that provided in language modules	Pearson Correlation	.558[**]	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	56	56

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Since the correlation test identified a significant relationship between the variables, linear regression was also carried out to evaluate whether students' experience of receiving similar feedback and greater relevance between the two areas could be regarded as a predictor for a perceived better level of integration in their degree programme. The results of the linear regression illustrated below confirm the findings of the correlation.

Figure 11 - Simple linear regression for integration and feedback

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	1.3 Feedback provided in content modules was similar to that provided in language modules[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: 1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.558[a]	.312	.299	.892

a. Predictors: (Constant), 1.3 Feedback provided in content modules was similar to that provided in language modules

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.872	.398		7.218	.000
	1.3 Feedback provided in content modules was similar to that provided in language modules	.453	.092	.558	4.947	.000

a. Dependent Variable: 1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules

The results of the simple linear regression identify the dependent variable as a significant predictor for variance in the independent variable. The t-test output in the coefficients table is equal to t= 4.947 significant at p=.000. The R^2 value of .312 indicates a 31% variance, suggesting that at least 31% of the variance in students' scores for similarity of feedback can be predicted by the perceived level of integration between the language and content strands of the curriculum. This findings suggests that curricular structures can play a role in the extent to which the programme appears more or less integrated to students as well as having implications for similarities in teaching and assessment practices (e.g. feedback) between the language and content strands.

5.1.1.2 The perceived need for greater integration between language and content

In universities A and D particularly, the questionnaire results indicated that students felt that language and content should be better integrated. This was an interesting result since universities A and D were specifically selected in order to observe the possible effects of a curriculum with a greater degree of separation between language and content on the student experience. As described in chapter 4, at university A all content modules were offered in English with language teaching being taught in parallel as a separate strand of the curriculum. As for university D, one of the reasons for exploring its programme was the fact that it retained, at least to some extent, what the MLA (2007) report describes as a two-tiered structure with lower-level language courses building up to the higher level content. The mean scores for question 3.3 (perceived need for greater integration) are summarised in the diagrams below.

Figure 12 - Mean scores - Perceived need for greater integration

University A	University D	University B	University C
5.22	4.50	3.35	2.78

The bar graph below (Figure 12) illustrates the mean scores above in descending order. Students at university A felt that there was a strong need for a greater integration between the language and content elements of their degree, while students at university C generally disagreed. Results from universities B and D are situated between the two higher values. These results provide further evidence for RQ1, indicating that in programmes where language and content was taught as a more coherent whole, students generally did not feel that there was a need for greater integration.

Figure 13 - Bar graph of mean scores for perceived need for greater integration
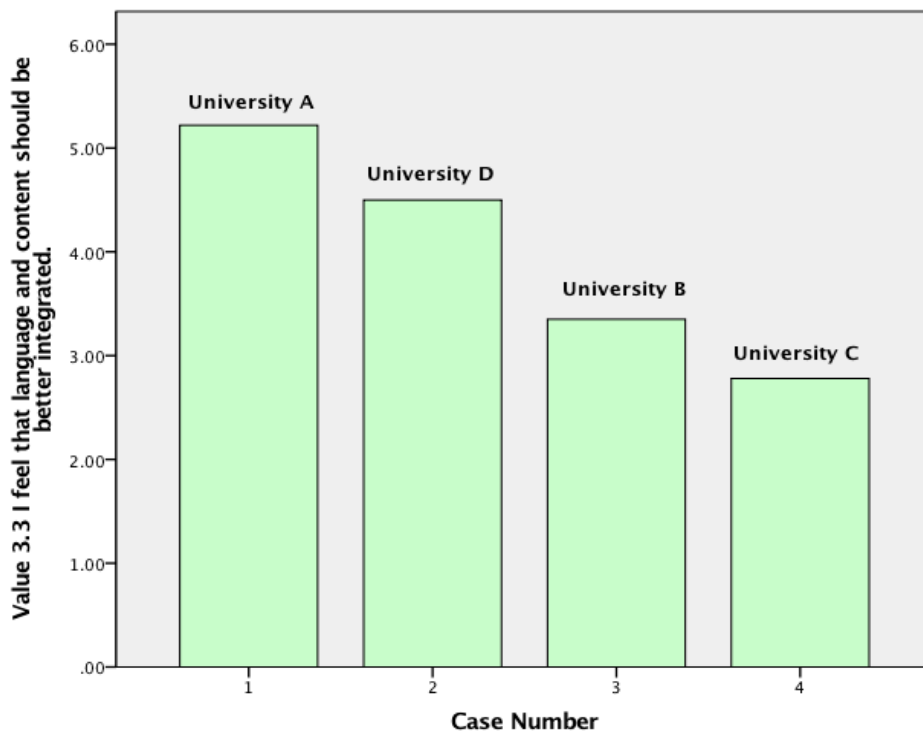
A further correlation test was conducted including all participants, to evaluate whether a relationship could be identified between variables 1.1 and 3.3 (perceived need for greater integration between language and content). The one-tailed correlation test (Figure 13) resulted in a negative correlation significant at p=.014, thus indicating a strong relationship between the variables.

Figure 14 - One-tailed correlation - Need for greater integration between language and content

Correlations

		1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	3.3 I feel that language and content should be better integrated.
1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	Pearson Correlation	1	-.342[*]
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.014
	N	56	41
3.3 I feel that language and content should be better integrated.	Pearson Correlation	-.342[*]	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.014	
	N	41	41

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

The correlation indicates that as the perceived level of integration increases, students' perceptions that language and content should be better integrated in their programme decreases. The negative correlation is statistically significant with a value of p=.014. Aside from identifying a relationship between the variables, the results of the correlation test also serve as a measure of reliability against the previous results.

With regards to differences observed between the results obtained in the two US and two UK universities, while the responses to questions on the integration between language and content differed considerably between the institutions as their curricula were not comparable, average mean scores for integration were generally higher in the American

universities compared to the two UK institutions. The bar chart below illustrates this difference for all variables related to the perceived integration between language and content.

Figure 15 - Bar chart of mean values for variables 1.1 - 1.6 - US and UK comparison
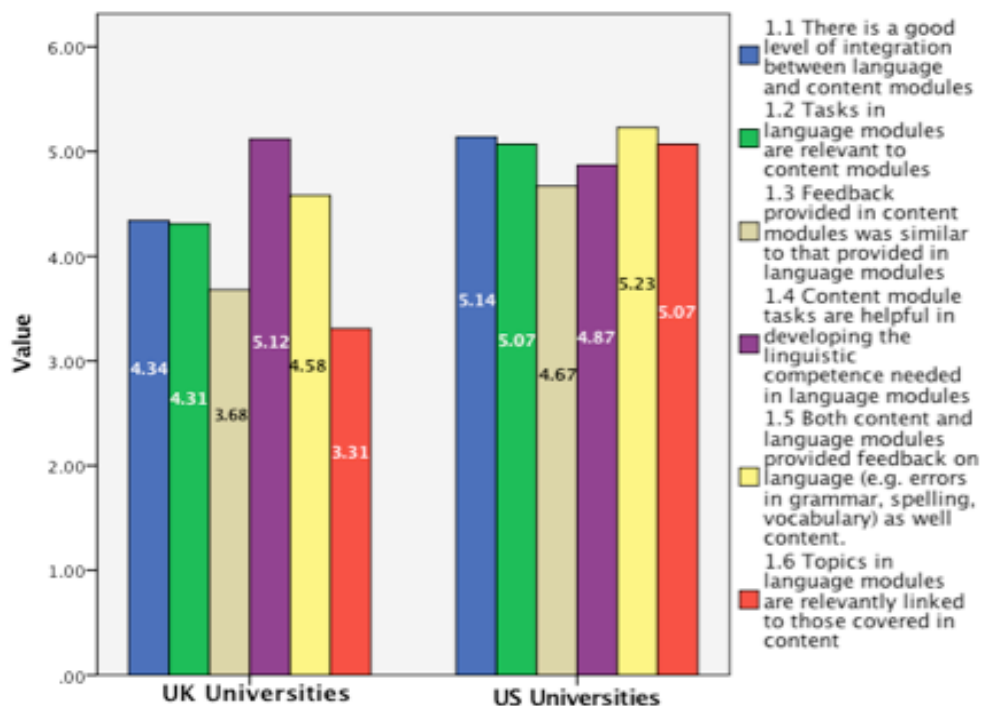
One of the most noticeable differences in comparing the results illustrated above, is the mean score for question 1.6, which looks at whether topics in language modules are relevantly linked to content. Here we notice a considerable difference in the mean values, with a 3.31 in the UK universities (3=slightly disagree) and 5.07 in the US universities (5=agree). One possible factor playing a role here is the fact that US curricula do not have separate language modules, which are taught in parallel to the content, so even where a bifurcation of the language and content is evident (with a lower-division language and upper-division culture / literature structure), once students reach the upper-division (in year 3 or earlier depending upon competency upon entry) most of the modules are of the kind that have been described as "content-based language modules", hence both a focus on

the language and content is present in these courses.

5.1.1.3 Target Language in content modules

One of the main differences between the four institutions was the extent to which the TL was employed in the teaching and assessment of content modules, where responses ranged from two extremes. The extent to which the TL was employed across the curriculum was also regarded as a descriptor of integration. The figure below illustrates the difference in TL use for the teaching of content across the four institutions.

Figure 16 - Bar graph - TL in content modules
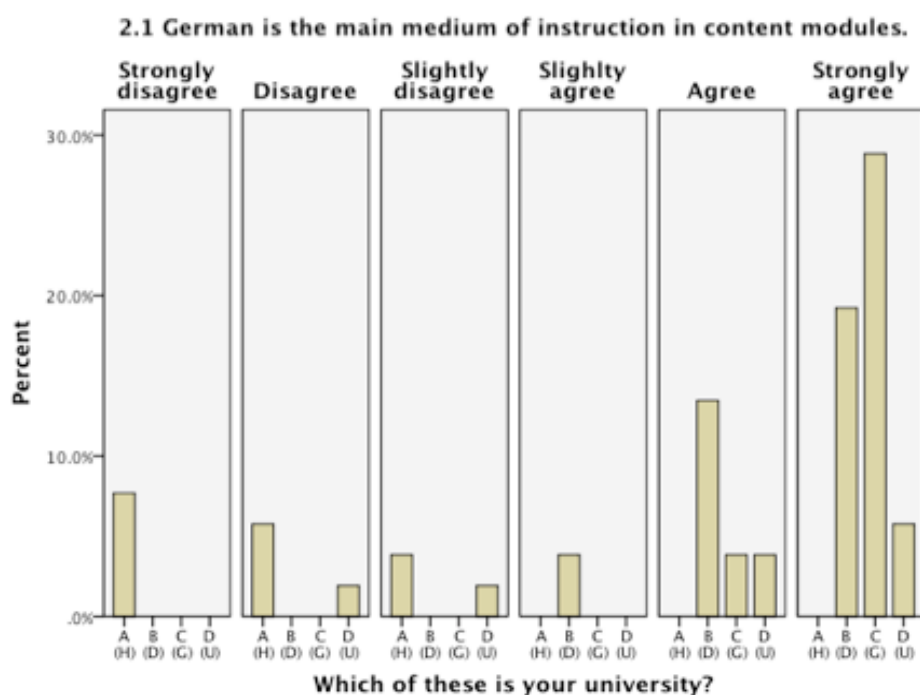
As illustrated in the bar graph, students who stated that German was the main medium of instruction in content modules were mostly those studying in University C, followed by University B, University D and finally University A. A correlation test was then conducted using all participants' responses n=52, in order to evaluate whether there was a significant relationship between students' experience of being taught content in German

and their preference for German as a medium of instruction in content modules.

Figure 17 - One-tailed correlation - German as main medium of instruction - preference

Correlations

		2.1 German is the main medium of instruction in content modules.	2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German.
2.1 German is the main medium of instruction in content modules.	Pearson Correlation	1	.522[**]
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	52	52
2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German.	Pearson Correlation	.522[**]	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	52	52

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The correlation test reported below illustrates the relationship between experience and preference. The one-tailed correlation test was significant at p=.000 demonstrating a very strong relationship between the two variables. The results thus indicate that as the proportion of content modules taught in the TL increases, so does student preference for being taught in German rather than in English. Regression analysis was also carried out in order to evaluate the extent to which experience of being taught content in German could be considered a predictor of preference.

Figure 18 - Simple linear regression for experience and preference for content in the TL

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German.[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: 2.1 German is the main medium of instruction in content modules.

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.522[a]	.272	.258	1.432

a. Predictors: (Constant), 2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.309	1	38.309	18.695	.000[b]
	Residual	102.460	50	2.049		
	Total	140.769	51			

a. Dependent Variable: 2.1 German is the main medium of instruction in content modules.

b. Predictors: (Constant), 2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German.

The results of the simple linear regression identify the dependent variable (German as a medium of instruction) as a significant predictor for variance in the independent variable. The t-test output in the coefficients table is equal to t= 4.324 significant at p=.000.   The R^2 value of .272 indicates a 27% variance, suggesting that students' experience of content

modules taught in German is a good predictor for students' preference for being taught content in the TL. This is a key finding as it indicates that 27%, or at least 25%, if looking at the adjusted R^2 value, of the variance in preference for being taught content in the TL is accounted for by experience. The unstandardised coefficient B (Beta) also tells us that for each one unit increase in the constant, there is a .385 increase in the dependent variable, i.e. an increase in student preference ratings for being taught in the TL. The relationship between experience and preference is further explored in the follow-up interviews discussed later in this chapter.

It should be noted, however, that students' preference for being taught in the TL was generally high across all institutions, including university A where students had no previous experience of content taught in the TL. Responses for all students to item 2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German had a mean value of 5.15 placing it between agree and strongly agree.

Figure 19 - Descriptive Statistics: I prefer content to be taught in German (mean for all respondents)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German.	52	1	6	5.15	1.227
Valid N (listwise)	52				

The pie chart below (Figure 19) illustrates the range of student responses to item 2.9. As can be seen in the graph, 57.69% of students strongly agreed with the statement, 17.31% agreed and 13.46% slightly agreed. If we add these up, the responses indicate that 88.46% of students expressed preference for being taught content in German.

Figure 20 - Pie chart: I prefer content to be taught in German
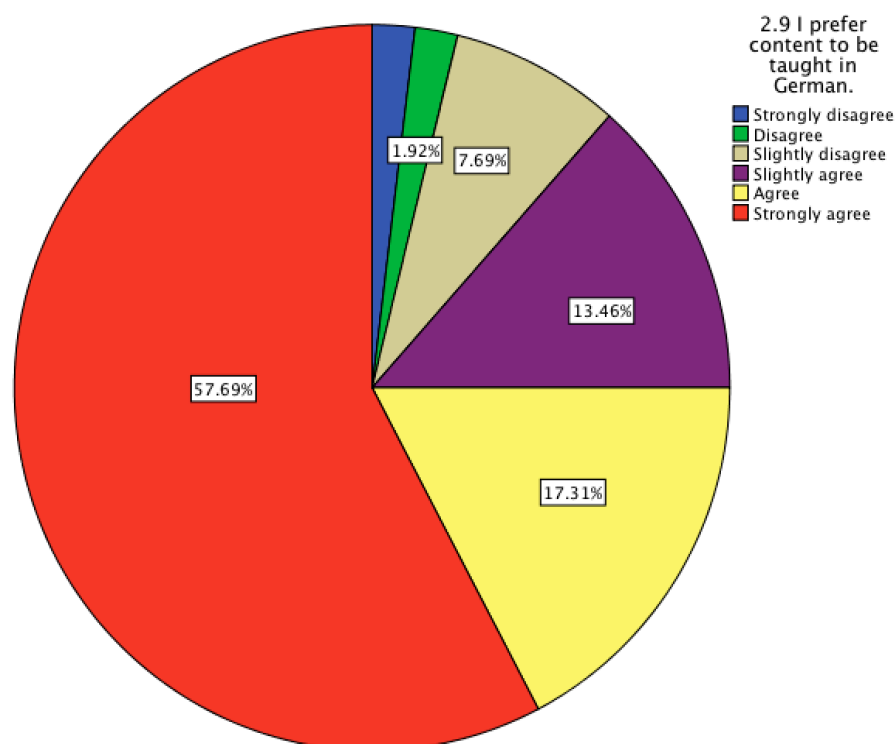
While the issue of whether content is taught in the TL or in English was not of central interest to the purpose of this study, as other factors were perhaps more relevant in a discussion on an integrated language and content curriculum, TL in content modules came across as an important indicator of integration, hence attention was placed on student views on the matter. It was observed that the programmes which offered a majority of their content courses in German also seemed to achieve greater relevance with regards to themes and topics (as discussed previously) and, as is better voiced in the interviews, there was often a pedagogical rationale behind the decision to implement this approach. The following sections review the quantitative findings for criticality development and intercultural competence. While the research questions addressing these concepts rely primarily on the rich data resulting from the student and staff interviews, some results from the questionnaire also help gain an overview of how curricula may play a role in the development of the above.

5.1.2 Criticality

Questionnaire items relating to criticality development adopted Barnett's model and spread across the three levels of domain: knowledge, self and world. Questions related both to the different levels of domain as well as to the four levels of criticality: 1. Critical skills, 2. Reflexivity, 3. Refashioning of traditions and 4. Transformatory critique. Both Barnett's domains and levels of criticality were used in the analysis of the questionnaire and interview responses. From the questionnaire results, criticality development did not seem to correlate in any particular way with greater integration between language and content in the curriculum. Indeed previous studies discussed in this thesis, such as the Southampton project, have explored criticality development in entirely different disciplines as well as Modern Languages, hence opportunities to develop higher thinking skills need not necessarily be linked to a greater integration between the language and content strands of the curriculum. One particular finding however, which once again becomes more apparent in the interview analysis that follows in this chapter, is the difference between opportunities to develop criticality in language and content modules (or upper and lower levels in American universities). Descriptive statistics for all four universities for item 6.1 Content modules provided greater opportunity to develop a critical awareness of cultures than language modules produced a mean value of 4.74 placing the mean between slightly agree and agree. The bar chart further illustrates the distribution of the responses across the Likert scale.

Figure 21 - Pie chart: Content modules provided a greater opportunity to develop critical cultural awareness
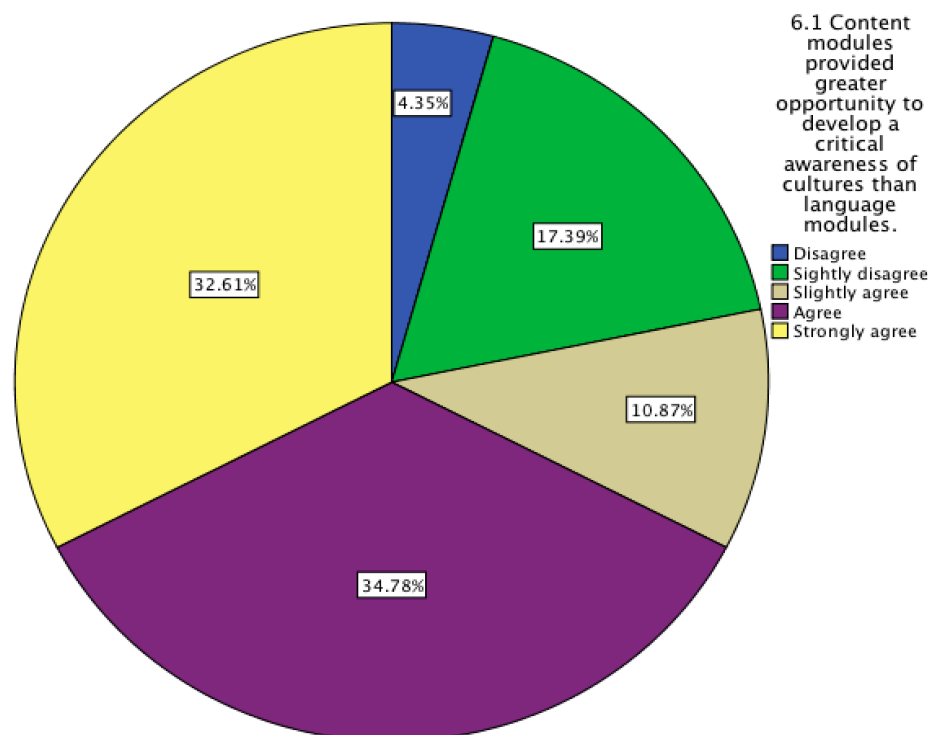
If we take the sum of all responses which agree with the statement (4. Slightly agree, 5. Agree and 6. Strongly agree) we have a total of 78.26% of students who agree that content provided a greater opportunity to develop a critical awareness of cultures compared to language modules. The results are significant particularly because they include responses from students in entirely different degree programmes with a great diversity in the approaches towards the teaching of language and content. They emphasise the invaluable role of content modules in the Modern Language curriculum but at the same time raise some concern about the opportunities for criticality development made available in the language modules (or lower-level language in the US). This issue is explored in more depth both in the interview analysis and in the discussion as it may be a finding to be further explored in future research studies as well as having implications for pedagogy.

5.1.2.1 Criticality development in the UK and US institutions

While no statistical significance was found between the degree of integration within the four programmes and criticality development, there were some differences between the US and UK institutions. Descriptive statistics illustrating the mean scores for criticality were used and then further analysed by subdividing these into the three domains and criticality levels to see if a difference in scores could be observed. The table below illustrates the diverse scores for each of the domains and levels of criticality.

Table 5: Criticality mean scores: level of domain Knowledge / Critical thinking & Reflexivity (Levels 1 &2)

 4.1 When reading a text, I carefully consider the writer's views

 4.3 I now have a more critical outlook at interpreting texts (compared to pre-university)

	UK	UK	USA	USA
	UNI A	UNI B	UNI C	UNI D
4.1	4.33	4.74	4.67	4.43
4.3	5.00	5.47	4.80	4.86
MEAN	4.66	5.10	4.73	4.64

Table 6: Criticality mean scores: level of domain Knowledge / Refashioning of Traditions & Transformatory Critique (Levels 3 & 4)

4.2 I am now more critical about accepting interpretations of texts

4.4 German studies has transformed my approach at interpreting what I read

| | UK | UK | USA | USA |
	UNI A	UNI B	UNI C	UNI D
4.2	5.22	5.58	4.93	4.86
4.4	5.11	5.26	4.33	4.57
MEAN	5.16	5.42	4.63	4.71

The mean scores for the level of domain knowledge indicate an overall higher value for university B, followed by university A. This appears to indicate a slightly greater emphasis on criticality development, particularly in the domain knowledge in the two English universities. There is also a greater difference in the mean scores of the UK and US institutions in the items referring to levels 3 and 4 indicating that students in the UK institutions generally feel that their programme has enabled them better to transform their approaches at interpreting texts and becoming more critical in accepting interpretations.

Similar results were obtained for the levels of domain self and world, with university B still returning higher mean values on all levels of criticality. The table below reports mean values for all three domains subdivided into criticality levels 1 and 2 and levels 3 and 4. University B remains the institution with the highest mean values, followed by university A, C and D.

Table 7: Mean values for criticality by institution

| | UK | UK | USA | USA |
	UNI A	UNI B	UNI C	UNI D
Levels 1 & 2	5.18	5.19	4.98	4.90
Levels 3 & 4	4.96	5.26	4.90	4.83
MEAN	5.07	5.22	4.95	4.86

While there was little difference between the mean values for criticality levels 1 and 2 among the four institutions, values decreased for levels 3 and 4 in all institutions aside from university B, where these surprisingly increased. This was an unexpected result as it places students' average response between point 5) agree and point 6) strongly agree on the Likert scale. As mentioned previously, criticality levels 3 and 4 are the highest according to Barnett's framework and refer to Refashioning of traditions and Transformatory critique. The statistical results report a difference between the institutions and also perhaps a difference between the US and UK institutions considering values for university A were also on average higher than those obtained from universities C and D. Possible factors contributing to the difference in scores cannot be drawn from the quantitative analysis as the results did not appear to correlate with any particular factor. There was no association between degree of integration and students' criticality scores, however this does not exclude the curriculum as one of the possible factors linked to the higher scores. Results from the interview analysis discussed later in this chapter explore possible factors linked to the difference in criticality scores reported above.

5.1.3 Intercultural Competence

Questionnaire items for intercultural competence were devised according to Byram's (1997) model and hence the questions were framed according the definitions of the Five Savoirs: 1. Savoir être, 2. Savoirs, 3. Savoir comprendre, 4. Savoir apprendre / faire and 5. Savoir s'engager. Results for intercultural competence were different from those obtained for criticality although scores averaged between point 4) Slightly agree and point 6) Strongly agree with the majority centred around point 5) agree, hence even where a statistical significance between variables was found, the relationship was not strong. The table below (Table 8) reports mean values for each of the five savoirs and an average mean value for all the savoirs according to the institution.

Table 8: Mean values for Intercultural Competence

	UK	UK	USA	USA
	UNI A	UNI B	UNI C	UNI D
1. Savoir être	5.22	5.04	4.98	5.14
2. Savoirs	5.11	5.02	4.87	5.14
3. Savoir comprendre	4.91	4.96	5.03	5.21
4. Savoir apprendre / faire	4.83	4.91	4.90	4.00
5. Savoir s'engager	4.78	4.92	5.09	5.04
MEAN	4.97	4.97	4.97	4.90

As can be observed, mean values indicate no overall difference in intercultural competence scores between institutions. The only difference can be observed in responses to questions on Savoir comprendre where the two US institutions scored higher than the English universities and in the scores for Savoir s'engager. The scatterplot below illustrates how mean scores for savoir s'engager (variables 5.11-5.13) correlate with indicators for integration (variable 1.1) for the four universities respectively.

Figure 22 - Scatterplot - Integration and savoir s'engager
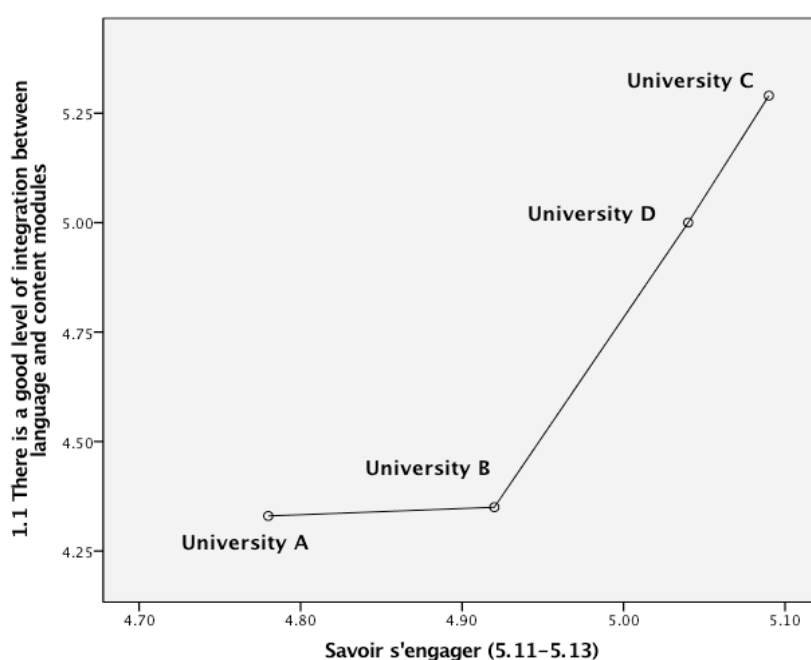
The variables used to measure students' self-assessment of how the university programme helped them develop skills of savoir s'engager were primarily 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13. A correlation test using variable 1.1 as indicator of integration and scores for variables for savoir s'engager was carried out with two out of three resulting in a statistical significant relationship.

Figure 23 - Correlations for integration and savoir s'engager

Correlations

		1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	5.11 My university experience enabled me to critically evaluate practices and beliefs of the foreign culture.
1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	Pearson Correlation	1	.290[*]
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.022
	N	56	49
5.11 My university experience enabled me to critically evaluat practices and beliefs of the fore culture.	Pearson Correlation	.290[*]	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.022	
	N	49	49

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Correlations

		1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	5.12 Through comparisons I have learned a lot about my own culture / cultures
1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	Pearson Correlation	1	.226
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.059
	N	56	49
5.12 Through comparisons I have learned a lot about my own culture / cultures	Pearson Correlation	.226	1

5.12 Through comparisons I have learned a lot about my own culture / cultures	Pearson Correlation	.226	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.059	

Correlations

		1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	5.13 My degree program has created opportunities for me to critically compare other cultures to my own.
1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules	Pearson Correlation	1	.250[*]
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.041
	N	56	49
5.13 My degree program has created opportunities for me to critically compare other cultures to my own.	Pearson Correlation	.250[*]	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.041	
	N	49	49

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

As illustrated in Figure 22, the first correlation (variables 1.1 and 5.11) was the most significant with a p value of p=.022. The second correlation test (variables 1.1 and 5.12) was not statistically significant with a p value of p=.059 so just slightly over 0.5 and the third correlation test (variables 1.1 and 5.13) resulted in a statistical significance of p=.041. If we take a closer look at the descriptors for these three variables, a possible explanation for a stronger significance in the first correlation could be related to the fact that the focus of the question is on critical evaluation of "the foreign culture", while 5.12 stresses learning about one's "own culture through comparisons". As the interview data later clarifies, only a small proportion of students across all four universities demonstrated an assured competence in this area. This point is also further discussed in chapter 7,

where the focus is students' development of intercultural competence as understood from the data analysis.   In 5.13 the question is once again not implying a strong contribution on behalf of the university programme, but rather the wording focuses on "creating opportunities for comparisons between the foreign culture and one's own".

As with the quantitative results for criticality, no significant findings, beyond what has been reported here, could be established through the quantitative analysis and hence the research questions referring specifically to criticality and intercultural competence rely primarily on the rich data resulting from the staff and student interview analysis.   Even where statistical significance was found, as in the examples reported above, it should be stressed that the difference between mean scores was very small with the majority of students across all four institutions agreeing with the statement, hence the data discussed above serves more as support for any findings drawn from the qualitative analysis.

5.2 Student Interview data

The response to the student interview invitations was very positive, with nearly half of questionnaire respondents expressing interest in the follow-up interview.   The total number of questionnaire responses collected was N=56 and of these 21 students agreed to be interviewed.   This resulted in very rich qualitative data, which was invaluable for the research study.   The results drawn from the interview data are summarised in this chapter and presented in a similar order to the quantitative data.   While results concerning criticality and intercultural competence are presented here, these are further discussed with cross-reference to the literature in chapters 6 and 7.

5.2.1 The language and content curriculum

The interview study followed up students' responses to the questionnaire and was thus structured in a similar format, with questions concerning the language and content curriculum being asked first, followed by those concerning students' views on their own

development of criticality and intercultural competence. The interview results in this section are drawn from student responses to questions concerning 1. attitudes towards being taught in the Target Language, 2. attitudes towards the curriculum, and 3. views on the relationship between language and culture.

The three categories were drawn from a second-level coding process (Dörnyei, 2007, 252), which consisted of taking a closer look at the data in order to notice emerging patterns. As Dörnyei (2007) notes, second-level coding can be carried out by re-examining respondents' accounts and listing all identified codes. The process highlights some similar related categories, which can be organised under a 'broader label'. The next step requires the researcher to 'look at all the specific extracts that are linked to the newly formed broader category' (Dörnyei, 2007, p.252). As Dörnyei suggests, it may also be useful to produce a hierarchy of codes, in the form of a tree diagram. The list of identified codes relating to students' responses on the language and content curriculum have been hierarchically organized into the tree categories, which appear below. The table, which follows, provides a summary of students' responses and their respective codes, which emerged from the analysis.

Table 9: The language and content curriculum – a summary of student responses

1. Attitudes towards being taught in the TL
Challenge
Intellectual depth
Comprehensibility
Achievement
Communicative Competence
Target Language Culture
Preference for TL

2. Attitudes towards the curriculum
Relevance between themes
Relevance between tasks
Linguistic links

3. Relationship between Language and Culture
Culture and language viewed as separate
Holistic view on language and culture

The following tables summarise students' responses in relation to the curriculum. Students are listed according to their chosen pseudonyms and institution. The themes highlight both typical and less common responses emerging from the findings.

Table 10: Summary of student views on the curriculum - University A

Student	Views on the language / content curriculum
1. Zak	Content in TL very difficult [CHALLENGE] Preferred content to be taught in the TL [PREFERENCE for TL] as it improved ability to communicate in that language [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE] Success in TL content module felt amazing [ACHIEVEMENT]
2. Rebecca	Experience of content in the TL and being marked in the TL would have provided greater exposure - [PREFERENCE for TL] linked to [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE] Topics in content and language are completely different [RELEVANCE BETWEEN THEMES]

3. Sarah	Discussing films in both language and content [RELEVANCE - LINKS BETWEEN TASKS]
	Content in TL would have been too difficult / topics are more demanding [CHALLENGE] [INTELLECTUAL DEPTH]
	I like that [language and content] are sort of two separate things, it's like the language obviously has to be in German and then the content is sort of understanding these German materials. [CULTURE AND LANGUAGE VIEWED AS SEPARATE]
4. Debbie	Too hard if taught in the TL / On YA content modules were taught in the TL - virtually impossible [CHALLENGE]
	YA presentation - successful - increased self confidence [ACHIEVEMENT]
	Content better in English - too much analysis [INTELLECTUAL DEPTH]
	Interaction between students and teachers in language module is easier in English [COMPREHENSIBILITY]
	Grammar had to be done in English otherwise you get lost [CULTURE AND LANGUAGE VIEWED AS SEPARATE] [COMPREHENSIBILITY]

Table 11: Summary of student views on the curriculum - University B

Student	Views on the language / content curriculum
1 Sam	Would prefer content in English to get a better mark [CHALLENGE] but would prefer German to improve competence [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE]
	language and content slightly linked but no real cross-over [RELEVANCE OF THEMES]
	culture modules are more in-depth [INTELLECTUAL DEPTH -CONTENT]
	tutors do give feedback on the language in content modules but it's less specific / don't comment on everything [LINGUISTIC LINKS]
2 Ruby	lacked confidence in oral classes, felt inadequately prepared for year 2 content taught and assessed in German [CHALLENGE (neg)]
3 Mark	wondered what was the purpose of taking first year content in English since it didn't improve his fluency. [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE]
	exposure to target language is always good [PREFERENCE for TL] -

4 Lucy	Year 1 content entirely in English combined with limited contact time in oral classes (once a week) made her feel she didn't get enough exposure to the TL - not enough opportunities to speak [PREFERENCE] for greater TL use in year 1 - [CHALLENGE]
5 Nicola	the language modules are very much centred on grammar, producing texts / content is more academic / Worked harder in content because of the level of thinking required [INTELLECTUAL DEPTH - CONTENT]
6 Emma	"I chose to learn languages because I get really excited about understanding when someone's speaking to me in a different language and I get really excited about communicating" [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE] [PREFERENCE for TL] "if you're studying German you should be able to understand it enough to be assessed in it." [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE] [PREFERENCE for TL]
7. Mary	"There were some texts that I didn't understand as much as I would have done if I had read them in English." [COMPREHENSIBILITY] Being taught and assessed in German was described as challenging but "in a good way" [CHALLENGE – pos] "we've been doing stuff on the Holocaust and it makes more sense to me to be able to read that in the source language and given that the language is part of the culture and part of their experience". [HOLISTIC VIEW ON LANGUAGE AND CULTURE]

Table 12: Summary of student views on the curriculum - University C

Student	Views on the language / content curriculum
1. JFK	Content-based language courses hard at the beginning because different from high-school experience [CHALLENGE] The curriculum was always interwoven with articles [RELEVANCE OF THEMES / TASKS] We're learning about Turkish issues in Germany - and we're finding indirect speech in what he says. [LINGUISTIC LINKS] [RELEVANCE OF THEMES]
2. Spencer	Content in TL improves [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE] prepares better for the job market - language was all taught in German - frustrating [COMPREHENSIBILITY]
3. Jennifer	Content in TL a challenge because of the work load [CHALLENGE] Preference for content in German [PREFERENCE]
4. Adrian	[PREFERENCE] for being taught in German Too much homework / can't explore a text in depth [WORKLOAD]
5. Gili	Being taught exclusively in the TL was very hard at the beginning [CHALLENGE] but very happy with the outcome [ACHIEVEMENT] "it was more through the culture that we started to learn the language itself" [HOLISTIC view on culture] "it's not just what you're saying but also how you're saying it." [LINGUISTIC LINKS]
6. Heather	Culture in lower-level not as detailed as upper-level [INTELLECTUAL DEPTH - CONTENT] Lower-level focused more on accuracy than content [DIFFERENCES LANG/CONT] Lower-level focused both on writing techniques and content [RELEVANCE OF TASKS]
7. Amelia	Received feedback on grammar in both lower and upper-level [LINGUISTIC LINKS]
8. Alice	Content-based language courses are more demanding than other approaches [CHALLENGE] Liked the increased exposure to the TL [COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE] A lot of her friends were frustrated / dropped out because the curriculum was not explained and was different from previous experience [CHALLENGE (neg)] [CULTURE VIEWED AS SEPARATE]

Table 13: Summary of student views on the curriculum - University D

Student	Views on the language / content curriculum
1. John	German Linguistics (content)- better in English, would have been too hard [CHALLENGE] [PREFERENCE] Maintained focus on grammar in upper-level [LINGUISTIC LINKS] Very positive learning environment in a content module taught in TL - [ACHIEVEMENT]
2. Maria	Dropped out of 2 content courses taught in English - [PREFERENCE] for content in TL / Reading something in translation makes you lose the feel for the text [COMMUNICATIVE CRITICALITY - emerging] Harder to write an essay with really good content in German [CHALLENGE (positive)] so I like the classes that kind of challenge that. [ACHIEVEMENT] No real relevance between topics in lower/upper level [RELEVANCE - topics] Content-based upper-level language [CURRICULUM - INTEGRATION]

The tabulation of coding presented in Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 exposes clear trends in student responses. The overview of the student responses in relation to the language and content curriculum highlights "challenge" as a common theme emerging from the analysis. Students most often described the experience of being taught content in the TL as challenging. While some students perceived this challenge as negative and therefore preferred being taught in English, for others the challenge was perceived positively and often linked with "achievement" and "communicative competence". The majority of students interviewed in fact welcomed the increased opportunity to practice the target language and often associated the challenge they experienced with positive outcomes, such as improved fluency and confidence in operating in the TL, which for many students constituted one of the main objectives of studying foreign languages at university. Hence "preference for being taught in the TL" was also mentioned repeatedly in interviews. Particularly for students in university A, where the only experience of content in the TL

occurred on the Year Abroad, students expressed concerns regarding "comprehensibility" of the input and described the experience as "difficult" and "challenging". Students also made reference to the different level of depth between language and content modules with the majority of students across all institutions highlighting content or upper-level courses (in the US) as more intellectually demanding compared to language / lower-level courses. In relation to the curriculum, students at university C noted that the genre-based approach appeared to maintain relevance of tasks and continuity in terms of feedback received by the tutors. Reference was made to the "linguistic links" maintained between modules, which appeared to be connected to the department's efforts to keep the language and content curriculum better integrated. Linguistic links and relevance of tasks / themes between the language and content modules also emerged from interviews at university B, although this varied according to the individual students' experiences since students had the option to opt-out of literature courses and select translation, linguistics or interpreting in its place. The most common links between the language and content curriculum were hence related to the fact that students did receive feedback on language in both language and content modules and there was a clear attempt to engage students in discussions on topics which at times may have been relevant to some of the content modules offered in the German studies programme. Students however pointed out that the level of intellectual challenge was very different between language and content modules with content modules being far more demanding and academic both in terms of input and assessment. This point is discussed in further detail in relation to criticality development (Section 5.2.2.1) and is hence not included in the tabulation reported above.

The following section explores students' responses in relation to the language and content curriculum in greater depth and is structured according to the three categories, which emerged in the analysis.

5.2.1.1 Attitudes towards the TL

Several themes emerged from the interview questions on Target Language. Many comments referred to preference and this was often in relation to a perceived improvement in communicative competence. Some differences emerged between the institutions and these were often tied to either pre-university experience or current experience of foreign language learning. While the majority of students stated that they preferred to be taught both language and content in the TL, some referred to this approach as challenging, affecting comprehensibility of the content and the intellectual depth of the discussions and written assessments. Views differed according to the institutions with a general more positive attitude towards teaching in the TL observed in those institutions where the TL was adopted across the curriculum or where the exposure was greater.

At University A where students had no prior experience of content modules taught in the TL, aside from some who experienced this for the first time on their year abroad, views differed among students interviewed. Sarah, a finalist student of German, pointed out that being taught content in the TL might affect comprehensibility of the input and might be too difficult in light of the high level of challenge already present in content modules.

> I find that if I read things in German <u>I forget them really easily</u>, it just goes in one eye and out the other. When we sort of talk about things in German it's ok. But when it comes to like.."oh I want to use this seminar for my essay", <u>I prefer to talk about it in English</u> [...] The topics tend to be different from the language topics, it's more things like….like the recent quote was feminism vs. feminiminism (sic.) and I think <u>if she had tried to explain that in German it would have just gone over the top of my head.</u>

(University A - Student Interview 3 -Sarah, emphasis added)

While the student refers to the challenging nature of the content and hence its possible incomprehensibility, had it been taught in German, other students from the same cohort highlighted the sense of achievement they had after having been successfully able to meet

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the challenges of being taught and assessed in German while on their year abroad. Debbie equally refers to the level of challenge and the difficulties she experienced while on her year abroad but also highlights a certain feeling of success and achievement that resulted from that experience.

> I did a culture module there and it was all taught in German and I could only just grasp the basics of it, like certain topics when they were talking about the local government but when we were asked to discuss and compare it to my own local government I just had no idea what to say, it was very difficult. [...] It got easier as you went along. So definitely before Christmas it was very difficult, each class you were just overwhelmed. [...]
>
> Researcher – What helped you become more confident?
>
> Debbie – I think once we…we had to do a presentation in German and once I did it and there weren't any issues I knew that I could do it. I felt a bit more confident.

<div align="right">(University A - Student Interview 4 - Debbie, emphasis added)</div>

Zak, also from the same cohort, commented upon his experience in a similar way. He also struggled particularly in the first semester and then managed to cope with the challenge in semester 2. Zak described the business content modules he took while in Germany as "interesting but difficult". He further described his experience as follows:

> Zak - One of them (one module) I failed, fortunately it didn't have an effect on my grade here, but one of them I passed but you know it was level 5 degree level stuff and I was expected to write essays in German and I think I struggled to do that in England / in English.
>
> Researcher - And how did you feel about the one you passed?
>
> Zak - It felt amazing.

<div align="right">(University A - Student Interview 1 - Zak, emphasis added)</div>

Surprisingly some students at University A expressed a preference for being taught in the TL, while having had no previous experience of it at their home institution. Rebecca, for

instance, referred to the potential of content in German to increase opportunities to practice the TL.

> I feel that being a final year student, <u>if I had more hours in the week of hearing German</u> and studying cultural books, and I was <u>being marked in German</u>, I would have a <u>greater exposure in German</u> that might give me a greater opportunity in future- I'd have <u>a wider range of vocabulary.</u>
>
> (University A - Student Interview 2 - Rebecca, emphasis added)

It would appear that those who were hesitant about content being taught in the TL also lacked confidence in their communicative competence and hence mentioned issues relating to comprehensibility and referred to the experience as "too difficult" or "challenging". In programmes where a large proportion of the content modules was taught in the TL, students were generally more confident about being taught and assessed in the TL. At University C, for instance, where all courses counting towards the German major are taught in the TL, students at times made reference to their initial difficulty or shock in adjusting to the approach but also referred to how the experience enabled them to achieve a high level of communicative competence enabling them to cope with higher level courses, which they enjoyed more.

> Researcher – So all the classes have been <u>taught in German?</u>
>
> Gili – Yeah <u>at first I thought "this is insane" but I was surprised at how much I could understand</u>. I was really <u>happy</u> and at the same time <u>very frustrated</u> but it was <u>productive</u>. There were times when the professor knew that "ok this needs English translation".
>
> Researcher – Did they use English occasionally?
>
> Gili- Very rarely – when they did it was after the class was over.
>
> (University C - Student Interview 3 - Gili, emphasis added)

Students interviewed at university C also made reference to student use of the target

language and how they felt that provided them more opportunity to develop their communicative competence. With regards to modules being taught in English as opposed to German, Alice pointed out as follows:

> I feel that any situation where <u>teachers are speaking a lot of English</u>…it kind of turns into a <u>translation exercise,</u> which to me is not very productive.

> (University C - Student Interview 6 - Alice, emphasis added)

What emerged as a new finding with regards to the different student attitudes towards the Target Language was in fact <u>student use</u> of the TL, particularly where this took place among students and at times even outside the classroom. It appeared that where TL was the main medium of instruction, students felt a greater confidence and motivation for experimenting with the language. The willingness of students to adopt the TL as medium of communication outside the classroom appeared to construct a Target Language Culture, where the TL was no longer associated exclusively with the classroom context or the TL community but could become the medium of communication among the German Studies community within the department.   Student JFK from university C, who had grown up in a small town in the Midwestern United States, and was now studying in a high ranking university in a large multicultural city on the East Coast, was particularly articulate in describing how not only the university experience affected him personally, but also the fact of living in a very different environment from the one he was accustomed to prior to going to university. JFK gave an excellent example of how use of the target language extended beyond the classroom environment. He described how he read his German presentation to members of a German club in his hometown.

> It's fascinating because we actually have a German club in [student's home town]. Some of the people were in the camps in WW2, sometimes they can remember what life was like in East and West Germany during the Wall. I talked to them and read my speech to them. And you can understand how things that are happening here in [student's home town] really were in

comparison to other things.

JFK also made reference to the unique relationship his cohort had with one of the professors. He felt the faculty members saw students very much as individuals and appeared to care for them beyond the academic context. He pointed out that on one occasion one of the professors "invited (the students) to her house for a meal and (they) spoke German". The student also made an attempt to communicate with myself (the researcher) in German before the interview officially began. This was a further indication of how the student had embodied the TL as his own and felt it was not something restricted to the academic content or belonging exclusively to the Target Culture. While other students at university C also presented positive attitudes towards the TL, references to a Target Language Culture were not as clearly voiced. Where some evidence of a developing Target Language Culture emerged, this was often linked to students' own use of German words as opposed to English during the interviews. When describing learning activities in German modules it hence appeared that some of the thinking was taking place in German or that students were proud to make reference to a concept in German rather than using its English equivalent / translation.

At University B, while the majority of students expressed preference for being taught content in the TL, increased opportunity or exposure to the TL did not seem to develop into a TL culture, rather preference for German as a medium of instruction remained strongly associated with the learning environment and the German speaking community. Being taught and assessed in German in content modules also seemed to create an initial concern about marks or anxiety about not being able to cope with the level of challenge. Students however clearly expressed preference for the approach and highlighted the benefits of being taught content in German. Sam, of university B, commented as follows with regards to his preference for English or the TL.

Researcher - Would you prefer a content module taught in English or one taught in German?

Sam - To get a <u>better mark</u> probably the one in <u>English</u> but to actually <u>improve my German,</u> the one in German would be <u>more useful</u>.

<div align="center">(University B - Student Interview 1 - Sam, emphasis added)</div>

Other differences between institutions were observed in students' comments with regards to the curriculum in place at their institution. While this was not directly linked to Target Language as a medium of instruction for content modules, TL appeared to play a role in the degree of integration observable from the descriptions students offered in relation to their courses.

5.2.1.2 Attitudes towards the curriculum

While no programme offered a complete integration between language and content modules, notable differences were observed in relation to the relevance between themes taught in language modules and those taught in content, relevance of tasks and linguistic links between the two areas. Aside from university A, where all content modules were taught in English, linguistic links were present in the other three institutions, where at least some of the content was offered in German. Linguistic links are understood as written or oral feedback relating to grammar, accuracy and use of language given to the student both during the seminars and in response to a marked piece of work (e.g. an essay, homework task or assessed presentation). Relevance of tasks and themes, on the other hand, refer to the similarity of topics, lesson activities and assessments between language and content modules. Students at university A did highlight some similarities in the kind of tasks which took place in both language and content modules, however students generally commented that there was little relevance between the two areas.

Sarah, for instance, referred to discussing "films" as an example of similar tasks between the two types of modules.

There has been a link, maybe talking about German films in the language classes – perhaps in the oral class.

<p align="center">(University A - Student Interview 3 - Sarah)</p>

In reference to linguistic links present in the content modules and the role of content in the language modules, Zak described his experience as follows,

Researcher - Was there any emphasis on language in your content courses?

Zak - There was <u>no language emphasis in the content.</u>

Researcher - What about emphasis on content in the language?

Zak - No, I felt there was a <u>lack of content in the language</u>.

<p align="center">(University A - Student Interview 1 - Zak, emphasis added)</p>

It appeared that many language modules focused on grammar or oral practice but little emphasis was placed on commenting on the content of students' work, rather feedback appeared to remain focused on the linguistic accuracy of the text produced.

Another issue raised in relation to the curricular separation between the language and content modules concerned the students' perception that in content modules it was more difficult to express opinions as a result of the learning environment. This view may have been personal and also related to a particular module and / or tutor but it does nonetheless present a students' perspective on how the differences between the language and content curricula affected her learning experience.

It's hard to say because we definitely don't speak any German in the content modules. The exposure is just to the text. It should be the other way around instead of us speaking German in the content, <u>perhaps more content should have been brought into the oral classes</u> so we could express ourselves and <u>if you're corrected it's fine</u>, you're in that environment, y<u>ou're there to learn the actual German part of it</u>. But <u>in a content class you're under pressure</u> that <u>everything</u> you say should be <u>accurate</u> and correct.

The student's comments highlight a need for content modules to ensure the learning environment encourages active participation and discussion and does not resemble an assessment-like context. An environment where students feel reluctant to take part in discussion is likely to adversely affect both students' intellectual development and communication skills (whether in English or the Target Language). A further point emerging from the reference above refers to the need for language modules (the student actually makes reference to the oral component) to be more content-based as students already expect to discuss topics in the Target Language within this environment and, at least for some, these classes provide a more relaxed context where making mistakes is acceptable and expected. Some similar issues in relation to the parallel teaching of language alongside content were also evident in interviews conducted at university B, in spite of the fact that the curriculum appeared to be, to an extent, better integrated.

With regards to the feedback received, Sam commented that,

> [lecturers] do comment on content and language but the way it's done because it's less
>
> important…they might not pick up on every mistake,

Nicola also commented on the differences between modules in reference to the tasks and academic characteristic of both courses.

> I guess the content is more of the typical academic – you do things that you may not expect on
>
> a language degree – the language modules are very much centred on grammar, producing texts.

In addition to describing the different focus placed in language and content modules, Nicola's response highlights the often-unexpected educational contribution that content

modules offer to language specialists. The precise role content modules play in the educational growth of students will be further discussed in relation to students' criticality and intercultural competence development.

At university C, where the curriculum was designed in such a way to increase relevance between the upper and lower division and where all modules were, to an extent, content-based, students provided good examples of how relevance between the two areas was maintained. Amelia, for instance, stated that she continued to receive significant written feedback on language throughout her upper-level modules, in spite of the content-based nature of the courses.

> Amelia - [In the course] we looked at German, Swiss and Austrian authors, we did songs and plays. We talked about contrasting the German and American time period.
>
> Researcher - And did you still receive feedback on language and grammar in these upper-level modules?
>
> Amelia – Definitely. I get a lot back on paper.
>
> (University C - Student Interview 7 - Amelia, emphasis added)

Students at university D similarly continued to receive feedback on language in their upper-level content modules, but this did not occur in all modules as some courses offered by the department were taught in English, particularly those on German philosophy, linguistics and Jewish studies. Courses which focused on cultural / literary aspects generally provided better integration between the two areas of the curriculum. Maria, of university D, described the modules offered as follows,

> There are content classes that are only taught in English because the German department here is so small that they want to make it possible for people of other majors to take those same classes. But then... yeah... I also feel that like Business German, I see that as a language class because it's taught in German and there are specific business terms that you learn and you learn how to write a resume in German and things like that. But I feel that part of that is also culture

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and content because you're learning about German business and about German economics and stuff like that.

The student, as stated, viewed the Business German module as an example of an upper-level content module, which provided a good balance between conveying cultural content and developing language skills.   When comparing the US and UK institutions involved in the study, it appeared that overall a greater continuity was observable in the US institutions as even at university D, where a distinction between the lower-level and upper-level was evident, the German department did provide students with at least some upper-level content-based language modules. One area where the bifurcation was perhaps more evident at university D concerned the selection of cultural content adopted in lower-level language modules. It appeared that the primary aim of these modules was to adequately prepare students for the upper-level but the primary focus remained on communicative / linguistic competence and the engagement with culture was often limited to learning about the countries where the TL was spoken. John's experience as a student both in the lower-levels and upper-levels illustrates this difference.

> Levels 1-3 are there to give you the foundations of the language because if you don't have it, don't understand the grammar, the vocabulary, whatever language components... you're not able to move on to something more in depth like the content classes. They are made to prepare you for the upper-division classes.

An emerging finding resulting from the student interviews concerned how the different approaches to the curriculum may have influenced students' theoretical understandings of the relationship between language and culture.   It appeared that in interviews some students understood the purpose of language modules as enabling them to develop their communicative competence and did not necessarily expect a critical exploration of culture

to be a component of this curriculum. Similarly they described content modules as having the aim of developing academic writing on cultural topics. Other students challenged this view of the language / culture relationship or understood the two elements as being part of the greater experience of foreign language learning. The following section explores students' responses from the four institutions in relation to how students voiced their understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

5.2.1.3 Relationship between Language and Culture

Different perspectives on the relationship between language and culture emerged from the interview study. While students were not asked to comment on their views of the language / culture relationship, some students appeared to describe the relationship between the two areas as separate and thus viewed language as distinct from its cultural content, while others described the relationship as more holistic. Two students from University A, Debbie and Sarah, referred to the former understanding of culture, while Mary and Emma of university B and Alice of university C referred to the latter.

Referring to the teaching of the written component in the first two years of study at university A, Debbie commented that the modules focused mostly on grammar and hence stated as follows,

> "it was mostly grammar, so I think it had to be done in English, otherwise you get completely
>
> lost. Even now it depends on the type of work, there are moments you have to ask in
>
> English." (University A, Student Interview 4 – Debbie, emphasis added)

The words "had to" and "has to" seem to indicate that, had the module been taught in German, according to the student, it would not have been comprehensible. Through the statement the student expressed an explicit preference or belief that when the purpose of a module is to teach a particular content (in this case grammatical concepts), this must be done in English. This view may be heavily influenced by her personal educational

experience at the university as well as a lack of confidence in her competence of the Target Language. Sarah, also at university A, was more explicit in articulating her view of language and culture.

> Researcher – In the questionnaire, item 2.11, you've disagreed that you prefer German to be the language of assessment in content modules. Could you comment on that?
>
> Sarah – I like that they are sort of <u>two separate things</u>, it's like the <u>language</u> obviously <u>has to be in German</u> and then the <u>content</u> is sort of <u>understanding these German materials</u>. I think… to write a substantial essay in German would take so much longer and would be so much harder because you're not just focusing on the content, it's more like your language and you're checking every little thing.
>
> (University A, Student Interview 3 – Sarah, emphasis added)

Sarah's understanding of the language culture relationship reflects an understanding of language as an 'object of study' within the language modules' context, while content (cultural modules) are viewed as "separate", where the aim is for students to understand and explore the more challenging texts. As was the case with Debbie, Sarah also refers to the challenge of coping with a content module taught and assessed in German, indicating a lack of confidence in her linguistic competence.

Quite a different view of the relationship between language and culture was voiced by students interviewed at universities B and C, where all students had had experience of content modules taught in German. Mary, of university B, commented both on the reasons for her preference for content modules over language modules as well as on her perspective of learning language through content.

> Well the language modules are good but personally <u>I engage better with the content modules</u> because I find them <u>more academically challenging</u> and just more <u>relevant</u> in general so if we can continue the <u>language learning itself through content</u>, which <u>interests me more</u> then in general I'm just going to <u>be more interested and more engaged</u>. For example for German

we've been doing stuff on the Holocaust and it makes more sense to me to be able to read that in the <u>source language</u> and given that the <u>language is part of the culture</u> and <u>part of their experience</u>, it's just logical I guess.

(University B, Student Interview 7 – Mary, emphasis added)

A number of points can be drawn from the statement above, firstly the student highlights a difference between the language and content curriculum and describes the latter as more 'academically challenging'. This view came across in several interviews, particularly from students at university B, and is explored in greater detail in relation to criticality development. Mary also links the greater relevance and increased interest in the content modules to an increased intrinsic motivation. While exploring student motivation is not an aim of this thesis, the statement highlights language learning through content modules taught in the TL as a possible contributing factor to increased intrinsic motivation for studying German. The student then offers an example of a content module, which interested her very much, given the topic, and offers her perspective on the language – culture relationship. She highlights the importance of accessing a text in its original as opposed to its English translation, arguing that 'it makes more sense'. This point is further discussed in chapter 6 in relation to Communicative Criticality. She then continues to elaborate on the point stating 'the language is part of the culture and part of their experience', which appears to portray a more holistic understanding of the language – culture relationship, in line with Kramsch (1998) who argued that 'The teaching of foreign literatures [...] is indissociable from other relevant aspects of language study, in particular the teaching of reading and writing, and the teaching of culture' (Kramsch, 1998 in Kramsch and Kramsch, 2000)'. Emma, also a student of German at university B, expressed a similar understanding of the relationship between language and culture, although was not as explicit in her statement.

Researcher – Do you generally prefer to be taught in German?

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Emma – Yeah, well you learn <u>all the uses of German</u> not just the grammar that you learn in class. For me, I <u>chose to learn languages</u> because <u>I get really excited</u> about <u>understanding</u> when someone's speaking to me in a different language and I get <u>really excited </u>about <u>communicating</u>.

<p align="center">(University B - Student Interview 6 - Emma, emphasis added)</p>

Emma also talks about authentic communication in relation to her intrinsic motivation for studying languages and points out that being taught in German provides increased exposure and greater opportunity for both hearing and hence 'understanding' the language as well as speaking or 'communicating'.   Thus, from her perspective, language learning is described as an experience, which should take place in all or most aspects of the German studies degree programme, rather than something restricted to the context of the language modules.

Integrating language and culture into the curriculum, however, also appeared to present some challenges. Alice, of university C, relates the learning experience of one of her classmates, who did not understand the rationale behind the content-based curriculum in the lower-division language classes and, after a frustrating experience in her first months of study, decided to withdraw from the university and study in Germany.

Honestly the only reason I am clear about the curriculum is because I took a graduate class explaining that […]. I had a friend who did a couple of classes here and then decided to go abroad, outside [University C] - go to Germany - and she was telling me how much more comfortable she felt there, because it was more <u>like her high school classes</u> she was <u>used to,</u> because they kind of <u>separated teaching</u> of one thing and some content on the side. I think she didn't really understand why she had to do all the worksheets the way they did them. […] She was <u>used to just memorising</u> this and do these <u>exercises for grammar,</u> in this way … and I think especially because she didn't have an explanation of what the point of it was, she was doing all these things and didn't understand how it helped her.   For her <u>language class meant memorising things</u>.

Previous experience of language learning, in this case Alice's friend's high school context, played a significant role in shaping student understanding of what to expect from language learning at university. According to Alice, the student preferred an approach to language learning, which separated the acquisition of linguistic competence from the teaching on content. As Alice notes, in her friend's view, language classes should have had the objective of teaching and assessing the application of grammar separated from the exploration of content, which is not what she experienced at university C. The comment is particularly useful in understanding how students may respond to more innovative approaches to the integration of language and culture and highlights what could be a recommendation to the department (i.e. to inform students of the pedagogical rationale behind the different approach).

While it was not the objective of the student interviews to explore students' understanding of the language – culture relationship, theoretical perspectives did emerge from the students' responses quoted above. Some students appeared to be satisfied with a greater separation between the two areas and described a rather dichotomous understanding of language and culture, while others viewed language as a medium of communication, which could effectively be employed for the purpose of communicating and exploring content.

5.2.2 Criticality development across the curriculum

In interviews students were asked to comment on how the university experience, and which elements of it, appeared to contribute to their criticality development. The questions were informed by the questionnaire results, so students were generally asked to elaborate on their questionnaire responses. Students' views on their own criticality development were coded using Barnett's Criticality framework, hence references to the

domains and levels are reported in the analysis. Bartnett's criticality model for a 'curriculum for critical being' distinguishes between two axes: levels (ranging from operational skills, level 1, to transformatory critique, level 4) and scope, consisting of three domains: formal knowledge, the self and the world. (Barnett, 1997, p.103). He argues that a university curriculum for critical being 'has to be one that exposes students to criticality in the three domains and at the highest level in each' and points out that 'critique in the domain of knowledge has to be brought into a relationship with critique in the domain of the world'(ibid.).

While some students' comments do make reference to transformatory critique, hence Barnett's highest level of criticality, this was most often linked to the domain 'self' and therefore did not necessarily extend to critical action in the domain 'world'. The extent to which students' criticality development was voiced in both staff and student interviews, and how this compares to previous studies, is further discussed in chapter 6. The table below illustrates references to criticality, which emerged in some of the student interviews.

Table 14: Interview data: References to Criticality

	References to Criticality
University A Zak	"In the terrorism module [...] we had to analyse newspaper articles written in the 70s and I found it [...] overwhelming <u>how the media</u> in the 70s in Germany played such a fundamental role in <u>the way people understood and perceived things.</u>" [DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE - Level 2 Reflexivity - reflection on one's own understanding] ——————————————————— "Because of that, <u>I began to question the values I've been given</u>, the way I think [...] <u>who has influenced that?</u> ——————————————————— [DOMAIN SELF - Level 2 Reflexivity - self-reflection] ——————————————————— "I've become more liberal in the way I think and <u>I wouldn't align myself</u> with conservative politics <u>anymore</u> because of what I've experienced at university." [DOMAIN SELF - Level 4 Transformatory critique - reconstruction of self] ———————————————————————————
Rebecca	In reference to the terrorism module - "we're learning about whether the terrorists did that or whether the film is dramatising this for effect. Actually the director lived through the period so <u>perhaps he could be telling the story through his eyes</u>." [DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE - Level 1 Critical skills- critical thinking skills]

University B Emma	"In all my seminars across my university experience, you have to <u>express an opinion</u> or use what you've read or your research to express an opinion, and quite often <u>your opinion will be challenged,</u> because that's the whole point of a university seminar, to challenge you and your classmates so <u>you have to stick up for yourself."</u> [DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE / DOMAIN SELF - Level 2 Reflexivity - reflection on one's own understanding / self-reflection]
Mary	In reference to a content module on the Holocaust - "I think <u>it made me look at other genocides differently</u> – also I went to a talk given by a holocaust survivor - which was advertised by the university- she was talking a lot about <u>how we treat gypsies </u>and she was saying that this is often something which is often overlooked – looking at the holocaust "Yes that's how it happened then but actually <u>it's still a problem today</u>" so I guess there's been a lot of things that have happened – so it's about learning from the past. [DOMAIN SELF - Level 4 Transformatory critique - reconstruction of self] [DOMAIN WORLD - Level 4 Transformatory critique - reconstruction of world]
University C JFK	Talking about his experience when he first arrived to his university - "when I came here, it blew all of my ideas, my world, it blew it up and that was so powerful. Because a university like this, with so many people of so many backgrounds ... as a place for really ... diversity in action <u>made me challenge everything I thought</u>." [DOMAIN SELF - Level 4 - Transformatory critique - reconstruction of self]
Alice	In commenting on the educational contribution of her university - "The cultural understanding ... opening up not only at different perspectives, but <u>different ways of looking at those perspectives,</u> different tools to analyse even the general news that comes to us from these different parts of the world. Even just to able to <u>pick up an article and realise that if it's an American article there might be a certain cultural stand </u>and if you read a <u>German article it might look very different."</u> [DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE - Level 1 - Critical skills - critical thinking skills]

University D	
John	Referring to his study abroad experience - "I'm not from the US – yeah I'm a fluent speaker. I think I'm glad that the German people share what I feel. I've spoken to people from China for example and their English is not.. they take time to express their opinions.. I'm usually very patient with them, like I try to pick out key words to try to understand what they're saying so ..when I experienced it myself I think about how I do things." [DOMAIN SELF - Level 4 - Transformatory critique - reconstruction of self]
Maria	Referring to how the university experience helped her become more critical - "It's helped me think about things differently and just look into deeper meanings ...to not just take information so easily but actually challenge it and question it." [DOMAIN KNOWLEDGE - Level 1 - Critical skills - critical thinking skills]

When students made reference to criticality development, they often gave examples of topics or tasks they were given in content modules, which brought them to reflect on what influences the writing of texts and author's views (domain knowledge) and what influences their own understanding of this knowledge (domain self). In some cases students made reference to how the critical reflections transformed them as individuals and enabled them to view the world from a more critical perspective. The following section looks particularly at the different contributions that both language and content modules made to students' development of criticality.

5.2.2.1 Criticality development in language and content modules - how is it different?

While students made reference to the contribution of both language and content modules towards their development of criticality, across all four institutions the majority agreed that generally content modules provided greater intellectual challenge and hence served to guide students towards a more sophisticated critical reflection. The results echo the questionnaire findings, where 97.8% of students across all four institutions agreed that class activities in content modules contributed considerably to their development of critical thinking (question 6.8). Students' experience in content modules however did vary considerably depending on the kinds of modules chosen.

Zak, of university A, stated that he felt like the teachers were 'more critical with [him] in the content modules' and gave examples of two content modules (the terrorism and modern women's writer's modules), which played an important role in developing his critical thinking and understanding of culture. Rebecca, also of university A, similarly made reference to the terrorism module and particularly the analysis of the film *Baader Meinhof Complex,* which prompted a critical discussion on whether the film related the events as they took place or whether much of what was dramatised was influenced by the director's own experience. At University B students similarly commented on the difference between language and content modules in how they facilitated criticality development. A number of students clearly stated that content modules played a much larger role in this development as a result of the more academic structure and the challenging assessments associated with this type of module. Sam, for instance, when referring to his own development of criticality, commented as follows,

> I've always been quite critical about things. But now I have a better understanding of how to
> approach …cross reference, from having to write the essays, less so in the language modules,
> they haven't really helped that much.

<p style="text-align:right;">(University B - Student Interview 1 - Sam)</p>

Comments referring to the important contribution of content modules, compared to language modules, were fairly frequent at university B. Students felt content modules challenged them to develop a critical insight and generally played a greater role in their criticality development. Lucy, who chose literature as her content modules, felt they provided a far greater opportunity for intellectual challenge.

Researcher - Would you say you were more intellectually engaged in content modules?

Lucy – Yeah, far more. Because you're discussing far more complicated concepts. It's also a lot of the things we talk about in oral classes ... it's great that we talk about them because they're very current, very necessary ... but they're sort of the debates that I have with my friends or family anyway, it seems somewhat quite contrived to talk about them in another language.

(University B - Student Interview 4 - Lucy, emphasis added)

Nicola similarly referred to the content modules as being more intellectually engaging and requiring more effort. When asked to comment on the difference between the two kinds of modules, she commented as follows,

Researcher - Which modules required more intellectual engagement?

Nicola – Definitely the content. Just the level of thinking required to get to grips with some of the concepts.

(University B - Student Interview 5 - Nicola, emphasis added)

Mary, also of university B, similarly described the difference between how the two types of modules addressed the exploration of culture and highlighted the difference in intellectual challenge between the two.

Researcher - Would you say that content modules provided greater opportunity to develop a critical awareness of culture?

Mary – I think it's critical to a certain extent with the language modules. This is probably very subjective ... but my problem with the language modules in general is that they tend to be very

... I think the German word oberflächlich (superficial / shallow) is quite good.

They are kind of superficial, which I totally understand because it's a hard thing to balance. If your aim is to teach how to write good German … I don't know… I think with the content modules there was <u>constant challenge</u> of having to <u>go away and research it yourself</u>.

(University B - Student Interview 7 - Mary, emphasis added)

Similar comments were also observed at the American institutions, where students generally described upper-division courses as playing a greater role in the development of criticality, however students' statements were not as explicit as those from university B. Spencer, of university C, for instance stated that at upper-level 'you can't use simple words anymore, words have to be richer', indicating that the level of sophistication in the oral and written production was higher in upper-division. Heather also pointed out that upper-level courses were generally more intellectually challenging and demanded 'more responsibility'. One student however, also emphasised the presence of content in lower-levels, which could lead to a critical discussion on culture.

From day 1, from the first class, I've been learning about the Turkish migration in Germany, differences between East and West, I learned about the concept of Heimat. It's already critical.

(University C - Student Interview 1 - JFK, emphasis added)

The statement highlights the similarities between the upper- and lower-level curricula at university C and provides an example of how critical thinking can already take place in classes where students still have limited linguistic skills. Maria, of university D, also felt that criticality was better fostered in the upper-level content classes as a result of the learning activities characteristic of these courses.

In the content classes there is a lot more critical thinking, you have to read something and analyse it.

(University D - Student Interview 1 - Maria, emphasis added)

The student interview responses would hence seem to indicate that generally content modules provided not only greater intellectual challenge but also better facilitated the development of criticality.   These findings confirm statements voiced in the staff interviews and will be further discussed in chapter 6 with reference to the literature.

5.2.3 Intercultural Competence across the curriculum

References to intercultural competence made in the student interviews were coded using Byram's (1997) framework for Intercultural Competence (IC) drawn from his Five Savoirs, or 'factors in intercultural communication'. The five factors are 1. Savoir être: Attitudes of relativising self / valuing other, 2. Savoirs: Knowledge of self and other; of interaction, 3. Savoir comprendre: Skills of interpreting and relating, 4. Savoir apprendre / faire: Skills of discovery and interaction and 5. Savoir s'engager: Education - political education, critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997, p.34). Byram argues that in order for successful intercultural communication to take place, attitudes towards 'people who are perceived as different' need to be not merely positive, as even positive prejudice can hinder mutual understanding, but rather 'attitudes of curiosity and openness, of readiness to suspend disbelief and judgment' (Byram, 1997, p.34). These characteristics are understood as 'savoir être'. Byram also makes reference to distancing one's self from his or her own perspective when examining other cultures.

> There needs to be a willingness to suspend belief in one's own meanings and behaviours, and to analyse them from the viewpoint of others with whom one is engaging. This is an ability to 'decentre' which Kohlberg et al. (1983) have argued is an advanced stage of psychological development and which Melde (1987) suggests is fundamental to understanding other cultures. (cf. Byram et al., 1994, pp.20-24).
>
> (Byram, 1997, p.34, emphasis added)

The ability to 'decentre', which Kohlberg et al. (1983) refer to, is arguably even better understood when compared to Kramsch's (1993) concept of 'third spaces'.   While

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Byram's savoir être makes reference to 'relativising self' thus distancing one's self from a particular standpoint. However, it does not explicitly refer to the ability to view all cultures, including one's own, as foreign or from a third or other perspective, which is neither the learner's own culture / cultures, nor that of the foreign culture. There are therefore elements of the framework that arguably do not fully capture all facets of intercultural competence, these are discussed in further detail in chapter 7. The summary table below reports students' references to their development of IC coded according to Byram's terminology, while acknowledging that the same references may also be re-coded according to other theoretical conceptualisations for intercultural competence.

Table 15: Interview data: References to Intercultural Competence (IC)

University A	
Rebecca	Referring to the university's contribution to her development of IC - 'I'm a lot more open, I think now I see things from other people's point of view and my own point of view. I don't really criticise them.' [SAVOIR ÊTRE - relativising self and valuing other - readiness to suspend disbelief]
Sarah	In reference to the contribution of the year abroad towards her development of IC - 'You assume the countries are not that different ... but all the shops are shut on a Sunday and people get out early to get fresh bread for their Sunday breakfast.' [SAVOIRS - Knowledge of self and other - practices and products] [SAVOIR APPRENDRE / FAIRE - skills of discovery and interaction - ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture / cultural practices]
Debbie	Referring to German Language modules commented that 'there were a lot of comparisons ... the rubbish bins, riding your bike in town, etc.' [SAVOIRS - Knowledge of self and other - practices and products]

University B	
Sam	In reference to the contribution of either language or content modules to his development of IC, commented that - 'It's mainly the <u>language modules</u> more than the content / cultural ones. Because the culture they pick in the language modules is more relevant, m<u>ore up to date … it's given me the opportunity to </u>see what's going on in other countries to <u>compare and contrast </u>what is going on in other countries [...] in the oral exam (you have the choice to) speak about the public situation in England and compare it to France ... <u>different public opinions</u> on the situation. [SAVOIR APPRENDRE / FAIRE - skills of discovery and interaction - ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture / cultural practices] [SAVOIR COMPRENDRE - skills of interpreting and relating - explaining and relating documents and events from another culture to one's own] [SAVOIR ÊTRE - relativising self and valuing other - readiness to suspend disbelief]
Mary	Referring to the contribution of the YA towards her development of IC - 'When I was away, a lot of us have agreed that, we hadn't thought about the fact that when you're there, one of the things that happens is that <u>you actually meet people from all over the world,</u> you make friends with the people who are new. I made friends from R<u>ussia and from Mexico.</u> You end up having quite a lot of<u> conversations about their traditions and their religions,</u> all sorts of different things. It <u>helps you understand more where they're coming from.</u> It just helps <u>to remind you that your culture is not the only culture.'</u> [SAVOIRS - Knowledge of self and other - practices and products] [SAVOIR COMPRENDRE - skills of interpreting and relating - explaining and relating documents and events from another culture to one's own]

University C	
JFK	Referring to some of the issues that Germany experienced as a result of the separation between East and West, commented that - 'East Germany has a lot of the same problems […] that we do, you think about both sides and how you fit in where. And what happens when <u>you place yourself in that society</u>, w<u>hat would I be like if I were East German</u>, <u>what would life be like?</u>' [SAVOIR S'ENGAGER - critical cultural awareness - ability to evaluate critically perspectives in one's own and another culture / country]
Jennifer	In reference to being able to carry out a discussion with people who do not share the same views on a subject, commented as follows: 'I just realised that you are not going to be able to have a productive conversation <u>with a German person that unions are bad</u>, or <u>with an American that unions are good</u>.' [SAVOIR ÊTRE - relativising self and valuing other - readiness to suspend disbelief] [SAVOIR S'ENGAGER - critical cultural awareness - ability to evaluate critically perspectives in one's own and another culture / country] Referring to discussions, which took place in one of her upper-level classes, commented as follows, 'We'll talk about "what does that mean <u>from an American perspective?</u>" And in my class we've always had international students. I come from Mexico. – grew up in the States. I'm always coming from this angle. Most of my professors are very curious - "ok what does this mean <u>for you</u> <u>from your perspective</u>"
Gili	[SAVOIR ÊTRE - relativising self and valuing other - readiness to suspend disbelief] [SAVOIR S'ENGAGER - critical cultural awareness - ability to evaluate critically perspectives in one's own and another culture / country] In talking about how her German studies programme helped her understand how contextual features (history, culture, religion etc.) can inform people's views, stated, 'I didn't realise how much the holocaust affected the Germans now, like the Schuldgefühl (feeling of guilt - associated to the holocaust) still exists today.' [SAVOIR APPRENDRE / FAIRE - skills of discovery and interaction - ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture / cultural practices]
Heather	Referring to how a text studied in one of her classes made her reflect upon cultural differences, stated, 'One of the pieces we read was a play and it was written in the past, in England and <u>I thought it was interesting to see how the Germans viewed the English</u>.
Amelia	[SAVOIR S'ENGAGER - critical cultural awareness - ability to evaluate critically perspectives in one's own and another culture / country]

University D	
John	Describing the contribution of his study abroad experience to his intercultural understanding - 'When you order food and stuff you hear what people say and how they treat you when you're speaking terrible German ...I think that travel study definitely helped. [SAVOIR ÊTRE - relativising self and valuing other - readiness to suspend disbelief]
Maria	Referring to how a German cinema class made her critically reflect upon a cultural issue - 'I took a German cinema class last quarter and probably more than half of those movies had to do with Turkish immigration. I come from a small village in Germany and there are a lot of Turks. But for some reason, maybe because I was younger, I never really thought about all the stuff they went through. But it's like..how different the culture is and how tricky it must be for them to live in that village where all the culture is just super German. So that kind of made me want to explore that a bit more. [..] Just seeing the cultural conflicts was really interesting. [SAVOIR S'ENGAGER - critical cultural awareness - ability to evaluate critically perspectives in one's own and another culture / country]

References to savoir s'engager (critical cultural awareness) were generally less common than those for the other four savoirs and these were generally observed in interviews from university C and D, the two US universities. The results confirm, to an extent, the questionnaire finding, which also had higher mean scores from the two US universities for savoir s'engager compared to universities A and B. Coding references to intercultural competence using Byram's framework however, did not appear to successfully capture all aspects of students' development of intercultural competence. Many of the references cited above in fact could provide evidence not only towards students' competences as understood by this framework, but could also be re-interpreted according to how they refer to the American National Standards for Foreign Language Learning and theoretical concepts such as the experience of otherness or third spaces. Additionally there are further references from the student interviews, which are not mentioned in the table above as they could not be coded according to the five savoirs framework, although they do refer to students' development of intercultural competence. Thus the findings for intercultural competence drawn from both the staff and student interviews are re-examined in chapter 7 and cross-referenced against the literature. The discussion also highlights emerging themes, which appear to extend beyond the five savoirs framework.

5.3 Staff Interview data

Staff interviews provided invaluable data without which a full understanding of the contributions and great efforts on behalf of faculty members to ensure students benefit the most from their learning experience would have been impossible to capture. The number of interviews varied between institution according to the number of faculty members in the department, availability and more importantly the willingness of staff members to take part in the interview study and support my research. The interview study took place between the end of March and end of May 2015 and resulted in seven interviews: University A: none, University B: 2, University C: 3 and University D: 2. Interviews were

conducted with faculty members who were familiar with the German curriculum of their institution and had either been directly involved in curricular decision-making or indirectly through the implementation of policies in their teaching practice. Efforts were made to interview members of staff involved both in language and content teaching so a perspective from each of the two areas could be explored. An important component of the staff interviews centred around the description of the curriculum, which helped interpret both the student interview and questionnaire responses within the context of their learning experience. The table below provides a summarised overview of the findings drawn from the staff interviews in relation to views on the curriculum at their institution, content in the target language and intercultural competence and criticality development.

Table 16: Staff interview data

University	Participant	Emerging themes
B - UK	UniBProf.1 Head of German	Views on Curriculum – Separate language and content modules but TL as medium of instruction from Yr.2 onwards increases relevance and coherence between the language and culture areas. Content in the TL – "a challenge" but students appreciate it IC and Criticality Development – YA not significant / explicit coaching through questioning in content and language modules
B - UK	UniBProf.2 Language Coordinator	Views on Curriculum – Teaching both lang & cont is an advantage – establish links between modules, discuss linguistic issues in content and use content module texts in language – Content in the TL - TL as medium of instruction for content facilitates these links / helps increase relevance. IC and Criticality Development – YA significant only when students are guided towards critical reflection – e.g. through YA assessment. Reference to explicit teaching / coaching in language and content modules.
C – USA	UniCProf.1 Head of German	Views on Curriculum – No distinction between language and content modules - genre-oriented / texts-based Content in the TL – All content is taught and assessed in the TL – linked to a theoretical view on the language – culture relationship as well as creating more opportunities for students to develop linguistic competence IC and Criticality Development – YA not significant / not an objective of the YA programme

C – USA	UniCProf.2 Language Coordinator	<u>Views on Curriculum</u> – content-based genre-oriented – no distinction between language and content modules <u>Content in the TL</u> – learn about the foreign through the foreign language <u>IC and Criticality Development</u> – YA not significant / not an objective of the YA programme
C – USA	UniCProf.3 German Lecturer	<u>Content in the TL</u> – all courses are content courses to an extent <u>IC and Criticality Development</u> - occurs more in taught sessions than YA – YA more effective when students have greater socialisation
D – USA	UniD.Prof.1 Head of German	<u>Views on Curriculum</u> - two-tiered structure is a problem – yet the university offers upper-level content-based language courses <u>Content in the TL</u> – depends on the instructor and sometimes topic – Content in English helps recruitment
D – USA	UniD.Prof.2 Language Coordinator	<u>Views on Curriculum</u> - two-tiered structure not an issue for her (teaching upper-level content-based language courses in TL) but has not been established at department level – individual instructor <u>Content in the TL</u> – students prefer to be taught in German <u>IC and Criticality Development</u> - mostly occurs through explicit guidance / coaching in language and content modules

5.3.1 The language and content curriculum in Universities A and B

German at University A is a rather small area of specialism within Modern Languages and hence teaching duties are shared among the few members of staff within German Studies. At the time of the data collection, all content courses offered were taught exclusively by the two academics on permanent contracts. Both were non-native speakers of German holding specialisms in the area of German cultural studies. Language modules were also, for the most part, taught by the same two faculty members with the exception of some first year language modules being taught by a PhD student and the oral component taught by native-speakers (Lektorinnen). The language modules at university A were mostly taught in the target language with the exception of the first year, where much of the grammar explanations generally took place in English.   The content modules offered at the time, on

the other hand, were taught and assessed exclusively in English and focused on a variety of cultural topics. The clear distinction between the language and content curriculum present was voiced in student interviews and appeared also to affect the role the target language played among students. Unfortunately due to the timing and availability of staff, it was not possible to interview the faculty members hence the perspective from university A is based primarily on observations of the curriculum and student responses to the interview and questionnaire.

The German division within the School of Languages at University B, on the other hand, prides itself in offering a large number of content modules taught in German, something which is not a characteristic of every degree programme in the UK. Aside from ranking among the most prestigious universities in the UK, university B is also well known for Modern Languages. At the time of the data collection, most of the German content modules from second year onwards were offered in the target language and most of the assessments, aside from the compulsory dissertation, were also carried out in German. In the first year content modules were offered in English as it was thought that students would not be able to fully engage in the discussions, had they been in German. Two members of staff agreed to take part in the interview study, this included Prof. UniB1 Head of German at that time and Prof. UniB2, the language coordinator. The role that the target language plays across the curriculum came across as a strong component of the programme.

> Researcher– Do students mention content taught in German as something they particularly enjoy?
>
> Prof. UniB2 – Yeah, they say they choose content modules because they know this is going to improve their language skills as well.

> (University B – Staff Interview 2)

Prof. Uni1B1 also commented on the content courses offered in German which, according

to her observation, initially present an extra challenge for students possibly causing some anxiety and concern about marks and performance, but it is an aspect of the curriculum that students greatly appreciate once they have been reassured that being assessed in the TL will not disadvantage them in their academic performance.

> In the UK this is <u>something rather exceptional</u> in a sense, I taught at […] for a long time and there's really a clear segregation between content and language and I think students <u>perceive it as a challenge</u> in a sense but ultimately they enjoy it and they <u>feel that their German does improve</u> and they will be forced to do so in the future because they will have to give presentations in German, so they will move towards a better proficiency in year 2. The only year that would be an exception is year 1, but I think students are quite happy with that because <u>they do struggle in year 2 to make the transition</u> in a sense. <u>At the beginning it's a shock to them</u>, they're <u>always appreciative retrospectively</u> but they do struggle and some of them don't quite enjoy it in the moment but I never heard anyone say that they don't appreciate it. It's a weird kind of contradiction.
>
> (University B – Staff Interview 1, emphasis added)

Comments from both members of staff highlighted students' appreciation of the opportunities that content taught in the TL provided in terms of greater exposure to the target language. "Challenge" and "struggle" however were also mentioned as well as the acknowledgement that offering the majority of content courses in the TL remains an exception rather than the norm in the UK. It should be noted however, that the statement refers to the lecturer's personal experience in two prestigious Russell Group universities, hence the statement best describes the situation in those types of institutions and similar universities. In reference to how students are reassured that the curricular approach will not disadvantage them academically and affect performance, faculty members place greater consideration on the content over language when marking their assessments.

Researcher - Do you consider the fact that they are writing in German when marking the assessments?

UniBProf.1 – Yes, we try to prioritise the content but if the language compromises the content they will be marked down, and this is what we tell them in a sense. They don't get a better mark necessarily if they write a brilliant essay in German with regards to language and there is no content, so ultimately it's the content that counts. But, as you know, as the content is mediated through language, it has an impact in a sense. I think we're very benevolent, I think this is what they realise after one term, that this is doable, we're sort of coaching them through the process.

(University B – Staff Interview 1)

The statement highlights the importance given to the content, but also to the way in which it is conveyed. This appears to be an effective way of achieving a balance between the two areas in order to ensure students make adequate progress in their understanding and evaluation of the subject area and at the same time continue to develop their linguistic competence through academic writing. Another aspect of the curriculum, which came across in the two staff interviews at University B relates to the similarity of topics in language and content modules. Prof.UniB1 illustrated some of the challenges in achieving this particularly in the first year, where content is taught in English.

I think colleagues emphasise relevance in a different manner […] I think there is a focus on the content as well, but it's not related to content modules just yet, because they are taught in English anyway. But [students] really appreciate that we do have […] modules that try to do that very specifically, like the translation modules and the students love that.

(University B, Staff Interview 1, emphasis added)

The challenges of establishing relevance between the language and content modules seemed particularly pronounced in the students' first year of study where, as Prof.UniB1 points out, content is taught in English, and hence relating the language curriculum to the content modules may prove to be particularly difficult. Prof.UniB2, on the other hand,

made reference to her own teaching experience in both language and content modules and illustrated a number of instances where relevance was successfully achieved between the two areas of the curriculum.

> I have the advantage of teaching language and content. I've taught 1ˢᵗ year and 2ⁿᵈ year content. 2ⁿᵈ year content is taught and assessed in German and I found that really interesting because you can really emphasise the links between the topics, the themes that you're talking about in language and content and how they overlap. For example we had the idea of protest resistance and then escalation of resistance, subjectivity, heroes and that links to students' movement and protest in the language. And it's nice to make students aware of these links.

> (University B, Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)

The fact that the lecturer was responsible for teaching both language and content and had taught both first year content (taught and assessed in English) and second year (carried out in German) gave her the unique opportunity to reflect on the role of the Target Language in increasing relevance between the two areas of the curriculum. As she acknowledges in the interview, the fact that content was taught in German in year 2 greatly facilitated the ability to establish relevant links between the topics. The example given highlights a clear potential for transferability between the two areas.

The lecturer also gave a good example of how a grammatical concept i.e. compound nouns in the German language became a subject of discussion in a content module.

> UniBProf.2 - I think it's really quite interesting particularly if students look at […] which topic-specific elements of content are expressed in compound nouns, because compound nouns [are] used in common pieces of vocabulary. […]

> Researcher – Is that a discussion you had in the content?

> UniBProf.2 – Yeah, it comes into content and also translation, like what's the most idiomatic way of expressing ideas; compound nouns seem like a purely grammatical concept but it isn't. It has far wider links, so that's something we would talk about.

Once again the lecturer's personal experience of being responsible for the teaching of both language and content allowed her to recognise the importance of a particular grammatical concept for her teaching in a content module.   This emphasises not only the key role the medium of instruction plays in facilitating opportunities for increased relevance, but also highlights the possible advantages of involving academics in both the teaching of language and content so that they are able to recognise areas where relevant links can be made across the curriculum and reflect upon their teaching practice as a result.   The lecturer referred to her involvement in both language and content as an "advantage" several times in the interview and illustrated how convening language modules also meant that she would be involved in the selection of materials – another opportunity to increase relevance between thematic areas. Assessment tasks in language modules were also mentioned, with a very good example of how students could refer back to one of their content modules.

> We try to work on topics that are going to help them again with their content. So if there's something they've been talking about in the content, we can really help build on that. For instance one of the topics in second year language is national identity is national culture and that comes across in every single content module. […] One of the questions for the oral exam has been "talk about how this relates to a content module that you've done".

In reference to how the curriculum increases opportunity for relevance between the language and content areas, it would appear that although the structural difference remains and there are still members of staff within the school that are solely responsible for content or language, there are also faculty members, as Prof. UniB2, who are actively involved in both areas of the curriculum. There was also evidence that the language curriculum was perceived as an important component for the learning journey of students and hence much thought was given to develop and update materials and teaching approaches. University B

hence provides a good example of how relevance may be increased between the two areas also in the more traditional high-ranking institutions where, as a result of the wide range of options being offered to students and the increased number of specialised staff, this may prove to be quite a challenge. The following section addresses some of the similar curriculum-related challenges identified in the American universities under study as well as exploring the context-specific issue of the bifurcation of language and content within the four-year degree sequence.

5.3.2 Language and content in lower-division and upper-division classes in Universities C and D

The issue of the separation between language and content as problematised in the MLA (2007) report in relation to Foreign Languages in Higher Education relates specifically to the curricula in upper-level (also referred to as upper-division) and lower-level (or lower-division) classes. The terminology adopted by the faculty interviewed in reference to the individual modules is 'classes' or at times 'courses' as the term 'module' is adopted in British English to refer to a university unit of study. Also, the term 'instructor' or 'professor' is used instead of the term 'tutor' to refer to the lecturer responsible for the teaching the class. As the British Higher Education system does not have a lower-division / upper-division structure, nor does it have a compulsory Foreign Language or General Education (GE) requirement, before discussing the interview results, the diverse curricular structures are described.

University D, while not a typical case and undergoing an upcoming curricular change at the time of the data collection, reflected to an extent the structure described in the MLA (2007) report as a 'two-tiered language-literature structure' with some exceptions. The German department offered lower-level language courses known as German 1-6, which were designed according to proficiency levels and aimed at developing the linguistic and

communicative competence required for students to be successful in the upper-level courses. Students who were not German majors or minors were often required to take at least one year of a Foreign Language e.g. German 1-3. In American universities all students are required to satisfy a GE requirement regardless of their degree programme and Foreign Languages often constitute one of the subject areas; hence there may be both majors and non-majors enrolled in courses such as German 1-6. The university system also offers some upper-division courses as a GE requirement option although the majority of non-majors are generally found in lower-level classes. Furthermore as the department is known as a department of Germanic studies, it offers courses such as German-Jewish studies and German philosophy, which are taught in English and often of interest to non-majors.

With regards to the two-tiered structure, the issue appeared to raise concerns but also to have been addressed, at least in part, by offering upper-level content based language courses although particularly those courses named German 1-6 appeared to be primarily designed around proficiency levels rather than being situated in a given content. The Head of German (UniDProf.1) at University D hence described the lower level courses as "sequential".

> At a lower level we have language courses. They're sequential. They start with people who don't know any German and move up to people who have a moderate ability to read, understand and sometimes speak. The 100 level courses are culture, society and so forth, it varies from year to year but I would guess one third to one half are taught in German.
>
> (University D, Staff Interview 1)

With regards to the concerns raised in the MLA (2007) report, which in reference to the two-tiered structure argues that it 'impedes the development of a unified language-and-content curriculum across the four-year college or university sequence' (p.4), UniDProf.1 commented as follows:

Yes that is the case. We have this problem. [...] The problem was there when I arrived, the problem is still there, I have no idea how to solve it. I don't think anybody does. I haven't seen anybody solve that problem, there are students who take the German language and then finish their major and then never take another course with us.

(University D – Staff Interview 1)

While the concern about addressing the two-tiered structure is recognised as a 'problem', the fact that the department has successfully offered upper-division content courses taught and assessed in German is perhaps an indication that extending that practice across the curriculum may be one way to attempt to address the concerns voiced in the report. UniDProf.2 described one of her upper-level content-based language courses in the interview, which demonstrates not only an effective way of fully integrating language and content but also an attempt to challenge students intellectually by making comparisons between the Target Culture and their own.

German [name of class] that's based on a play Draussen vor der Tür which is a post-war German play that deals pretty much with post-traumatic stress disorder that the German soldiers came with [...] and I'm trying to connect it with the problems of veterans that we have right now in the United States. (University D – Staff Interview 2)

The separation between language and content at university D hence appeared to be most evident in the disparity of teaching approaches and rationales for teaching in English or in the target language adopted by the different members of staff. Responses obtained from the staff interviews at University C, on the other hand, related a very different experience of the role of the Target Language and integration of the language and content curricula. First of all it should be noted that the German Department at University C has become internationally known among the academic community for its unique curriculum. The curriculum in place follows a research-based rationale and staff roles and hierarchical structures are also considered very carefully. Firstly all staff, whether graduate students,

language tutors or content specialists, are made aware of the curriculum and there is a sense that the whole department works cooperatively to ensure consistency in teaching methods and approaches.

Three members of staff, including the head of German at the time, agreed to take part in the interview. With regards to the unique curriculum in place at University C, UniCProf.1 (Head of German) described how the change took place and referred specifically to the cooperative nature of the faculty members and supportive attitude of all staff, without which such a significant curricular change would not have been possible.

> Researcher – What was the main rationale for moving away from a two-tiered structure?
>
> UniCProf1 – Yeah, this goes back many years, you read about this, [Prof. X] was instrumental but if all the department hadn't been on board…then that wouldn't have happened. It was a pretty unusual situation, usually you have a lot of resistance. And then the role of the graduate students was instrumental too. […] we wanted […] to have parallel structures between the intensive and the regular language courses so you could easily switch between one and the other. We had to look at the curriculum and rethink a lot of aspects, so that was one of the reasons why we even did that at the time.   (University C – Staff Interview 1)

The language coordinator for German, who had also been influential in the curriculum design, referred to the current curriculum as follows:

> UniCProf.2 - I think that's what's so unique about the curriculum, because it's <u>based on a particular theory of language, so it's not random.</u> The theoretical background is really strong and that's what makes it so unique. We have a way of using that theory to connect the linguistic to the social. And that's why I want to believe <u>that it's not just a claim that we have a content-and-language integrated instruction, but that is what's happening in a systematic way.</u>
>
> (University C – Staff Interview 2)

The department proudly describes its curriculum as content-and-language integrated instruction, hence informed by the literature on CBI (content-based instruction). The

departmental website refers to this aspect of the curriculum as 'content-oriented from the beginning of instruction' with an explicit aim to foster learners' 'language acquisition' from the beginning to the end of the four-year undergraduate sequence. The degree programme hence does not differentiate between 'language courses' and 'content courses' but rather aims to integrate both through oral and written genres appropriate for the level (University C – Departmental Website). UniCProf.2 further commented on the uniqueness of the curriculum by quoting the department's way of describing the curriculum as 'content from the start, language to the end' and argues that this 'means that the introductory courses are content-based courses but the language integration in the advanced level courses are focused on particular domains of knowledge like literature, business, the environment, language training is part of it is as well.' She also referred to the genre-based approach mentioned on the website.

> What's innovative..is..well many departments claim that they have language and content integration, the innovative part is how exactly it's done. So to answer the question in brief, we have a genre-based approach and we understand genre as verbal actions in various types of communicative contexts and that helps us to connect language use both to culture, to the communicative context but also to texts and with all the consequences of texts, how they are constructed, on the global level, how aspects of context are represented in texts for example how participants in a particular communicative situation are represented in texts, what kind of activities they're involved in, what the subject matter is. So through the genre-based approach we are able to integrate both the cultural aspects as they are realized.

<div align="center">(University C – Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)</div>

The specific rationale given highlights the important role of the genre-based approach and the function of texts in establishing links between the linguistic and content / cultural value which can be analysed from it. The professor was also asked to comment on how the curriculum differs from a two-tiered structure observable in many institutions in the United States.

Researcher – In which way is the instruction different from what they would experience in a two-tiered department?

UniCProf.2 – The primary focus is on <u>meaning making</u> as we say so interacting on central aspects of experience and <u>not on grammar.</u> That doesn't mean that the grammar or lexis are not taught, they are taught but <u>only as part of the communicative purposes</u> and communicative goals that are posed.

<div align="center">(University C – Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)</div>

The primary focus of the curriculum at university C appeared to be centred around 'meaning making' through a 'genre-based approach'. As expressed in the interview, the decision to reshape the curriculum at departmental level had both a pragmatic function as well as being informed by a strong theoretical framework. The department's understanding of the role that target language plays in the teaching of language and culture is a further aspect of the curriculum, which is once again heavily informed by research into second and foreign language acquisition. The following section examines the rationales for teaching in English or in the Target language emerging from the staff interviews across the four institutions.

5.3.3 Rationales for the role of the TL - teaching in English or German

Rationales for the role of the TL emerging from the staff interviews differed considerably across the institutions. The most common rationales included concerns about student recruitment, student satisfaction, facilitating the transition from content taught in English to content taught in German, research-based rationales for teaching content / culture in the TL and staff specialisms. At university D students enrolled in German modules are often non-majors and may indeed be more interested in the specific content area than improving their linguistic competence, although this vary much varied from student to student. When asked whether only a specific kind of upper-level content modules were generally taught in English as opposed to the target language, the Head of German replied as follows:

> Not necessarily, it's a matter of how we can get enrolments. We're under pressure to build our enrolments and obviously a course that is taught in English will get more students.
>
> (University D, Staff Interview 1)

Interestingly UniDProf.1 used the word 'obviously' to refer to students' preference for being taught in English. This did not appear to wholly represent the student voice, as can be noted in the interview with Maria discussed above.   It needs to be considered however that UniDProf.1 is also referring to courses in Jewish studies and German philosophy, which often attract interest from non-majors with little or no competence in German. The aim of these upper-level courses is clearly not linguistic, and it is hence understandable that in order to widen participation across the university, such courses would be taught in English. At the same time however, the statement voices a pragmatic rationale for the medium of instruction, which does not seem to be supported by any particular theoretical basis.   While it would appear that upper-level content courses would attract a larger number of students if taught in English, the department does offer a number of content courses in German. The decision appeared to be linked both to the member of staff teaching the module as well as the topic area.

> UniDProf.1 – My impression is that courses on <u>German literature and German film would be taught more often in German</u>. But German-Jewish studies is usually taught in English and all my philosophy courses are taught in English.
>
> Researcher – So upper-level courses, the ones that are taught in German, do they maintain a linguistic focus?
>
> UniDProf.1 – A linguistics focus in the sense that they tend to be on literature […].
>
> Researcher – But is there a focus for example on developing a particular grammar?
>
> UniDProf.1 – I think there is at times but <u>I wouldn't call it systematic.</u>   If the instructor finds something that students are having trouble with…or maybe in the feedback.
>
> (University D, Staff Interview 1, emphasis added)

The language coordinator, UniDProf.2 was also asked about her views on target language. Being more involved in the teaching of language modules both at lower-level and upper-level, she had worked closely with a number of students who regarded the development of their linguistic / communicative competence very highly.   Her courses, unlike those in German philosophy or German-Jewish studies, were generally taught and assessed in German or in both German and English.   From her perspective students expressed a preference for being taught in German and appeared to be intrinsically motivated by the very opportunity to experience the target language in different contexts.

> Researcher – Would you say that students generally prefer to be taught in German?
>
> UniD.Prof2– <u>Yeah, they do.</u>
>
> Researcher – They have expressed that?
>
> UniDProf.2 – <u>Actually, yes.</u> And they also like this... because it <u>helps them master the language</u>.
>
> Researcher – Plus if they have an interest in the language…
>
> UniDProf.2 – Yes, right, <u>they enjoy hearing it</u> and it's great. But students also like this multicultural Germany class when there is a lot in German but theory in English, they like that very much too.
>
> Researcher – Are any of the courses you teach taught entirely in English?
>
> UniDProf.2 – No.
>
> (University D, Staff Interview 2)

'Mastering the language' emerged as one of the reasons why students may have preferred to be taught in the TL as well as 'enjoying' to hear the language itself.   There was no evidence that courses in the target language would cause students concerns about their grades or prevent them from taking part in class discussions. Any reference to modules taught in German highlighted the students' positive attitudes and interest in the learning

experience. Teaching content in the target language, according to UniDProf.2, furthermore did not affect the level of depth achievable, however where she felt the subject matter would be too challenging to grasp and write about in German, she allowed students to submit the work in either language.

> Researcher – Have any students raised concerns that they are not able to reach the same level of depth when writing in German or are they concerned about their grade when being assessed in the TL?

> UniDProf.2 - No, not really. I always take that into consideration.. well you have to. And in some classes if I feel that there is really so much depth in the topic that they would not be able to do it in terms of thinking in German ..then I just let them write an essay in English. Not for every assignment because in some I just want them to master the skill – the language – but some I open up. Last quarter I taught a film class and there was one essay they had to write in German, one in English and one they had the choice to write the essay in German or in English.

> (University D, Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)

Student concerns regarding being assessed in the Target Language appeared to be a greater issue in the English universities compared to the two institutions located in the USA. This may be linked to the fact that, in British universities, being taught content in the Target Language is not necessarily the norm but rather a characteristic of some departments and not of others. In the USA, on the other hand, especially content which is directly related to German studies (such as German literature) would generally be expected to be taught and assessed in German both at undergraduate and graduate level. At University C, for instance, all language and content modules, which count for the German major are taught and assessed in German. The Head of German attributed the decision to adopt the target language across the curriculum to the rationale for the entire curriculum of the department.

> Researcher. – In terms of TL, are all the courses taught in German?

> UniCProf1. - All that count towards the major are in German. […]

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Researcher – And what's the rationale for that?

UniCProf.1 – Yeah, I mean if you think about the rationale for the entire curriculum it relies on working with the language the whole time in texts.

(University C, Staff Interview 1)

The importance of taking into consideration the fact that students would be assessed in the TL, also came across in staff interviews both in the American universities and at university B, in the UK. At University C it appeared that clear communication with the students regarding how they would be assessed resolved any concerns they may have had about the challenges of writing and presenting in the target language. When asked whether any students expressed concern about their grades in relation to being assessed in German, UniCProf.2 commented as follows:

Researcher. - Are students concerned about being assessed in German?

UniCProf. 2 - No, not at all. […] Students complete the assignment based on a lot of work that happens before they have to do it. We have this modeling principle where most of the assignments are based on the model that students are exposed to, and on the discussion and the analysis of the model. So the explicit instruction happens around the model. Very often they have the opportunity to practice a task in groups or in partners and present that to the class and keep that before they do it independently. For the writing task, we have a process approach, which means that students have an opportunity to improve their grade and write a revision, we require one revision sometimes it's two or even three. Sometimes students are asked to post their work on the web so in this case it's two revisions rather than just one. […]

Researcher. – Would you tolerate a margin of error?

UniCProf.2 – Yes, we have…in terms of linguistic foreside, we'll list what's in focus and what students are assessed on, and then there are other features because it's content based instruction and not "fill in the blanks" students have more freedom so they do make other mistakes because they're trying to express meaning, so we don't penalize them on that. But there are features that are in focus, and that's what students are assessed on.

Tolerating a margin of error appeared to allow students the freedom to focus on meaning making as opposed to accuracy. When students were expected to apply certain linguistic features accurately, this was made explicit to them so that they would fully understand how they would be assessed. From the staff interviews student preference for being taught and assessed in the TL was clearly voiced, as was the important role of allowing a freedom in students' oral and written production in order to reduce anxiety and allow the learning process to take place. Another interesting point made in connection with the rationale for teaching in the target language actually made reference to thinking critically about "the foreign"

> UniCProf.2 – [..] Yeah …and the critical thinking aspect is part of it. The idea is that you learn about foreign through the foreign language and that's probably the best way to learn about the foreign, through the perspective of that language and not in translation.

The statement voiced by UniCProf.2 demonstrates an engagement with the literature on "the foreign" (e.g. Kramsch, 1993) and how that is understood. The concept of learning about "the foreign" through the foreign "language" seems to indicate an understanding of language and culture as a very close relationship. It echoes Byram's definition of what Foreign Language Teaching should entail, specifically with regards to the development of Intercultural Communicative competence. Byram (1997) argues that 'FLT has the experience of otherness at the centre of its concern as it requires learners to engage with both familiar and unfamiliar experience through the medium of another language' (p.3). Hence engaging with a text in translation would not, as the lecturer pointed out in the interview, provide students with a comparable experience. There are arguably aspects of "the foreign" that indeed become manifest through the specific terminology and syntax of the foreign language.

The staff interviews further examined the rationales for the specific curriculum in place at the different institutions in relation to how student development of criticality and intercultural competence would be fostered.

5.3.4 Staff perspectives on the relationship between curriculum, the year abroad and the development of criticality and intercultural competence

Understanding the ways in which the different curricular approaches, design and selection of tasks, both for classroom discussions and assessments played a role in the development of criticality and intercultural competence in undergraduate students of German required careful consideration of data elicited both in the staff and student interviews. This section looks at a staff perspective on the specific role of explicit coaching as well as the development process that students undergo as a result of their increased knowledge, awareness and experience of real-world scenarios.

While university graduate attributes often include intercultural competencies and hence encourage students to undertake study abroad, as Holmes (2015) argues, 'the intercultural awareness and development that students might expect to gain from a study abroad […] is unlikely to occur of its own accord" (p.17). Findings from the staff interviews confirmed this view and indeed it would appear that other more explicit contributions, often arising from discussions taking place in either content or language modules, played a more significant role in guiding students towards a critical reflection on "otherness" as opposed to the mere observation of difference, which naturally occurs when visiting or temporarily residing in a foreign country.

At university B the year abroad is a compulsory requirement for students on a single-honours or joint-honours German degree. While the year abroad appeared to be regarded (to an extent) as an opportunity for students to further develop their intercultural competence and start to critically reflect upon culture and difference, as opposed to

observing and describing it, other aspects of the curriculum appeared to play a more significant role. With regards to how the year abroad contributed to students' understanding of the foreign, the Head of German commented that she felt it helped students develop maturity, independence and fluency in the German language, but not necessarily intercultural competence.

> Researcher – Do you feel that the year abroad helps students develop their intercultural competence?
>
> UniBProf.1 - I don't think so, it doesn't necessarily come with a greater awareness of intercultural facets…I think it helps them on a different level. […]
>
> Researcher – Do you feel it helps them recognise themselves as British or realize that people in other countries view them as British?
>
> UniBProf.1 – I was never under the impression that there was such a feeling, I think this is the one thing that… I really don't think they start seeing themselves as foreigners, no. […] I don't think there is that epiphany of "wow, people see us that way". I never felt that this happened for them. […] This specific thing I never observed in students. But they might not tell me. It's more about commenting about the Germans, it's really that. They experience foreignness but they don't see themselves as the foreign element. They feel that the Germans remain quite impolite or very friendly. They attribute the differences to the Germans and not themselves. […]
>
> I think this is more something that happens in our modules rather then doing it independently, it's rather when you start talking about things and they are guided through certain texts that you make them think, then they engage with it.
>
> (University B, Staff Interview 1, emphasis added)

The statements voiced here seem to echo Coleman's views on residence abroad (RA) that indeed "during RA, stereotypes of the host community are not always disarticulated, and they may even be reinforced (Coleman, 1996). Previous studies on year abroad programmes also found that students were not able to 'relate their observation / experience

to their "cultural" (i.e. content) studies' (Romero de Mills, 2008; Johnston et al, 2012). These findings present a challenge for statements describing year abroad programmes as playing a central role in students' intercultural development, such as those presented in the British Academy Position Statement (2012), on Valuing the Year Abroad, which argue that when students find themselves in the foreign country they are 'potential ambassadors for the UK […] acting as intermediaries for and between cultures and societies, often returning with a more nuanced and critical understanding of their own' (p.5).   From the lecturer's perspective, the modules played a more central role than the year abroad experience because they provided "guidance" and lecturers coached students towards critical reflection, as she puts it "you make them think".   Findings from the American universities likewise seem to stress the importance of explicit coaching although, at least at University D, the year abroad did seem to play a more central role.

> Researcher. – If we look specifically at the development of intercultural competence – towards graduation – do students demonstrate the ability to compare cultural practices of the foreign culture to their own?
>
> UniDProf.1 – I think they do. By that time they've done about three years with us.
>
> Researcher. – In which way?
>
> UniDProf.1 – Many of them have spent some time in German speaking countries. So they have their own views. They're not completely outside the American framework but I think they know that there is an American framework, which is a very helpful thing to know.
>
> Researcher. – After their study abroad experience, would you say that they're able to realise that people view them as Americans?
>
> UniDProf.1 – I think that may be another step, to realise that other people are looking back at them and seeing that they're Americans, I'm not sure they're at that level.
>
> (University D – Staff Interview 1)

The language coordinator at University D also commented on the role of study abroad in

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connection to how it affected students' attitudes and curiosity for the foreign culture. Interestingly, she gives an example of one student who extended his curiosity for Germany and the German culture to Japan. This demonstrates a certain openness and curiosity that is clearly separated from the interest in building linguistic proficiency but rather highlights a genuine interest in discovering "the foreign".

> Researcher. – And have you taught some students who have already been on their year abroad? Do they come back changed?
>
> UniDProf.2 – Yeah they do, they always do
>
> Researcher. – In which way?
>
> UniDProf.2 – Oh, they want to go back. I think they are more open to the culture, to learning more about culture.
>
> Researcher. – Do you feel they have incorporated aspects of German culture in the things that they do?
>
> UniDProf.2 – Well they like Berlin, you know people coming from [city's name] they love Berlin, they like European, German cities, big cities. They want to travel more…actually.. now that I'm thinking about it, people who went abroad like to Germany and opened up to German culture they start opening up more towards other cultures, like they want to start exploring other cultures. I had this student who was very much into German and he went for several months to Germany and then he came back and was still into German but then he got interested in Japan.

<div align="center">(University D, Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)</div>

The description of the year abroad experience illustrated here is very positive. It clearly refers to "curiosity" and a wish for "exploring" other cultures, which may not only include the German culture. This may (at least in part) be linked to the fact that University D is located in a large metropolis where even students in German Studies programmes are often ethnically diverse or have grown up in a multicultural environment. The "openness"

and "curiosity" referred to here seem to echo Byram's notion of Savoir être understood as attitudes of 'curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own' (Byram, 1997, p.91).   At university C it did not appear that developing intercultural competence constituted a central aim of the study abroad programme. The stress was placed on the academic side i.e. adequately preparing students prior to departure so that they would be capable of meeting the academic standards.   The language coordinator summarized the experience gained on the year abroad as follows:

> They go there for the <u>intercultural experience</u> but also to learn about something – to <u>study at a German university,</u> that's an important side, <u>we are preparing</u> (in the texts in context class) them to <u>fulfil the academic tasks</u>.
>
> (University C, Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)

With regards to the assessments tasks, which students carry out on their year abroad, American universities did not assess students while they were away. Students were assessed at their host universities and would then bring evidence of marked work back to their institution in order for it to count.   University B, on the other hand, as is common practice in many Modern Language departments in the UK, required students to complete a research-based project while on their year abroad. The assessment, as a guided task, seemed to play a significant role in helping students reflect upon their experience of "difference" at a deeper level.

> Researcher. – With regards to the Year Abroad, in which way does it help transform students' attitudes about the foreign culture and their own – what role does the language / content / year abroad play in this?
>
> UniBProf.2 – Perhaps if we think about the tasks that students have when they are on their year abroad - quite often they will <u>notice very obvious differences</u> and then they <u>start to think critically</u> - We used to ask them to write a project along certain lines, like environmental issues

in Germany, that kind of thing, and I think that from a certain perspective it was the <u>observation</u>, but then actually saying why is this – and <u>if they didn't,</u> then <u>we would prompt them</u>, for example when they sent us a first draft - so you've <u>observed this</u> and that's great but <u>what actually do you think that this means, what does it say about German culture</u>? […] What does it say in <u>comparison to the UK?</u> We often have the idea of <u>comparing</u>.

<p style="text-align:center">(University B, Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)</p>

The language coordinator at University B highlighted the important role of the assessment and once again the explicit coaching through questioning, which enabled students to revise first drafts where they only described an observation of difference and go into more depth in the analysis. The year abroad assessment task was tied to the language modules and was carried out in the target language.   The contribution that content and language modules make towards student development of intercultural competence is further discussed in chapter 7.

Concluding remarks

The chapter examined results from both quantitative and qualitative data drawn from the questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire data provides evidence primarily in support of the first research question, indicating that curricular structures can affect the student experience particularly in the extent to which they are provide opportunities to be exposed to the target language, the type of feedback received in both language and content and students' preference for being taught content in the target language. The follow-up interviews provide further data that helps contextualise the findings from the questionnaire.

The coding procedure for the staff and student interviews presented some challenges, particularly as the data was initially coded adopting Byram's (1997) ICC model and Barnett's (1997) criticality framework respectively. With regards to ICC for instance, some of the data did not provide evidence in support of the previously theorised *savoirs*

but rather unexpected findings emerged from the analysis. Some of the data was hence initially included in this chapter as evidence of ICC development but was later removed and discussed in section 7.8.1 in relation to *otherness and third spaces* and in 7.8.2, with reference to *recognising themselves as foreign among the TL community*.   There were also numerous interview extracts which were not included in this chapter as they provided more generic views or opinions on the course as opposed to examples or descriptors of students' development of intercultural competence and criticality or aspects of the curriculum linked to the development of these competencies.

The following chapter discusses students' development of criticality with reference to how it provides evidence in support of Barnett's (1997) criticality framework as well what emerged as a contribution to existing theory.

CHAPTER 6 FOSTERING CRITICALITY DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Evidence of criticality development from the empirical study

This chapter examines findings in relation to criticality development reported in the data analysis with the aim of exploring to what extent criticality development appeared to be facilitated in the four different degree programmes and which factors seemed to play a significant role in this development. Firstly it reviews Barnett's (1997) concept of criticality in relation to the empirical findings, which are interpreted according to his subdivision into the three domains of knowledge, self and the world. What follows is a discussion of what constitutes critical thinking and critical being and how the theoretical conceptualisation was helpful in the analysis. The chapter also re-examines the data to explore differences between students' development of criticality in both language and content modules and observed differences between the US and UK institutions. Finally it discusses factors contributing to the development of criticality drawn from the empirical study.

6.1.1 Emerging criticality development understood according to Barnett's (1997) concept of criticality

The data drawn from the empirical study was firstly interpreted according to Barnett's (1997) concept of criticality as the questionnaire and interview guide themselves were drawn up on the basis of his theoretical conceptualisation. The empirical findings are also discussed in comparison with previous studies, such as those resulting from the Southampton project and other doctoral research on criticality development in Modern Language degrees which similarly adopted Barnett's framework as a basis or as one of the models for understanding and defining criticality development. Barnett (1997) argues that the core concept of 'critical thinking' should be dispensed and replaced with a wider concept, which he calls 'critical being' (p.7). In his view the full potential of 'critical being' is achieved only when criticality, as expressed in the three domains of knowledge,

self and the world, is 'being lived out at the highest levels of critique in each domain' (ibid.). He argues that 'critical thinking skills confine the thinker to given standards of reasoning [...], whereas critique opens the possibility of entirely different and even contrasting modes of understanding' (ibid.). He theorises three forms of critical being: critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action and states that criticality can be understood as 'taking place in three domains: knowledge, the self and the world' (ibid.). Staff and students' interview responses were examined according to the three criticality domains and, although evidence was found for all three, most of the students' and staff references referred to the first two domains, namely knowledge and the self, with only few references being made to the domain 'world'.

6.1.1.1 Domain knowledge

References to the domain knowledge were the most frequent in both student and staff interviews. This may have been linked firstly to the fact that the lower stages of criticality generally concern critical thinking skills in relation to the subject being studied or discussed, hence the domain knowledge, and secondly to the fact that in order for the critical reflection to extend to the self, students may need to be prompted either directly or indirectly towards the process of self-reflection. Barnett argues that 'higher education has taken its dominant conception of critical thinking to be that of CT1[14], of critical thinking focused on formal bodies of thought' (Barnett, 1997, p.68). While an important element of the criticality framework, Barnett argues that in order for students to develop into critical beings, individuals need to develop across all three domains.

> A curriculum intended to develop critical persons necessarily, therefore, has to find some way of developing critical thinking in the three domains so as to develop critical thought, critical self-reflection and critical action.
>
> (Barnett, 1997, p.114)

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[14] CT1 refers to Critical Thinking in the domain 'knowledge' (Barnett, 1997, p.105)

Nonetheless the development of criticality is likely to begin from the domain knowledge as a result of critical discussions on a particular subject matter. As Barnett argues, when students reach the state of mind necessary for critical thinking to occur, they understand that what they 'encounter in books and elsewhere, including the views of [their] lecturers, is contestable' (ibid. p.71). This process then may lead to a critical reflection on the students' own views and a realisation that their 'own ideas are contestable too' (ibid.). The contribution of discussions and lecturers' questioning at university was an aspect highlighted in several student interviews in relation to fostering criticality. Further factors, which seemed to play an important role, were the choice of topics and the intellectual depth of the discussion or assessment-related activities in which students were engaged. Zak, of university A, referred to the unique contribution of the terrorism module on his development of criticality.

"In the terrorism module [...] we had to analyse newspaper articles written in the 70s and I found it [...] overwhelming how the media in the 70s in Germany played such a fundamental role in the way people understood and perceived things. [...] Because of that, I began to question the values I've been given, the way I think [...] who has influenced that?

(University A - Student Interview 1 - Zak, emphasis added)

The reference describes how the student first began to engage with the written materials, in this case newspaper articles, and then, through the engagement with the texts and a reflection on the role the media played in portraying a specific view of the events, he began to question not only how the readers of those articles may have been prompted to accept a particular viewpoint, but also what may have influenced his own values and beliefs. Rebecca, also of university A, similarly describes her critical thinking within the domain knowledge in relation to the same module. In this case the critical reflection is

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initiated through a film analysis.

> We're learning about whether the terrorists did that or whether the film is dramatising this for effect. Actually the director lived through the period so <u>perhaps he could be telling the story through his eyes</u>.
>
> (University A - Student Interview 2 - Rebecca, emphasis added)

The reference provides an example of how the discipline-specific critical thinking skills have been developed. The student has demonstrated the ability to reflect upon and question viewpoints, arguably an invaluable skill for criticality to develop into further depth.   Similar references were found across all four universities. Emma, of university B, describes how critical thinking within the domain knowledge was an aspect imbedded in her overall university experience.

> In all my seminars across my university experience, you have to <u>express an opinion</u> or use what you've read or your research to express an opinion, and quite often <u>your opinion will be challenged.</u>
>
> (University B - Student Interview 6 - Emma, emphasis added)

Similarly Alice, of University C, commented that one of the things she appreciated the most from her university experience, was to have developed the ability to adopt a critical perspective on knowledge and what informs viewpoints portrayed in texts and media.

> Researcher - what might be the greatest thing you've taken away from Georgetown?
>
> Alice - The cultural understanding ... opening up not only at different perspectives, but <u>different ways of looking at those perspectives</u>, different tools to analyse even the general news that comes to us from these different parts of the world. Even just to able to <u>pick up an article and realise that if it's an American article, there might be a certain cultural stand </u>and if you read a <u>German article, it might look very different.</u>"
>
> (University C - Student Interview 8 - Alice, emphasis added)

Barnett acknowledges the fact that the development of critical thought is not restricted to a specific academic field or context. He argues that,

> We can call a body of thought or a discipline 'critical' when it takes on the character of illuminating social practices such that we become more aware that those practices could be other than they are. [...] In principle this critical capacity is available to all disciplines, since all disciplines are sites of power".

(Barnett, 1997, p.72)

Barnett therefore places emphasis on the approach that a discipline adopts towards knowledge, rather than the nature of the discipline. The application of critical thought, he argues, works 'when a body of thought does more than seek simply to describe the world. It comes into play when it affords genuine enlightenment, in unmasking the hidden forces at work' (ibid.). In interviews it is precisely this aspect of the learning experience, which both students and staff made reference to, when describing their development of criticality. The language coordinator at university B provided an excellent example of how language tutors would coach students to go beyond merely noticing or describing cultural differences they observed. The comment describes how staff prompted students towards a more critical reflection on culture when writing their year abroad project.

> I think that from a certain perspective it was the observation but then actually to say why is this – and if they didn't then we would prompt them. For example when they sent us a first draft [we would say] "so you've observed this and that's great but what actually do you think that this means? What does it say about German culture? [...] What does it say in comparison to the UK?" We often have the idea of comparing.

(University B - Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)

The reference highlights the important role of the lecturer in prompting students to critically reflect upon their observations, thus moving beyond noticing or describing the world as they perceive it, towards a critical reflection on the meanings of difference and the factors which contributed to the development of different cultural practices and beliefs. While this was not expressed so explicitly in the students' interviews, lecturers repeatedly made reference to the importance of the type of texts and topics they were given, highlighting the important role of the lecture in selecting materials and topics which can guide students towards critical reflection. Byram (2008) highlights the important role of the educator in this process and advises teachers to at least encourage students 'to make the basis of their judgments explicit and expect them to be consistent in their judgments of their own society as well as others' (p.233). Yamada also refers to the important role of the teacher in fostering criticality development.

> [...] even without direct teacher/researcher intervention, some kinds of classroom activities seem to stimulate the thinking of learners, but carefully designed teaching activities revolving around the three dimensions of language awareness, cultural awareness and learning process can help to intensify criticality development.
>
> (Houghton and Yamada, 2012, p. 68)

As was evident from some of the student comments, a disposition towards critical thinking within the domain knowledge was, at least for some students, interconnected with their development of criticality within the domain self. Barnett (1997) refers to the development of criticality within this domain as the student's 'claim for autonomy' (p.94). This is where the student shifts from interrogating what he or she has read in texts or observed in the world, to interrogating his or her own perspectives and beliefs.

> The student interrogates her own thinking or her actions, recognizing that other thoughts or actions might be even more worthwhile. In the process, new thinking and new acts may

emerge. The self-reflection is accompanied by self-criticism.

(Barnett, 1997, p.94)

The following section explores references to the development of criticality within the domain self as they emerged from the interview study.

6.1.1.2 Domain self

In reference to the domain self, Barnett identifies eight forms of self-reflection:

- Self-reflection on the student's own disciplinary competence

- Educational reflection

- Critical reflection

- Reflection as metacompetence

- The reflective practitioner

- Reflection as self-realization

- Reflection as social formation

- Societal reflection

(Barnett, 1997, pp.95-99)

The first form of self-reflection refers to the moment in which the conversations taking place in the discipline become 'an inner dialogue of the individual student' (ibid. p.95). Here the student interrogates and critiques his or her own understanding of the intellectual field. In interviews students made reference to the way their university experience brought them to reflect upon their own interpretations and opinions about the topics or issues being discussed.

> In all my seminars across my university experience, you have to <u>express an opinion</u> or use what you've read or your research to express an opinion, and quite often <u>your opinion will be challenged,</u> because that's the whole point of a university seminar, to challenge you and your classmates so <u>you have to stick up for yourself.</u>

The second form of self-reflection, the educational reflection, appears to draw parallels to the concept of Intercultural Competence. Barnett describes educational reflection as,

> [...] a willingness to search for synoptic overviews, a determination always to go on searching deeper and a disinclination to be satisfied with a particular understanding, and a preparedness to step outside one's immediate viewpoint to see things from another perspective [...] Reflection here carries cultural connotations too, since it looks at the formation of at least a stratum of society that understands itself as embodying these human qualities [...].
>
> (Barnett, 1997, p.96, emphasis added)

While close readings of texts and critical analysis of their multiple meanings is arguably a characteristic of most disciplines within the humanities, Modern Languages offers students the opportunity to 'step outside one's viewpoint' not only from an intellectual standpoint but also in the context of communicating with people from the Target Culture. In interviews students often made reference to self-reflection in connection with their development of intercultural competence. References to critical cultural awareness, which emerged in interviews and appear to make cross-reference to Barnett's concept of educational reflection are further discussed in chapter 7 as they are also relevant to the discussion on Intercultural Competence. The third form of self-reflection, critical reflection, refers to higher education becoming 'a process of self-learning, leading to a new way of perceiving oneself' (ibid. p.97), which appears to relate to the 'reconstruction of self' as an aspect of transformatory critique within Barnett's conceptualisation of criticality. In interviews some students made reference to transformatory critique within the domain self. At times this was linked to the very experience of being at university and in other instances there was a direct connection to the subject matter being discussed. JFK of university C felt that the university experience led to a complete self-

transformation challenging his pre-conceptions and beliefs from every angle.

> When I came here, it blew all of my ideas, my world, it blew it up and that was so powerful. Because a university like this, with so many people of so many backgrounds ... as a place for really ... diversity in action made me challenge everything I thought."

<div align="center">(University C - Student Interview 1 - JFK)</div>

Zak, from university A, on the other hand, attributes his development of self-transformation to discussions, which took place in his German content modules.

> In the terrorism module, there was one instance where we had to analyse newspaper articles written in the 70s and I found it intriguing, just overwhelming how the media in the 70s in Germany played such a fundamental role in the way people understood and perceived things and how they shaped the link between the media and the state. [...] Because of that I began to question how have the values I've been given, the way I think, what roots do they have? Who has influenced that? My parents obviously and their views, the media we read, I started to question more the role the media has in changing people's views. And I think the things on gender really, this year, there was another culture module I did on modern women writers and that really changed my view [...] when it comes to gender and how the focus has been very patriarchal and male dominated. And, as a man, it's really had an effect on me. Because also I came from a village … people are very conservative..my mum and dad are very conservative but I've come to university I've become more liberal in the way I think and I wouldn't align myself with conservative politics anymore because of what I've experienced at university. [...] I've loved doing an arts degree and I'm so happy, I didn't really know that it entails that.

From the reference above we can see how the student's criticality development initiated within the domain knowledge gradually moving up Barnett's levels of criticality (from 1. critical skills to 4. transformatory critique), and as a result of a critical reflection on knowledge, the student begins to question his own values and beliefs. Hence we notice a

direct connection between knowledge critique and reconstruction of self. The student highlights the contribution that two content modules made to his development of self-reflection and places emphasis on how his views on gender and politics were transformed as a result. Interestingly, he also points out that he was unaware that a language degree would entail such critical reflection, an aspect of his study, which he thoroughly valued. Barnett subsequently mentions five other forms of self-reflection, namely reflection as metacompetence, the reflective practitioner, reflection as self-realisation, reflection as social formation and societal reflection. While these last five forms of self-reflection are less applicable to the students' criticality development as observed in this study, they add to the understanding of the development of criticality within the domain self. Reflection as metacompetence refers to the transferable skills of identifying 'units from one repertoire of skills which will serve in a new situation' (ibid. p.97). The concept appears to echo the terminology of transferable skills, which often appears in graduate attributes. The reflective practitioner describes the application of self-reflection to practice in the student's professional life. Reflection as self-realisation refers to the critical reflection that the student experiences in Higher Education. It is oriented towards the self in the world and is understood as a path towards self-discovery. Reflection as social formation acknowledges that 'the reflective self alone cannot bring about self-realization but has to draw on others' (ibid. p.98). It refers to the socialising process a student experiences when becoming a member of a community. Societal reflection, the eighth form of self-reflection, refers to a self-reflection starting from the understanding that the world is 'susceptible to purposive interventions. Problems are set by and within the world and their solutions are to be found in the world' (ibid. p.99). This form of self-reflection describes the journey that students undergo in higher education when they recognise a problem and, through reflection, which could be linked to research, attempt to find solutions. Societal reflection aids to our understanding of how critical reflection can spread across the three domains of

knowledge, the self and the world.

References to criticality which emerged from the interviews also provided some evidence in support of the eight forms of self-reflection theorised above. Perhaps the two areas for which there was little evidence were reflection as social formation and societal reflection. These two forms of self-reflection require the student to look outwards and distance him or herself from his own perspective. Particularly societal reflection requires students to develop a more critical understanding of the world and recognise that problems and solutions are both created by individuals like them. That is, they need to view themselves as social actors within the world in order to understand that problems and solutions are not a static reality but rather these are formed by society. This concept is relevant to Barnett's forms of criticality, particularly critical action and it is regarded as the highest form of criticality.

6.1.1.3 Domain world

Few references to the domain 'world' could be drawn from the analysis, and only one statement, drawn from one of the staff interviews, appeared to provide clear evidence for 'critical action'. This is not surprising, in fact Barnett himself points out that 'the most problematic domain is that of the world' (Barnett, 1997, p.112). Assessing the extent to which students 'take action' in the world as a result of their developed criticality is one of the challenges. A further challenge presents itself in being able to infer that students' actions in the domain world have been motivated by a learning experience fostered through the university. In spite of these challenges, Barnett argues as follows,

> The university precisely has a responsibility, qua university, to develop the capacity within its
> students to take up critical stances in the world and not just towards the world.
>
> (Barnett, 1997, p. 112)

The analysis of the staff and student interview study was able to capture at least a couple

of references made to taking action in the domain world. The language coordinator at university D was in fact able to give an excellent example of how a student described her actions in a situation outside the university environment.

UniDProf.2 - We had this class on multicultural Germany and we talked a lot about the headscarf and all the debates in Germany and how it became this symbol for many people of islamophobia. And one of the students said that there was a talk here at [University D] and she was helping seating people, and there was a student with a headscarf and she had a backpack. A couple of people came up to security and asked specifically to check this woman's backpack. And "I was outraged", she said.

The way that I could analyse it and think and even respond to those people, she said … I wouldn't have had enough tools and ways to talk about it if I hadn't taken this class.

Researcher – Yeah, that's a clear example of how the class made her change her way of thinking and made her examine something in a completely different context.

UniDProf.2 – Exactly, and she even said something..

(University D - Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)

In the example above a student related her experience of taking action at a talk given at her university. In this case she 'took action' against what she felt was a case of discrimination against a Muslim student wearing a headscarf. The fact that she was first of all able to notice the discriminatory behaviour, then draw a connection between what took place in this context and something which was discussed in one of her upper-level German classes and finally 'take action' by approaching the security staff and saying something in order to communicate her feelings on the situation, is a unique example of achieving what Barnett would describe as the highest level of criticality, i.e. transformatory critique in the form of critical action in the domain 'world'. He argues that higher education has to view students as 'actors in the world' and not just as 'thinkers' (ibid. p.103). In order for students to 'take action' in the world however, they need to be able to apply the critical

attitudes towards the world, which they may have developed through structured programmes of learning, to more pragmatic situations.

> Once the student is placed in situations where those skills and understandings are exposed to pragmatic situations in the world, then the potential for critical thought to widen to embrace the world arises (CT3)[15].
>
> (Barnett, 1997, p.113)

A further example of transformatory critique in the domain 'world' was identified in the analysis, although it crosses over between the domain 'self' and 'world' and does not provide as much evidence for critical action as the previous reference. Mary, a student at university B, related how attending a talk given by a Holocaust survivor, made her reflect upon the more current issue of how gypsies are treated today. She firstly refers to how a content module on the Holocaust made her reflect upon genocides and then refers to how the talk brought her to reflect upon some of the issues taking place in the world today.

> I think it[16] made me look at other genocides differently – also I went to a talk given by a holocaust survivor - which was advertised by the university- she was talking a lot about how we treat gypsies and she was saying that this is often something which is often overlooked – looking at the holocaust "Yes that's how it happened then but actually it's still a problem today" so I guess there's been a lot of things that have happened – so it's about learning from the past.
>
> (University B - Student Interview 7 - Mary, emphasis added)

While the statement describes how the experience made her reflect upon her own perspective on genocides, and hence is better situated within the domain 'self', the fact

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[15] CT3 refers to Critical Thinking in the domain 'world' (Barnett, 1997, p.105).

[16] Refers to the *Holocaust* module she tool as one of her content options.

that she states that the content module made her 'look at genocides differently' arguably provides a connection to the domain world, as the student has been brought to reflect on real world issues, such as genocides and the unfair treatment of gypsies. Her statements demonstrates an ability to draw comparisons between what was learnt at university and real-world situations, so, while not providing evidence that critical action was taken, the student appears to demonstrate the critical thinking skills necessary for critical action, should she be placed in a scenario where she may be motivated to take initiative. While it was possible to apply Barnett's model of criticality in the interview analysis, as some interview references demonstrate, criticality development was often observed as spreading across the different domains as opposed to being located in a particular one. Houghton and Yamada (2012) similarly found that the borders between the different domains were 'fuzzy'.

> Barnett's (1997) theoretical model of criticality, conceptualised in terms of domains and levels, was supported by both the study described in this book and the Criticality Project, but the borders between them were found to be fuzzy.
>
> (Houghton and Yamada, 2012, p. 154)

Barnett also places emphasis on the importance of the concept of 'critical being' in contrast with 'critical thinking'. The distinction is important in order to fully understand what is understood by the term criticality development according to Barnett (1997) and what the concept of 'critical being' adds to the more broadly employed term 'critical thinking'.

6.2 From critical thinking to critical being

The data drawn from the student and staff interviews appears to provide at least some evidence for critical being. While in the majority of cases students' references to criticality development remained in the domain 'knowledge' and hence described abilities

to question interpretations and viewpoints when reading and discussing texts, a number of references described critical reflection in the domain 'self' and some also referred to the domain 'world'. Only a few examples appeared to encompass all three domains at their highest levels of criticality (transformatory critique) and form of criticality (critical action). If, as Barnett (1997) argues, 'a curriculum for critical being [...] has to be one that exposes students to criticality in the three domains and at the highest level in each' (p.102) one could argue that there is some evidence that this is taking place, at least in part, in the Modern Language programmes involved in this study. Barnett places particular emphasis on enabling students to become 'actors in the world' and not just thinkers (ibid. p.103). Critical being is hence understood as being achieved through the integration of the three forms of criticality: critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action (ibid, p.105). Barnett stresses the importance of achieving the integration of all three forms of criticality and warns of the danger of producing students 'who are adept at critically evaluating, say, literary texts or other works of humanistic culture in one way, but who adopt quite different powers of critical evaluation in relation to the world.' (ibid. p.102). Offering perhaps an extreme case, Barnett (1997) argues that 'this is the nightmare with which Steiner (1984) presents us: a world in which the Nazis might appreciate Schubert or Picasso and then turn to their critique of the Jewish community in the Final Solution' (ibid. p.102).

From the analysis only a few examples of students demonstrate a somewhat successful development of criticality across all three forms and domains. Others made reference to becoming more critical in interpreting texts but there was often little evidence that the educational experience had challenged them to extend critical thinking beyond this stage. Often self-reflection or critical reflection in the domain world appeared to have developed independently although it may have been initiated or inspired by a discussion / reflective task.

Mary, from university B, appears to have successfully achieved all three forms of criticality. She first of all describes how, as a result of a German content module, she realised that understanding genocide is far more complex than she thought and that there is a lot you cannot understand. Secondly she illustrates how the module made her look at genocides differently by making her realise that 'there's a lot you can't understand'. This comment describes her self-reflection process and the development of her own understanding of genocide. She then illustrates how, through an extra-curricular activity, she was brought to reflect on the current situation of gypsies today - which she recognises as a problem. While there is no evidence that the student has actively 'taken action', hence evidence for this point remains weak, the student has, at least in part, developed criticality across all three domains. The diagram illustrates how her comments provide evidence of Mary's criticality development.

Figure 23 - Criticality development - Mary of University B
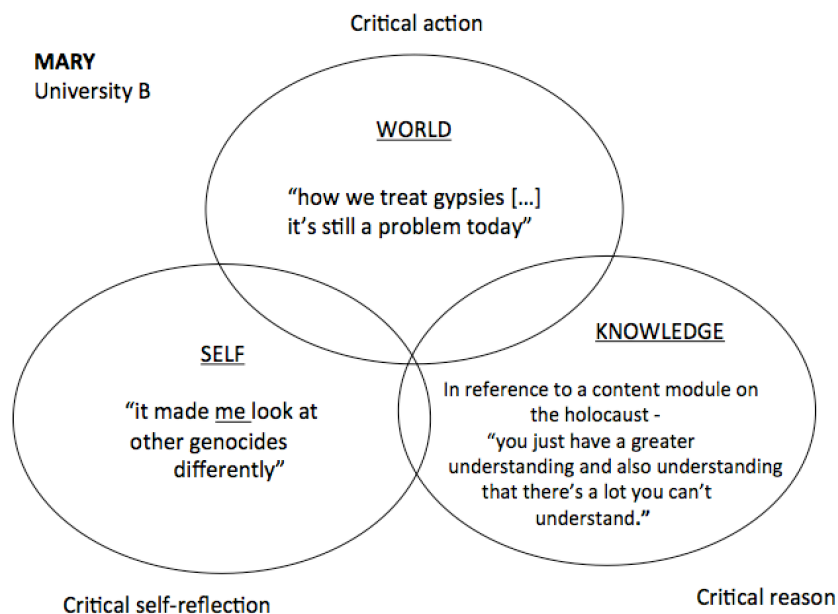
Zak, from university A, similarly appeared to have developed criticality, at least in part, across the three forms and domains.

Figure 25 - Criticality development - Zak of University A
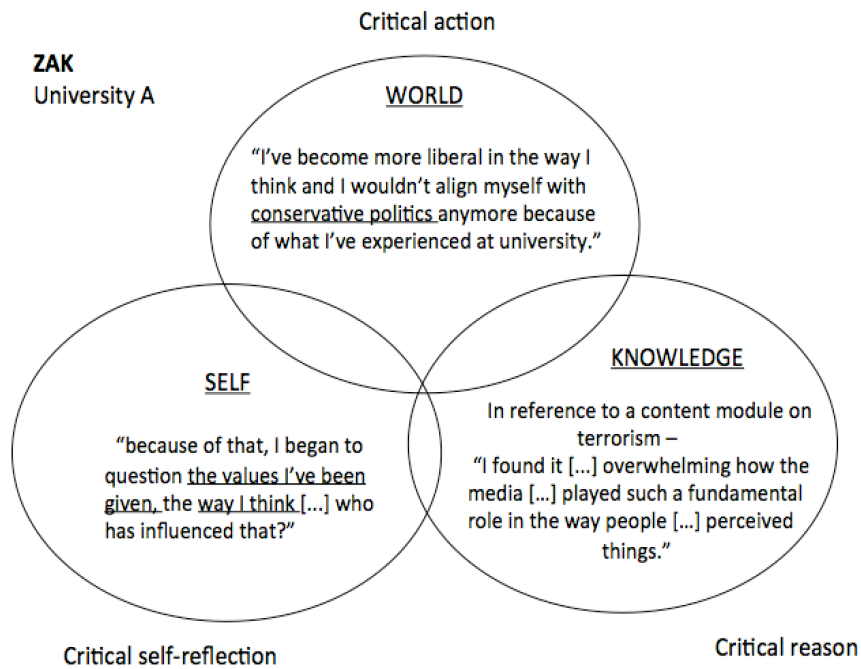
As with Mary, in the first example, Zak also appears to have developed first of all critical reason, then self-reflection and have just started to extend the critical reflection to its application in the world, hence critical action. The fact that his university experience has caused him to alter his political views is weak evidence of critical action because it merely indicates a disposition to act differently in the world, but nonetheless relevant enough to conclude that the student, at least in part, has developed into a critical person across the three forms of criticality. Perhaps the best example of critical action was described by the language coordinator at university D. She described an incident reported by one of her students, which occurred at a talk taking place on campus (previously cited in section 6.1.1.3). The diagram below describes the students' stages of criticality development based on the quote above.

Figure 26 - Criticality development observed by staff at University D
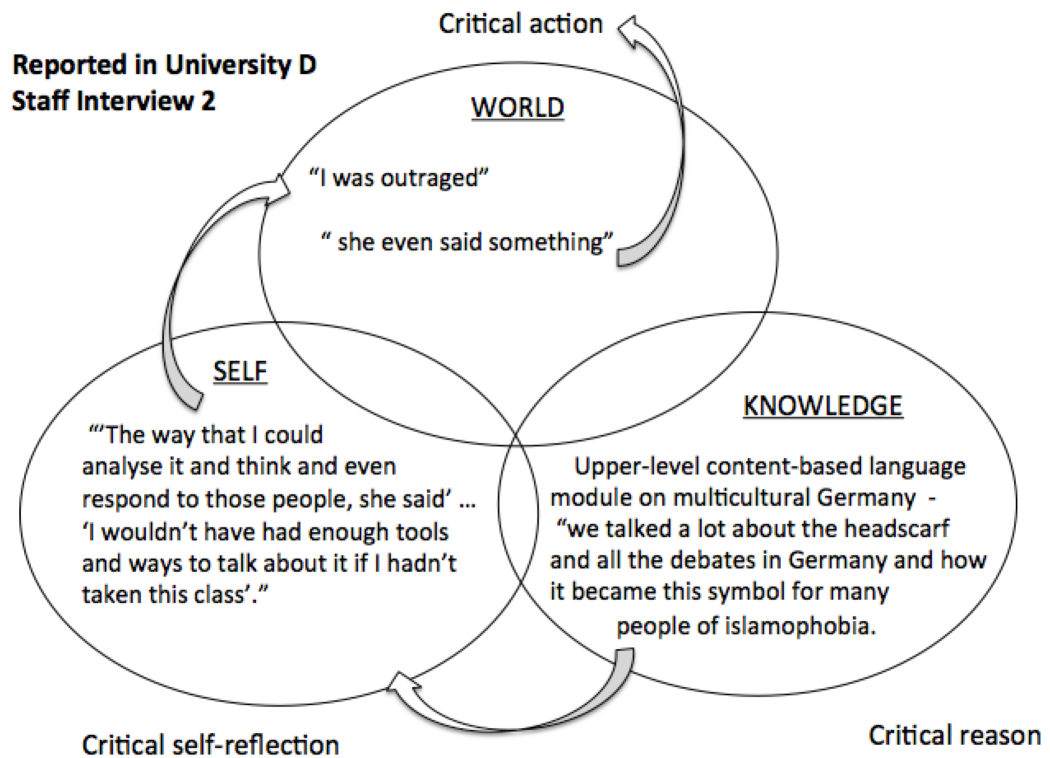
There appears to be a clear relationship between a discussion on content or in this case an upper-level content-based language module, and students' development of criticality. In the case outlined above, the student successfully managed to extend her critical perspective beyond the domains of knowledge and the self and act upon a situation which she found unjust. Perhaps the fact that the module discussed a contemporary issue, such as islamophobia, helped enable the student to recognise a situation of discrimination in the real world. JFK, from university C, also made reference to criticality development across the three domains. Having moved from a small town in the Midwest to a large metropolitan area on the East Coast of the United States, his experience at university completely transformed his world-views. The diagram illustrates references from the interview, which describe his critical thoughts in each of the domains. The project he is referring to consists of a student speech, which was recorded and broadcast on YouTube.

The speech was given entirely in German in occasion of the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Figure 27 - Criticality development - JFK of University C
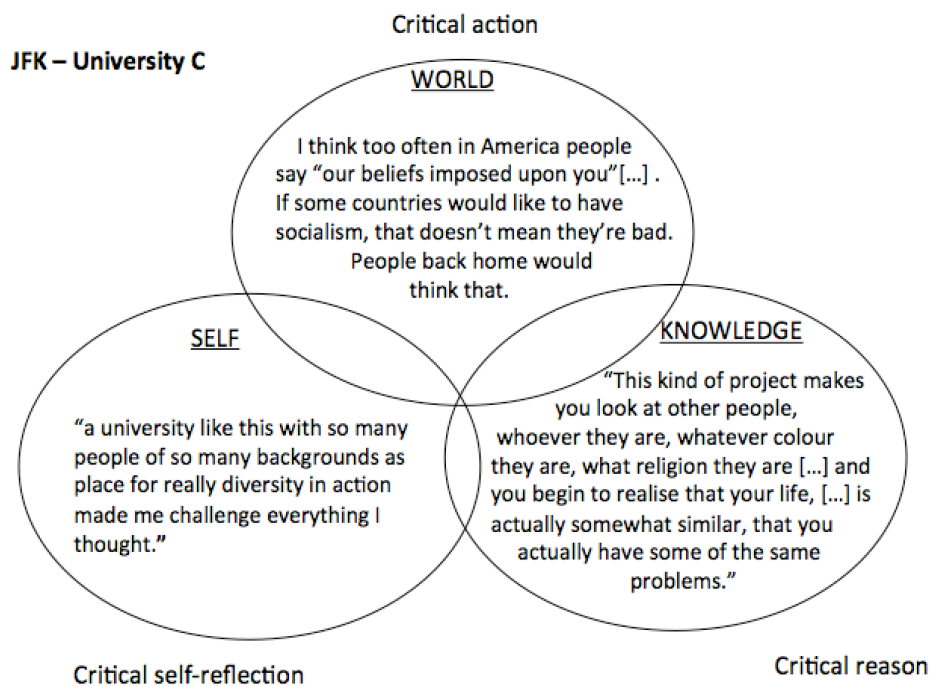
In this case both a specific learning task given in a German upper-level content-based language module, as well as the mere fact of being in a large multicultural city with a very diverse university student body, contributed considerably to the students' criticality development. There is evidence of critical reason and self-reflection with potential to achieve critical action since the student clearly refers to how the experience transformed his political views on the world. The examples above represent students who had been able to develop their criticality to an extent that they were now being critical about their own perspectives on views and beliefs as well as interpreting knowledge and, at least in part, had become more critical about the world around them. As can be noticed in the

examples described above, successful examples of students who had developed into what Barnett would define as "critical beings", were found in all four institutions. It must be noted, however, that these four students did not represent the majority, rather they were exceptional cases.

6.3 Communicative Criticality - an emerging theme

While it was possible to code most references to criticality emerging from the staff and student interviews according to Barnett's model of domains and levels, some students also made reference to a somewhat different form of criticality development. A characteristic of the Higher Education experience, primarily linked to foreign language learning, appeared to make a unique contribution to the development of criticality within the domain self. The experience of being able to access knowledge and express meaning through a foreign language would seem to contribute to students' development of what Barnett (1997) defines as reconstruction of self at its highest level (transformatory critique). The concept is specific to the foreign language learning context and hence was not coded as a mere contributing factor to reconstruction of self. It is an emerging finding from the analysis that can tell us something more about the role of language or access to knowledge through a foreign language and its relation to students' ability to reflect and understand their own thinking. With regards to the domain self, Barnett points out that,

If students seriously begin to reflect on themselves, to <u>understand their own thinking</u>, they might characteristically begin by gaining insight into the frameworks they typically deploy.

(Barnett, 1997, p.113, emphasis added)

In interviews some students made reference to how certain words or aspects of the German language such as grammar and syntax appeared to shape thought or allow them to express themselves differently. The concept appears to mirror, to an extent, the literature on linguistic relativity (Gumperez and Levinson, 1996) but, I would argue, extends beyond

this conceptual framework. As references emerging from the interviews refer to the critical self-reflection that students experienced through their education, I have described the phenomenon as Communicative Criticality. It is a form of criticality that comprises of transformatory critique and the reconstruction of self. The reconstruction of self occurs through the process of understanding one's own thinking and an experience of discovery of one's own and the foreign language's limitations. By recognising the linguistic limitations present in one language, through comparison, students discover alternative ways of expressing thought through the other language / languages they have studied. Through this discovery students gain a more thorough understanding of the relationship between language and thought and may become more critical about ways of expressing meaning. Students recognise that certain concepts are better rendered through certain languages compared to others. In the context of the study of foreign languages, students may become more critical of translation and interpretation and challenge the translator's / interpreter's semantic or structural choices when trying to transfer meaning from one language to the other. As a result of this process, they become more critical about their own thinking when relating meaning in the different languages they know.   Gili, from University C provides an excellent example of how the experience of learning a foreign language at university brought her to reflect upon the multiple ways of 'making meaning' possible through the different linguistic structures of languages. In the interview she described how the passive structure characteristic of the German language appeared to be able to better render the Buddhist idea that there is no 'doer', which she found challenging to express in English.

> The way the language is structured allows for passive constructions.   We were talking a lot about that today in our Buddhism class. In English there is a lot of emphasis on the agent, and... that's a really important idea in Buddhism, that there is no doer, just what's happening, just the doing. So I was like "it's really hard to think this way in English so it's been helpful to think about this in German because the structure of the language allows for it.   The professor

challenged us to go until the next class meeting and try <u>to think without the agent</u>, so like now that we're sitting here "there is a sensation of hunger".

<div align="center">(University C - Student Interview 5 - Gili)</div>

Though a German content course looking at what happened when Buddhist philosophy came to Germany, Gili was brought to reflect upon how a certain concept, in this case the omission of the agent, could be more easily rendered through the German language as a result of its linguistic structure. Her knowledge of both languages allowed her to break free of the constraints of the English language, where an active sentence which specified the 'doer' is usually preferred over a passive construction, and think about something without specifying the agent. Because of this exercise, the student discovered that there are multiple ways of expressing thought and different languages may provide better structures to convey a particular meaning. Mary, from University B, referred to what is lost through translation, for instance when reading literary texts in English as opposed to the German original.

> If we can continue the <u>language learning itself through content</u>, which interests me more then in general I'm just going to be more interested and more engaged.
> For example for German we've been doing stuff on the Holocaust and <u>it makes more sense to me to be able to read that in the source language</u> and given that the <u>language is part of the culture and part of their experience</u>, it's just logical I guess.

<div align="center">(University B, Student Interview 7)</div>

Aside from expressing preference for reading texts in the source language, Mary describes her understanding of the language-culture relationship and seems to indicate that the English translation not equipped to effectively capture the cultural reference and experiences relating to the Holocaust. There are German words or phrases, for instance, such as "Arbeit macht frei" or "Deutschland über alles", which were associated with the

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World War Two context and, when translated, do not convey the same cultural references. The concept of Communicative Criticality, which I have used to describe students' transformatory critique resulting from their discovery of the possibilities and limitations in making meaning present in both their own and the foreign language / languages studied, as mentioned above, echoes to an extent the work on linguistic relativity, which is concerned with the relationship between language, thought and culture (Gumperz and Levinson, 1996). The theoretical concept of linguistic relativity plays a role here as it is also concerned with the specific role of language in relating meaning, particularly in relation to culture. Contemporary empirical research on linguistic relativity stems from the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) who was also influenced by the work of his predecessors Franz Boas (1911) and Edward Sapir (1924) who theorised on the impact of language on thought. Whorf, however, was the first to 'try to demonstrate actual correspondences between structural features of languages and specific modes of thought' (Gumperz and Levinson, 1996, p. 42). The concept of linguistic relativity, generally referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or Whorfian hypothesis has, since its origin, remained an object of intense discussions (Risager, 2014). A distinction is often made between a strong and weak version of the hypothesis. The strong version argues that 'we are imprisoned in our language and can only think what our language allows us to think' (Bredella and Richter, 2004, p. 522) while the weak version states that 'language itself is influenced by our natural, social and cultural environment' (ibid.). While the strong version of the hypothesis has often been questioned (see Gumperz and Levinson, 1996), the weak version appears to describe the inter-relationship of language and culture noticeable when observing how speakers of different languages 'make meaning'.

The concept of Communicative Criticality builds upon the weak version of the hypothesis but seeks to describe the critical thought processes that students of foreign languages acquire. It refers to the students' ability to recognise that all languages are influenced by

their environment and that through a comparison of the different linguistic structures, students realise that there are multiple ways of making meaning. The strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis argues that 'we are imprisoned in our language'. While there appears to be no evidence to support such a claim, what Gili from university C described would seem to describe something similar. She recognised that the passive structure is more commonly used in the German language, which could be a reflection of the socio-cultural environment where there is less of a focus on the 'doer'. This seems to indicate that while language may not necessarily 'imprison' an individual and restrict their way of thinking, it may play a role in the way we formulate thought. The structure of a language itself, such as active or passive voice in this case, may reflect the cultural environment. For instance, a greater focus on the individual is emphasised by the use of the active voice, which clearly names the 'doer'. This finding is one that could be explored further as the student, mentioned above, spontaneously made reference to this aspect of language learning without having been asked to comment on it.

6.4 Criticality development in both language and content modules

Content or upper-level content-based language modules (in the USA) emerged from the data as playing an invaluable contribution to students' development of criticality. Factors which were most relevantly linked to criticality development included the explicit questioning guided by the teacher / lecturer to prompt students towards critical reflection as well as the nature of the assessment tasks. The extent to which language modules supported criticality development differed among the institutions but overall students from all four universities felt that when comparing the two types of courses, content modules placed a greater focus on the critical dimension. The questionnaire results highlight the difference between the contribution of language and content modules, which was also confirmed by the interview analysis. According to the questionnaire, 78.26% of students felt that content modules provided a greater opportunity to develop a critical awareness of

culture compared to language modules, while only 21.74% disagreed. Responses differed among the institutions but overall students in all four universities generally felt that the contribution of content / upper-level modules was greater. University D was the institution with the lowest percentage of students who agreed that content / upper-level modules provided a greater opportunity to develop a critical awareness of culture with 57.14% who agreed and 42.86% who disagreed. John of University D, for instance, felt that lower-division courses also provided opportunities to reflect on culture, however he recognised that this reflection did not occur at the same level or with similar amount of depth. When asked what he would change or add to the under-division language classes, he mentioned books written in German, by the German people.

> Researcher - If you were able to integrate language and content a bit more, what would you add to the language courses to increase the opportunity to critically reflect upon culture, or increase the intellectual challenge?
>
> John - Actually I think to read books written by the people ..the Germans. I mean I said that the lower division classes were more…made me think about the culture more but that also doesn't mean that upper-division doesn't do that. Because the last quarter that we did, we read the book Draussen vor der Tür, which is written by a war veteran who came back from the World War and he was very.. the book depicted the lives of people.. it made me think abut the culture at that time. [...]
>
> Researcher – Did you do those kinds of activities in language classes?
>
> John – No definitely not. Language was really like …because there was so little time to cover so many things. It more like practice drills, drills and drills.
>
> (University D, Student Interview 2 - John)

Zak of University A also makes reference both to language and content when describing his criticality development. In the interview he made reference to the intellectual benefits

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drawn from the study of language particularly in relation to how they transform the way we perceive things and challenge assumptions we may have about language and its semiotic function.

> But just to even be doing a language ... learning…through doing a language you get a sense that there are different ways to think, to perceive things, <u>a language can also influence somebody's thinking</u> – perhaps.
>
> (University D, Student Interview 1 - Zak)

While Zak ascribes the intellectual challenge to content modules, he also makes reference to the experience of learning a foreign language per se as a further factor that may contribute to the process of discovering that there are multiple ways of viewing the world. Students at other institutions were more explicit about the difference between language and content modules with regards to fostering criticality (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2.1). The staff interview data further illustrates how content modules appeared to play a significant role in the development of criticality, although the role of the language modules should not be overlooked. The language coordinator at university D pointed this out in her interview, stating that the language learning experience itself 'opens up' people.

> I think that <u>language learning is a process that really opens up people</u> even if they learnt it for the instrumental value, mainly, I mean there is <u>something happening to people when they start communicating in a second language,</u> something opens up.
>
> (University D - Staff Interview 2, emphasis added)

John, also from university D similarly referred to the language learning experience as sparking his curiosity for language and culture.

> Researcher – Which courses provided more intellectual challenge or made you critically reflect upon aspects of culture?

John – I think <u>the lower-level ones.</u>

Researcher – really?

John – Because..I always find very interesting why certain languages …<u>why certain languages</u> <u>have certain ways of certain things</u>, why do they decline, why do they inflect?

Researcher – So you are interested in the linguistic aspect?

John – Yeah, it makes me think... maybe it's <u>about their culture,</u> <u>their history.</u> It makes me <u>want to find out more about what led to this</u>.

(University D - Student Interview 2 - John)

This is a clear example that criticality development can initiate and be fostered in lower-level language courses where students are still acquiring the skills they need to effectively communicate. While the experience itself of learning a foreign language has been recognised as contributing at least in part to criticality development in previous studies (see Brumfit et al., 2005, Houghton and Yamada, 2012, Johnston et al., 2005) criticality development has more frequently been referred to in relation to the humanities side of the Modern Languages degree, hence the content modules. Brumfit et al. (2005) note that it is perhaps the combination of the language, content and year abroad elements of the ML degree that, when brought together, may make a significant contribution to fostering students' criticality development.

[...] we should note the possibility that it is the <u>rich combination of language with cultural</u> <u>content</u>, of learning in the university <u>with acquisition on the year abroad</u>, that may be <u>the</u> <u>valuable contribution</u> being made overall.

(Brumfit et al., 2005, p.161)

The statement above brings us back to one of the aims of the investigation, i.e. to explore what curriculum models appear to best develop criticality. Brumfit et al. (2005) would seem to suggest that the 'combination' and hence the contribution of all three elements as a whole would seem to make a more valuable contribution to the development of

criticality rather than each of the three elements on its own. The language coordinator at university B provided an excellent example of how having the unique opportunity of teaching both language and content modules in the TL as well as playing a role in designing and marking the year abroad assessment tasks, allowed her to increase relevance and continuity across the curriculum.

> I have the advantage of teaching language and content. I've taught 1st year and 2nd year content. 2nd year content is taught and assessed in German and I found that really interesting because you can really emphasise the links between the topics, the themes that you're talking about in language and content and how they overlap.

> (University B - Staff Interview 2)

Staff interviews in particular appeared to support the statement made in Brumfit et al. (2005) suggesting that rather than one element of the curriculum contributing significantly towards criticality development over another, it is the contribution of language, content and the year abroad together that seem to make a significant contribution. The findings also suggest that a greater degree of integration in the curriculum allows teaching staff to establish more links between the three elements. This extends the opportunities to carry on critical discussion on content in the language modules while also critically exploring language / structural features of the TL in content modules.

6.5 Criticality development in the UK and US Foreign Language Programmes

Data drawn from the US and UK institutions did not highlight major differences in students' criticality development, however it exposes some of the outcomes of specific curriculum designs, structures of degree programmes and methodological approaches. The data also highlights some similarities in the findings indicating that students across all four universities felt that there were a number of common factors linked with criticality development. As mentioned in the previous section, students across all institutions felt that content modules played an important role in fostering criticality development. While in the UK content modules are clearly defined academic units of study generally requiring

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assessments consisting of research papers and presentations, in the US universities defining what was meant by a 'content course' proved somewhat problematic. Both university C and university D offered upper-level content-based language modules taught in German. Some students regarded these as language modules since throughout the course they were being assessed both on content and on language. In addition, such courses were also aimed to extend and develop students' linguistic and communicative competence (and therefore included the teaching of grammar and vocabulary) as well as to develop students' academic writing skills in the target language. To avoid confusion, students in the US universities were asked to think of language courses as lower-level language courses, whose focus was primarily the development of communicative competence and preparing students for the upper-level classes. In interviews, students from the US institutions most often made reference to criticality development when referring to upper-level language and content modules as well as the year abroad. The table below summarises staff and students' references to criticality highlighting some of the similarities and differences between the UK and US institutions.

Table 17: Students' references to criticality development - US - UK comparison

	US universities (Uni C and D)		UK universities (Uni A and B)
Uni D - John	Study abroad "when I experienced it myself I think about how I do things."	**Uni A – Rebecca**	Content modules In reference to the terrorism module - "we're learning about whether the terrorists did that or whether the film is dramatising this for effect
Uni D - Maria	University experience "It's helped me think about things differently and just look into deeper meanings ...to not just take information so easily but actually challenge it and question it."	**Uni B- Emma**	Language and content modules / university experience "In all my seminars across my university experience, you have to express an opinion or use what you've read or your research to express an opinion, and quite often your opinion will be challenged."
Uni C - JFK	University experience "[it]made me challenge everything I thought."	**Uni B – Mary**	Content modules "I think it made me look at other genocides differently"
Uni C - Alice	University experience / upper-level modules " The cultural understanding ... opening up not only at different perspectives, but different ways of looking at those perspectives, [...] Even just to able to pick up an article and realise that if it's an American article there might be a certain cultural stand and if you read a German article it might look very different."	**Uni A – Zak**	Content modules "In the terrorism module [...] we had to analyse newspaper articles written in the 70s and I found it [...] overwhelming how the media in the 70s in Germany played such a fundamental role in the way people understood and perceived things."
Uni C - Gili	upper-level modules - discussion "what does that mean from an American perspective?" - discussions looking at different perspectives / interpretations	**Uni B – Nicole**	Content modules Higher intellectual challenge in content modules - links to critical thinking "[...] the level of thinking required to get to grips with some of the concepts"

Table 18: References to criticality development from staff interviews- US - UK comparison

	US universities (Uni C and D)		UK universities (Uni A and B)
Uni D - Prof 1	upper-level courses "I would say that the lower level language courses do not present German culture in any very critical way. [...] Certainly some of the upper-division courses, such as the holocaust course ... they've got to be heavily critical."	**Uni B - Prof 1**	content courses "What [University B] does is that it encourages engaging with theory as well and clearly theory sort of broadens your horizons straight away...
Uni D - Prof 2	upper-level courses "I think what makes it especially interesting for students and what I saw ..really a lot of engagement when they start to understand issues in their own county by discussing the same issues in another country."	**cont.**	...and it's very interesting to see the actual interaction between theory and the actual primary text because they start seeing things which they haven't seen before and vice versa, they start questioning theory"
Uni C - Prof 1	upper-level courses "there's more outward emphasis on themes and topics rather than structures."	**Uni B - Prof 2**	Year Abroad Assessment & language modules - explicit guidance "We used to ask them to write a project along certain lines, like environmental issues in Germany, that kind of thing, and I think that from a certain perspective it was the observation but then actually say why is this – and if they didn't then we would prompt them...
Uni C - Prof 2	upper-level courses - In reference to critically analysing texts - after curriculum reform "It's a much more consistent approach, I mean it used to be that it was up to the instructor, you could bring in all kinds of contextual things and depending on the instructor that happened or didn't happen as much."	**cont.**	...for example when they sent us a first draft - so you've observed this and that's great but what actually do you think that this means, what does it say about German culture"

	US universities (Uni C and D)		UK universities (Uni A and B)
Uni C - Prof 3	lower -/ upper-level "at the introductory level and at other levels the critical reflection has to do with analysing the contextual aspects and how they are related, how they are construed in texts. [...] And so the instructors ask students to talk about who wrote this recount, why did students write it, where does it appear, what's the connection between the venue and the communicative purpose. So the contextual information is a great part of that and that's where the critical thinking aspect comes in, in the ability to see why texts are written, for what purpose, what voices they represent.		

The references to criticality, as can be observed in some of the interview quotes above, did not highlight major differences between the US and UK universities. Upper-level courses in the US, and similarly content modules in the UK, were referred to more often than language modules or the year abroad. This confirms the findings discussed in the previous section, which describe the valuable contribution of content modules, and upper-level modules in the US, to students' development of criticality. Surprisingly there was no significant difference between institutions adopting a more traditional curriculum and those with greater integration. It appears in fact that the increased integration observable at universities C and B is aimed primarily at ensuring that language modules are relevantly linked and therefore can adequately prepare students for content / upper-level rather than being aimed to develop criticality within these units of learning. At university C, for instance, texts are introduced very early and students are engaged with genre even in lower-level language courses. This engagement with texts aims to adequately prepare students for the upper-levels so that they are able to understand and produce language in a variety of registers and can make rapid progress in their linguistic skills. Similarly at

university B, while language modules did introduce learners to culture and used texts to stimulate discussions on topics, the focus remained on producing language and hence the depth and critical aspect of the discussion or task was not comparable to that of content modules. The head of department at university D argued that 'the lower level language courses do not present German culture in any very critical way'. This is a very important point as it outlines one of the possible factors that distinguish lower-level language courses from those offered in upper-division. The lower-level syllabus is often modelled according to a communicative syllabus, which generally includes the use of a textbook supplemented with teacher resources. Upper-level modules, on the other hand, centre around content and often require students to research into a particular topic or issue and critically discuss it in the seminars. While the language syllabus in the UK universities often includes more explicit teaching of grammar / structure and is often not textbook-based, the superficial representation of the target culture and simplicity of the choice of discussion topics, compared to those of content modules, was also highlighted in student interviews in the UK.   Swaffar (2006) argued that the ACTFL exposed the issue of content in the teaching of language courses at collegiate level in the United States. It questioned the communicative orientation of such courses and, as Swaffar (2006) points out, exposed the fact that 'it was grounded in generalized language contexts and hence relatively dissociated from cultural difference and learners' capacity to engage actively in exploring such differences despite their own cultural preconceptions' (p.248). Foreign Languages as a discipline in colleges and universities was being challenged as a result of this insight. (ibid.)

> If the profession's goal of communicative competence provided its audience with language
> capabilities that were relatively isolated from social and historical contexts and posed few
> opportunities for learners to think about and analyze multiple sources of information about the
> social, political, economic, and cultural characteristics of FL speakers, then it did not meet the
> curricular desiderata for college-level work in the humanities. To do so, language teaching

would have to serve the goals pursued in other humanities courses by implementing a curriculum that enhanced students' intellectual horizons and, in so doing, enabled them to apply FL language abilities to a range of academic and practical endeavors. Such an objective would demand rethinking language-based pedagogy.

(Swaffar, 2006, p.248, emphasis added)

Swaffar (2006) points out that while the Standards project, which emerged as early as the 1990's, already specified 'appropriate tasks and stages in teaching content and reasoning processes as integral components of language learning' (ibid.), however, she argues, in postsecondary contexts they have been 'almost completely ignored' (ibid, p.249). While the article dates back to 2006 and therefore precedes the MLA (2007) report and any action taken by FL departments to address curricular issues specified in the document, the bifurcation of language and content courses into lower and upper levels is still observable in many institutions. Even at university C, probably the best example of an integrated FL collegiate programme in the country, the lower level language courses are still guided by a communicative pedagogy. Surprisingly 100% of students from university C, who responded to the questionnaire, agreed that 'upper-level content classes provided greater opportunity to develop a critical awareness of cultures than language classes' (Student Questionnaire, item 6.1 - 61.54% *strongly agree,* 30.77% *agree,* 7.69% *slightly agree).* University C had the highest percentage of students who agreed to item 6.1 compared to the other three universities. The data appears to highlight the content of a communicative-based pedagogy as one of the factors distinguishing the lower and upper-level classes as well as the depth and level of intellectual engagement in the discussions, tasks and assessments. The latter is arguably in part also a result of the former. These factors may explain why across all four universities students felt that the more academic content generally found in the upper-levels / content modules played a greater role in fostering criticality development compared to the other components of the curriculum. It is important to point out, however, that while lower-level courses generally continue to be

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guided by a communicative-based pedagogy, the data collected in the two US universities describes very successful upper-level content based language courses where there was clear evidence of students' criticality development as well as continued improvement in linguistic and communicative competence. These courses provide an excellent model of how to effectively integrate language and content at university level. The challenge that US FL departments face is how to address the issue of content in the lower-level language courses where students' proficiency levels generally range from beginners to intermediate. On the other hand, FL departments in the UK would need to reconsider the role of explicit grammar and structure teaching as well as the selection of content for the oral components as the data seems to indicate that these approaches do not play a significant role in students' criticality development, particularly when compared to content modules.

6.6 Factors contributing to the development of criticality

It has been noted that the identification of specific factors towards the development of student criticality presents its challenges; this is mainly due to the fact that much criticality development takes place outside the classroom.

It was however possible to identify a number of factors, linked to what takes place within the university, which helped foster criticality development. These include the choice of content taught in the modules and the explicit prompting, questioning and guidance given by the tutor / professor to foster a critical reflection in students. This explicit 'prompting' of critical thinking was described as taking place both inside the classroom, for instance in seminar discussions, as well as outside, through assessment tasks often requiring students to conduct their own research. References were also made to more implicit guidance, for instance through extra-curricular activities taking place on the university campus or elsewhere but where students were informed of them either directly by their tutors or indirectly through a university advertisement. The year abroad also played a role in students' criticality development although, as highlighted in the data, students' mere

presence in the foreign country was often not sufficient. The year abroad assessment task, on the other hand, was described as a tool which helped students transition from the mere observation of difference to a more critical outlook on why certain cultural practices and beliefs in the foreign country appeared so different to them. In interviews some students also made reference to other modules (not included in their German Studies degree programme), which they took if they were studying on a joint-honours degree (double-major in the US) or as free-electives (GE courses in the US).   These courses were often other humanities courses including business, government, French and anthropology. The data did not highlight major differences between factors linked with criticality development in the UK or US universities, nor was there any significant relationship between the degree of integration of the different programmes and students' perceived criticality development.   On the other hand, students who appeared to have achieved higher levels of criticality, generally made reference to the explicit prompting and coaching that took place in their content / upper-level modules.

Concluding remarks

The discussion highlights a number of factors, which were found to help foster criticality development as well as providing evidence in support of Barnett's (1997) theoretical model of criticality, conceptualised in terms of domains and levels.   Yet, in several instances, references to criticality were not clearly situated within a specific domain, but rather provided evidence across more than one domain simultaneously e.g. knowledge and self or self and world. This echoes Yamada's findings (Houghton and Yamada, 2012, p. 154) who, in reference to his study on criticality development in a beginner's Japanese module, also pointed out that the borders between the three domains were 'found to be fuzzy'. The chapter furthermore discusses an emerging new dimension of criticality specific to the foreign language learning context.

The concept of Communicative Criticality and the differences between the language and

content curricula, in the way they support criticality development, emerged from the analysis as important points for discussion. The following chapter discusses the findings relating to the development of intercultural competence.

CHAPTER 7 THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND THE FIFTH SAVOIR

7.1 Evidence of intercultural competence development from the empirical study

This chapter looks at the findings in relation to students' development of intercultural communicative competence reported in chapter 5, with the aim of contextualising them as well as highlighting emerging themes, which make a contribution to existing research. The findings draw primarily from the staff and student interviews, with some interesting results taken from the questionnaire. These are discussed further in this chapter and interpreted according to Byram's framework. Cross-reference is also made against the literature concerning the teaching of foreign languages in the USA and in the UK. A particular focus is then placed on exploring some of the findings, including emerging themes, which may provide a new perspective on factors contributing to students' development of intercultural competence, which extend beyond Byram's (1997) ICC model.

7.2 Students' development of intercultural competence - The National Standards and CEFR

Students' development of intercultural competence was primarily analysed by adopting Byram's (1997) ICC model, yet reference is also made to the National Standards and the CEFR, as aspects of intercultural competence are included in both frameworks. The section first of all reviews Byram's (1997) distinction between tourists and sojourners, then makes cross reference between the findings, the National Standards and the CEFR, followed by a discussion on evidence for students' development of intercultural competence interpreted according to the Five Savoirs.

7.2.1 Students as 'tourists' or 'sojourners'?

Byram's conceptualisation of Intercultural Competence is defined as follows,

Intercultural Competence is the ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognise as being different from our own.

(Guilherme, 2004, p. 297)

Byram distinguishes Intercultural Competence from Intercultural Communicative Competence as the latter 'deliberately maintains a link with recent traditions in foreign language teaching' (Byram, 1997, p.3). The term builds on the concept of Communicative Competence and theory of Communicative Language Teaching. Byram argues that the link makes it explicit that the focus will be on 'the contribution of foreign language teaching (FLT) to the development of the qualities required of a sojourner', which he defines as an individual 'who produces <u>effects on a society</u> which challenge its unquestioned and unconscious beliefs, behaviours and meanings, and whose <u>own</u> beliefs, behaviours and meanings are in turn <u>challenged and expected to change'</u> (ibid. p.1, emphasis added). Byram distinguishes between a 'sojourner' and a 'tourist', where the latter, unlike the former, 'hopes for quite the opposite effect'. He argues that the tourist hopes that first 'what they have travelled to see <u>will not change [...]</u> and second that their own way of living will be enriched but <u>not fundamentally changed</u> by the experience of <u>seeing others'</u> (ibid. emphasis added).

Byram's definition of 'sojourner' places emphasis on the critical aspect of intercultural competence known as the fifth savoir (critical cultural awareness). This factor is particularly important as it draws on the educational dimension of foreign language teaching. The concept of 'sojourner' lends itself well to university students of Modern Languages since in most degree programmes in the UK the year abroad is a requirement and even in the USA it is highly recommended for language majors to spend at least one semester abroad. As has been previously discussed, however, the experience abroad is unlikely to transform students into 'sojourners' on its own account.

It is not enough to send someone into another culture for study or work and expect him or her to return interculturally competent.

(Deardorff, 2009, p.xiii)

From the analysis a number of students appeared to reflect the qualities of a 'sojourner', while others did not seem to be particularly affected by their experience in a foreign country. The figures below provide an example from the student interviews in order to illustrate the different degrees of intercultural competence developed.

Figure 28 - University D - A sojourner - John

Comment on Study Abroad Experience

"It was a good way to see what we've learnt and … when you order food and stuff … you hear what people say and **how they treat you when you're speaking terrible German [...]** there were a few surprised looks, most of them were very nice, once you spoke German they spoke German back to you."

"I'm not from the US – yeah I'm a fluent speaker. I think I'm glad that the German people share what I feel. **I've spoken to people from China for example and their English is not.. they take time to express their opinions.. I'm usually very patient with them, like I try to pick out key words to try to understand what they're saying so ..when I experienced it myself I think about how I do things.**"

The student above has clearly reflected on his personal experience of struggling to communicate in German while abroad and was able to draw a comparison to Chinese speakers of English in the United States. Through this experience the student learnt the importance of appreciating the effort that a foreign language learner makes when trying to communicate in a language different from their own, and furthermore to suspend judgment when communicating with people whose English may not be very good because they are not fluent speakers. The second example illustrates a student who recognised the opportunity to learn more about the target culture through the year abroad experience but admits that she does not feel this contributed to changing her beliefs. The student

therefore doesn't quite fit the 'sojourner' description but can also not be placed at the other extreme, since she acknowledges the value of meeting other international students and communicating with people from the target culture. The student is therefore considered a tourist / sojourner as she seems to meet some of the characteristics of each.

Figure 29 - A tourist / sojourner - University B - Ruby

Comment on Year Abroad Experience

Interviewer – Did you learn more about yourself / you own culture?
Ruby – Yeah I think it would be very hard not to learn things **about** the **local culture** – if you're **with the natives** you're going to learn more. You also have the opportunity to meet other international students.

Interviewer – **Has it challenged any of your beliefs?**
Ruby – **I don't think it has challenged any beliefs,** I'd just say I've learnt a lot and I look at things differently. I've always been very open.

It is interesting to note the student's choice of words when referring to the German people and her learning experience. While the question actually asked her to reflect on whether she learnt more about herself and her own culture, the student talks about learning 'about the local culture'. Learning 'about' would seem to refer to acquisition of knowledge of the target culture rather than describe any critical or reflective thinking, furthermore the word 'natives' seems to create some kind of distance between herself and the people belonging to the target culture. While she states that she doesn't feel the experience challenged any of her beliefs, she does admit she looks at things differently. The third example, in the figure below, describes the student as a tourist since the comments on the year abroad provide no evidence of challenging beliefs belonging to either her own culture or the target culture. The student accepts difference as a fact without challenging even what she dislikes. She also appears to want to hold on to her way of life in England and

expresses a preference for a custom she is used to over the one she experienced in Germany.

Figure 30 - A tourist - University A - Debbie

Comment on the Year Abroad

I **noticed a difference** straight away, like I took my daughter on my year abroad, if I was **with the pram in Germany nobody would let me get on the lift,** everyone would go first and I would have to wait, **whereas in England… it's a different kind of courtesy,** but **I just accepted that,** that's how it is really and that is that.

I could tell that **my way of parenting** was very laid back compared **to the German way.** If I was out at 9pm with my child there would be a slight disapproval.
I struggled also with the fact that mothers in Germany don't tend to work for the first few years after they've had a child so it was difficult to find childcare and work while I was there.

The first quote describes her disappointment when tying to get on a lift with her pram. Instead of questioning the reasons behind the different cultural behaviour, she appears to be somewhat offended by it. She does not show evidence of being able to suspend judgment; in fact she has drawn a conclusion about German courtesy towards mothers with a pram on the basis of one incident. She then mentions that the Germans may have viewed her parenting style as 'very laid back' and also mentioned that she struggled to find childcare. As with the previous examples, these are also differences she noticed, which she disliked but did not question or challenge. The fact that some Modern Language degree students, who have spent a year or at least a semester studying abroad, are not able to critically reflect on what they observe and recognise as different, is concerning. Byram's terms of 'sojourner' and 'tourist' are very helpful here as they effectively describe the different attitudes that individuals who are intercultural or not so intercultural may display when interacting with people from the foreign culture or relating their experience in the foreign country.

7.2.2 Intercultural competence in the National Standards - examples of goal areas from student interviews: Universities C and D (USA)

Particularly relevant to the American context is also the contribution of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards, 2006). The Standards were developed in the late 1990s by foreign language educators as part of a national effort to improve educational outcomes. The Standards offer a framework for foreign language learning in the United States, which is comparable for the CEFR in Europe, while maintaining its differences in educational outcomes. The framework, however, has primarily informed teaching practice at K-12 (see Bartz and Singer, 1996; Phillips, 1999), while in Higher Education the applicability of the framework is questioned (Magnan et al., 2014).

The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century project, initially written in 1996 and subsequently revised in 1999 and 2006, was aimed primarily at setting educational goals for all foreign language students.

> [It] is a policy document that sets goals for all students to develop competence in foreign languages and cultures, and through reflection, to gain both insight into their own languages and cultures and a greater awareness of self.
>
> (National Standards, 2006, emphasis added).

When compared to Byram's conceptualisation of the sojourner discussed above, certain similar attributes are inevitably recognisable. Both make reference to the comparative aspect and the ability to gain insight into not only the foreign language and culture but also one's own. As will become clear in the discussion of the findings, evidence for this particular aspect of intercultural competence was found in only a portion of students, while a general 'intercultural awareness' or knowledge of the foreign culture was commonly referred to in interviews.

The National Standards (2006) include five domains or goal areas, these are known as the five C's.

- · Communication

- · Cultures

- · Connections

- · Comparisons

- · Communities

The goals are interrelated and suggest an integrated language learning approach (Magnan et al., 2014). The goal areas are discussed in greater detail in chapter three.

From the staff and student interviews, there was evidence to suggest that students were brought to reflect upon making comparisons between the American and foreign cultures and through these comparisons develop a greater understanding of both cultures and communities. There seemed to be a more explicit effort to draw comparisons in the American universities, which may be linked to the contribution of the National Standards as well as individual staff members' views on the relationship between language and culture.

Mary, of university D, gives an example of how Comparisons were included in one of her German language courses.

> [...] we read a world war 2 play and then we also talked about American soldiers coming back
> to the US but that was all in German.   It was more like analysis of the play and see how that
> relates to the culture here and what is happening right now.

The example reflects the standard 4.2 from the National Standards (2006) framework, which states as follows,

Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

(National Standards, 2006, p. 4)

There was also evidence that the standard of Communities was effectively developed.

JFK, of university C, talked about reading a speech written in German, which he had to prepare for a class project, to members of the German club in his hometown. He also described how German became the lingua franca when he and classmates were invited to a party at his professor's house.

(the professor) invited us to her house for a meal and we spoke German.

The examples given, as well as the student's own choice to speak to the interviewer in German before the interview commenced, is evidence of the student's willingness to employ the target language beyond the classroom setting. The National Standards (2006) describe this goal in Standards 5.1 and 5.2.

Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.

(National Standards, 2006, p. 4)

In interviews students also made reference to the standard of Connections. Standard 3.2 is particularly relevant here as it refers to recognising points of view only available through the foreign language. Mary, of University D, emphasises the importance of accessing text in the original language and argues that something is lost when reading texts in translation.

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I feel like a lot of times when I read something in German and then I read the translated version there is a big difference. You know it looses the whole feel of the play.

Standard 3.2 highlights the importance of accessing knowledge through the foreign language itself, rather than reading about the foreign culture / history / literature in translation.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

(National Standards, 2006, p.4)

There was also evidence that the Standard of Cultures was effectively developed throughout the foreign language programme. Alice, of university C, provides an example of how the Business German Culture module helped her reflect on how history may have influenced today's business culture in both the US and Germany.

In Business German culture it was a lot about starting with the historical perspective and building up to the current day to see how the perspectives today relate back to the historical process and how the history might be different from the American history, which would give us a different perspective on how the business culture functions today.

The example relates to Standard 2.2 as the student describes how studying German history helped her better understand the different perspectives on business culture observable in the US and Germany.

Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

(National Standards, 2006, p. 4)

While the National Standards stress the importance of goals areas beyond those of communication, in fact Communication is only one of the five C's, the emphasis on the critical dimension of foreign language education is not explicitly stated. However, as Guilherme (2002) argues, because the document implies that students become 'skilled observers of cultures', the approach implied by the authors may be considered critical.

> [...] the authors develop a whole approach to culture which may be considered critical because it implies that students should 'expect differences', 'become skilled observers and analysts of other cultures', learn 'how to put them into perspective within the cultural framework of the other language', develop an 'insider's perspective', and 'explore the process of stereotyping and the role stereotypes play in forming and sustaining prejudice'
>
> (National Standards, 1999, pp. 44-5, cited in Guilherme, 2002, p.151)

As a reference document it defines the experience of learning a foreign language as much more than the acquisition of communicative competence. Magnan et al. (2014) outline some of the changes, which took place in foreign language teaching as a result of the publication of the Standards.

> Working from the perception of the interrelationship of language and culture in the Standards, members of the profession began to lighten the instructional focus on language alone, making space to define learning goals more in terms of content. A decade after the second edition of the Standards, Phillips (2009) wrote: "For the first time in foreign language instruction, the Standards define goals in terms that incorporate content as a substantial outcome rather than leaving content as incidental to linguistic ones" (p.29).
>
> (Magnan et al., 2014, p.24)

The CEFR, informing language learning in Europe, also makes reference to the language and culture relationship and is discussed in the next section with reference to the findings. The section explores students' references to the 'savoirs', as specified in the CEFR

document, and examines some of the issues with the existing framework regarding the critical dimension of intercultural competence.

7.2.3 Intercultural Competence in the CEFR - Language modules and the place of critical cultural awareness - Universities A and B (UK)

Similar to the National Standards document guiding language learning in the USA, The Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 1996) consists of a reference document with the aim of guiding language teaching, learning and assessment. The document, as Guilherme (2002) points out, states that its 'general aim is to overcome linguistic barriers' (p.146). While communicative competence only constitutes one of the five goal areas in the National Standards framework, the CEFR 'puts its main focus on 'communicative language competences', that encompass 'linguistic competences', 'sociolinguistic competence', and 'pragmatic competences' (4.7.2 cited in Guilherme, 2002, p.146). The competences mentioned in the CEFR saw contributions from Byram's earlier work (see Byram, 1994). Yet, although the terminology of Byram's 'savoirs' was adopted in the CEFR, 'there is no reference to savoir s'engager, which is the crucial educational dimension of intercultural competence' (Byram, 2009, p.326). The general competencies mentioned in the CEFR therefore refer to 1. 'declarative knowledge (savoir)', 2. 'skills and know-how (savoir-faire)', 3. 'existential competence (savoir être)' and 4. 'ability to learn (savoir apprendre) (Council of Europe, 2001, 5.1.1 - 5.1.4, pp. 101-106). The fifth savoir, mentioned in Byram (1997) in his model for Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) is not mentioned in the CEFR framework, hence no reference is made to critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager).

Culture appears to occupy a secondary role compared to linguistic proficiency and is merely a component of the 'general competences'.

In short, it is implied in this document that the cultural component and the development of intercultural competence are part of 'general competences', a background knowledge that the language user / learner is expected to possess / acquire but that may not be materialised in the foreign language classroom. As far as the critical dimension of foreign language is concerned, it is <u>neither explicitly nor implicitly included in the document,</u> nor is it hindered or valorised.

(Guilherme, 2002, p. 149)

The CEFR in British universities is generally adopted as a guideline for language teaching and has no impact on the culture / content modules of the curriculum. In some institutions the CEFR informs assessment particularly in Institution-Wide Language Programmes (IWLP) or Languages for All modules. While the study focused on finalists students of German, and hence did not explore the IWLP provision nor did it evaluate beginners language modules, the fact that the CEFR framework places a great emphasis on developing linguistic proficiency and communicative competence may explain some of the student remarks raised in interviews on the teaching and assessment activities they experienced in language modules. Nicola, of University C, referred to the difference in content between the language and content modules and described the latter as 'more academic'.

(in content modules) the content is more of the typical academic – you do things that you may not expect on a language degree – the language modules are very much centred on grammar, producing texts.

The focus on grammar and writing 'production of texts' reflects the Council of Europe's statement regarding one of the purposes of the CEFR document, which is to facilitate the acquisition of foreign languages for the purpose of communication.

The Common European Framework) describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to <u>use a language for communication</u> and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively.

(Council of Europe, 2001, p.1)

Mary, also of University C, provides a very good description of the different role that linguistic competence played in both language and content modules. Once again the role of content appears to be marginal in the language modules as linguistic and communicative competence takes precedence over 'what' is being written or spoken. Coincidentally, the student also makes reference to implications for criticality.

> Mary - I think it's <u>critical to a certain extent</u> with the language modules. This is probably very subjective but my problem with the language modules in general is that they tend to be very ..I think the German word oberflächlich is quite good...they are kind of <u>superficial</u>, which I totally understand because it's a hard thing to balance. <u>If your aim is to teach how to write good German</u> … I don't know… I think with the content modules there was constant challenge of having to go away and research it yourself and you're doing it… I guess it's more directed in terms of what you're looking at..
>
> Researcher – Would you say that there was a greater focus on <u>how your wrote </u>rather than the content of <u>what</u> you were writing?
>
> Mary - Oh yeah 100%. So our teacher stressed … and <u>I think they're right,</u> because that's <u>what that part of the course is about, don't stress too much on the content of what you're writing because what we're wanting to see is good written German</u>… which…yeah.. I mean it's quite nice this year because I feel that <u>if you're good at writing</u> and good at having interesting ideas, they do actually recognise that.
>
> But at the same time the <u>people who just want to learn the language ... it's good that they can be recognised for that.</u>

Interestingly Mary offers an explanation, from her perspective, of why language modules may have to prioritise the 'how' over the 'what' when assessing language production. She

argues that 'it's a hard thing to balance' but at the same time expresses appreciation for having her 'interesting ideas' recognised in the final year. The strong focus on accuracy of written and spoken language production would appear to play a central role on 'distracting' both students and language tutors from exploring opportunities for developing a critical dimension of language teaching within the context of degree level language modules, resulting in a teaching of content / culture that remains, as Mary describes it, 'oberflächlich' (superficial).

The implications of the findings above are further discussed in chapter 8 as they identify one among other possible factors, which could adversely affect the development of criticality and a critical dimension of intercultural competence within language modules. The following section explores students' development of intercultural competence, drawn from staff and student interviews, according to Byram's ICC model. Further emphasis is then placed on the critical dimension, the fifth savoir.

7.3 Byram's framework for intercultural competence - what savoirs are developed and how?

The following section discusses the findings drawn from staff and student interviews in relation to the way they provide evidence in support of Byram's ICC model. Particular focus is placed on *savoir s'engager,* the educational dimension of language learning. The examples cited in the discussion are not comprehensive but rather serve to illustrate the institutions' approaches to the development of intercultural competence and students' competence across the ICC framework. Byram et al. (2001) offers a more detailed description of the components of intercultural competence, which were helpful when coding the data, and are therefore adopted in the discussion below.

7.3.1 Savoir être

Byram et al. (2001) defines savoir être as attitudes of 'curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own' (p.5, emphasis added).

There was evidence across all four universities that students had developed competence, at least to an extent, in this particular area.

Zak, a joint-honours (Business and German) student at University A, talked about the importance of developing a 'polycentric approach' towards other cultures, a concept which was discussed in one of his business modules but which he could see relevant also to his experience as a student of German.

> This polycentric approach to people from different cultures in the world [...] just to be open minded and be able to deal with people <u>from their point of view</u>. I feel that that's what people are missing from our society particularly.

The student refers, to an extent, to the attitudes of 'openness' and 'readiness to suspend disbelief'. Byram (2001) explains that these intercultural attitudes imply a student's ability to do the following:

> a willingness to relativise one's own values, beliefs and behaviours, not to assume they are the only possible and naturally correct ones, and to be able to <u>see how they might look from the perspective of an outsider</u> who has a different set of values, beliefs and behaviours. This can be called the ability to 'decentre'.
>
> (p.5, emphasis added)

While the student refers to a concept drawn from a business context, his understanding of the polycentric approach, to which he makes reference, shows evidence of having developed the ability to distance himself from his own values and beliefs and recognise the importance of taking an outsider's perspective. Rebecca, also from University A, when asked about the role her university experience played in developing her intercultural competence, commented as follow,

> I'm a lot more open, I think now I see things from other people's point of view and my own
> point of view. I don't really criticise them.

While Rebecca did not provide an example in support of her statement, the comment provides some evidence for savoir être. Her intercultural attitudes refer both to the ability to 'suspend disbelief' about other cultures as well as the attitude of 'openness' and ability to see things from 'the perspective of an outsider' (Byram et al., 2001, p.5). A clearer example for savoir être emerged from University D. John described his experience of speaking German as a foreigner while studying in Germany and explained how through this struggle he was able to better understand how Chinese speakers of English may feel in the USA.

> I've spoken to people from China for example and their English is not.. they take time to
> express their opinions.. I'm usually very patient with them, like I try to pick out key words to
> try to understand what they're saying so ..<u>when I experienced it myself I think about how I do
> things.</u>

The reference above provides a good example of how a student was able to 'see how things might look from the perspective of an outsider' (Byram, 2001, p.5). It is through learning how challenging it was to express himself in a foreign language that John developed a greater understanding for what foreign speaker of English may experience in his home country.

7.3.2 Savoirs

The term Savoirs refers to the knowledge area of intercultural competence. Byram (2001) describes the skill as follows,

> Knowledge (savoirs): of social groups and their <u>products and practices</u> in <u>one's own</u> and in
> <u>one's interlocutor's country</u>, and of the general processes of societal and individual <u>interaction</u>.
>
> (p.6, emphasis added)

Several examples drawn from the interview study provided evidence in this area of intercultural competence. Often reference was made to knowledge of the target country, which may have been acquired in either a language or content module or on the year abroad. The example below is taken from a student at University B, Mary, who describes her intercultural encounters while in Germany.

> When I was away, a lot of us have agreed that, <u>we hadn't thought about</u> the fact that when you're there one of the things that happens is that you actually <u>meet people from all over the world</u>, you make friends with the people who are new. I made friends from Russia and from Mexico. <u>You end up having quite a lot of conversations about their traditions and their religions,</u> all sorts of different things. It helps you <u>understand more where they're coming from.</u> It just helps to remind you that <u>your culture is not the only culture.</u>

As a result of the year abroad, Mary learnt about 'the process of societal and individual interaction' not only with people from Germany but also people from other countries. Through these interactions she learnt something about their 'traditions' and 'religions' and as a result developed a greater awareness of her own perspective.

Mary points out that meeting people from other cultures was something that she, and possibly other fellow students, had not thought about before embarking on the year abroad. This could also be interpreted as an example for savoir apprendre / faire.

7.3.3 Savoir apprendre/faire

Savoir apprendre/faire refers to the skills of discovery and interaction. Byram (2001, p.6) defines the skill as follows,

> <u>Skills of discovery and interaction (savoir apprendre/faire):</u> ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

In the reference above, Mary, of University B, points out that she hadn't thought about meeting people from different cultures prior to embarking on her year abroad. She may have expected to meet Germans but perhaps not people from Mexico or Russia. Her experience and successful communication with the international students can therefore be described as a skill of discovery and interaction.

7.3.4 Savoir comprendre

Savoir comprendre refers to the ability to understand events from other cultures and relate them to the familiar. Byram (2001) defines savoir comprendre as follows,

> Skills of interpreting and relating (savoir comprendre): ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.
>
> (p.6, emphasis added)

Because of its focus on comparisons, references which could be coded as savoir comprendre are also relevant to the discussion on the National Standards, previously discussed in this chapter. Several examples for savoir comprendre emerged from the US interviews and arguably the emphasis placed by the National Standards on Comparisons (one of the five C's) may be one of the factors for the increased focus on a comparative approach towards the exploration of culture in foreign language teaching. The German language coordinator at University D provided an excellent example of the comparative nature of her teaching style in her content-based language classes.

> German [module code], that's based on a play Draussen vor der Tür, which is a post-war German play that deals pretty much with post-traumatic stress disorder that the German soldiers came with ... at home ... and I'm trying to connect it with the problems of veterans that we have right now in the United States.

One of the students interviewed, also at University D, similarly made reference to the play

and how the lecturer drew a comparison to the contemporary difficulties that American soldiers face when returning home.

MARIA -   So we read a world war 2 play and then we also talked about American soldiers coming back to the US but that was all in German.   It was more like analysis of the play and see how that relates to the culture here and what is happening right now.

[…]

Researcher- And did that help you understand – giving an American perspective, did that help you understand what was going on in the text?

MARIA – Yeah I think they both played off of each other, helped flush the other one out, because the play gave an account of one single person so it was more an emotional connection that you could feel and then we watched a documentary that was more about a lot of different soldiers, so it was kind of impersonal so you could kind of connect the emotions from the play to like the impersonal account of these many people. – to see ... [...] they're probably feeling the same kind of things that the person in the play is feeling.

Comparisons also emerged from staff interviews at University C, also in the USA. Explicit examples were given to students in order to encourage them to better understand the content being taught through a reflective comparison with similar events / scenarios from their own country / culture.   To avoid repetition, the reference is mentioned in connection to evidence for how institutional programmes supported students' development of critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager), since comparisons arguably play a key role in this area of ICC development.

Byram (2001) emphasises the importance of the skills of comparing, interpreting and relating described in savoir comprendre, and argues that 'by putting ideas, events, documents side by side and seeing how each might look from the other perspective, intercultural speakers / mediators can see how people might misunderstand what is said, written or done by someone with a different social identity' (p.6).   The comparative

approach described by staff interviewed at both university D and C also appeared to make the content more relevant and accessible. Yet, while the comparative nature of some of the teaching approaches described above appear to guide students towards a reflection on the different histories and cultures, it would appear that while the activity may be reflective it is not yet critical. In order for the learning experience to become critical students need to be engaged in a critical evaluation of the practices and products in their own and the foreign culture. Byram describes this ability as Critical Cultural Awareness.

7.3.5 Critical Cultural Awareness - The fifth savoir

While the first four savoirs play an important role in the development of intercultural competence, it is the critical dimension that is most relevant here and hence it will be discussed in greater depth. Byram (2001) defines the fifth savoir as follows,

> Critical cultural awareness (savoir s'engager): an ability to <u>evaluate, critically</u> and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in <u>one's own and other cultures and countries</u> (p.7, emphasis added).

The critical dimension is of particular interest firstly because it refers to the educational purpose of language teaching and secondly, relevant to this particular study, because it is also relevant to the discussion in chapter 6 on criticality development in students of Modern Languages. Byram (2008) argues that 'the learner who has critical cultural awareness can reflect critically on their own ideology as seen from the perspective of others' (p.179).

While savoir comprendre already includes 'comparisons with otherness' which, as Byram (2008) argues, 'is fundamental to foreign language education' (p.181) it does not require the learner to question and critically evaluate the practices and perspectives which are being compared and hence arguably engages the learner on a different intellectual level. Savoir s'engager requires the learner to go beyond understanding his or her own culture by

comparing it to the foreign, it requires the learner to reconsider his or her own beliefs and perspectives and analyse how they may have been influenced and similarly explore how perspectives, practices and products of the target culture may have been influenced by factors such as history, religion or politics. Alred et al. (2003) argue that 'a pedagogy of intercultural experience must combine opportunities and <u>provocations</u> and <u>support to look inside</u> as well as outside' (p.25, emphasis added). Byram (2003) argues that foreign language learners need to develop a 'critical understanding of others' and 'ourselves' and hence the challenge for foreign language educators is 'to promote an ability to change perspective and relativise what is taken for granted' (p.73).

> What has been seen largely as a training in skills is in fact inevitably concerned with values and <u>critical understanding of others, ourselves and how we interact together</u> as individuals and groups. <u>Language teachers</u> of all kinds are <u>under-prepared for this task</u> because so much emphasis has been placed on technical matters of selection of content, theory of learning, and options for 'delivery' of teaching through old and new technologies [...] but the challenge for language educators is <u>above all to educate, to promote an ability to change perspective and to relativize what is taken for granted.</u> (Byram, 2003, p.73)

Byram (2003) argues that language teacher are 'under-prepared' for the task of promoting a 'critical understanding of others'. Indeed the data supports, to an extent, this opinion as fewer examples of critical cultural awareness emerged from the analysis compared to references to the other savoirs. Some faculty members interviewed also suggested that it is difficult to evaluate to what extent students had developed critical cultural awareness as evidence of such development may have taken place outside the university context. However, while the universities, which took part in the study were very diverse, some evidence of critical cultural awareness emerged from all four programmes. Zak, of University A, referred in particular to the contribution of content modules to his development of critical cultural awareness. He described how learning about how history

and religion may influence people's views allowed him to better understand failures in intercultural communication. He also highlights the importance of understanding that there are multiple ways of viewing the world and demonstrates the ability to 'suspend disbelief' (savoir être) as well as the 'ability to evaluate perspectives' from a different context.

> The modern women writers module made me think about social conditioning and how a state of history, how religion plays a part in brining somebody up into the world and the views they form. You've got to look at this from a Russian person's point of view. If you're not exposed to international media as much – because of this propaganda. Religion plays such a vital role in these people's lives, you're not going to be able to understand ... effectively communicate with somebody (if you say) "why are you doing this? How the hell can you have such a point of view? It's just outrageous!" It's not outrageous, it's from a different background, there are different ways of seeing things. The different ways of seeing things is certainly something that I've taken on ... and been able to develop through the programme.

Zak also described how his university experienced transformed his political views. This reference has also been previously discussed in Chapter 6 in the context of criticality development, however, as critical cultural awareness also places an emphasis on the critical evaluation of one's own practices and products, it is repeated here.

> In the terrorism module, there was one instance where we had to analyse newspaper articles written in the 70s and I found it intriguing, just overwhelming how the media in the 70s in Germany played such a fundamental role in the way people understood and perceived things and how they shaped the link between the media and the state. [...] Because of that I began to question how have the values I've been given, the way I think, what routes do they have? Who has influenced that? My parents obviously and their views, the media we read, I started to question more the role the media has in changing people's views. And I think the things on gender really, this year, there was another culture module I did on modern women writers and that really changed my view on the need for change when it comes to gender and how the focus

has been very patriarchal and male dominated. And, <u>as a man, it's really had an effect on me.</u>
<u>Because</u> also I came from a village … people are very conservative..my mum and dad are very
conservative but I've come to university <u>I've become more liberal in the way I think and I</u>
<u>wouldn't align myself with conservative politics anymore because of what I've experienced at</u>
<u>university.</u>

The example describes the student's developing intercultural competence on many levels.
Firstly he makes reference to knowledge (savoirs) of the products, in this case newspaper
articles printed in Germany in the 1970's; he then explains how the critical evaluation of
these documents brought him to reflect on the role the media played in influencing beliefs,
which brought him to critically reflect upon his own culture and beliefs and explore what
factors may have influenced them. This is where the students shows evidence of having
developed critical cultural awareness because his approach towards evaluating 'otherness'
has brought him to question not only 'practices, perspectives and products' of the foreign
culture, but also those which he regards as his own. It can be regarded as critical because
the learning experience 'provoked', as mentioned above in Alred at al. (2003), the student
to question accepted beliefs. The Language Coordinator at University B also provided an
excellent example of how a topic adopted in a language module brought students to reflect
on the situation of Turkish guest workers (Gastarbeiter) in Germany. The difficulties in
communicating experienced by the Gastarbeiter were something students could relate to
themselves, since they knew how challenging it was to try to express themselves in a
foreign language.

There is one particular film that we watched and <u>it made students reflect from a different</u>
<u>perspective</u> and it was about multiculturalism, integration of Turkish guest workers
"Gastarbeiter" [...] it was [...] quite interesting because <u>the actual idea of a language barrier</u>
played a large role in this film and <u>it was something the students could relate to themselves</u> -
but again looking at it from a slightly different perspective – and <u>how people here who come</u>

from different backgrounds are perceived and also to think about how they may be perceived when they then go to different countries.

The reference first describes the development of savoir comprendre as students are brought to reflect upon an event (or a scenario - in this case the idea of a language barrier) from another culture and relate it to their own experience. The lecturer then explains how through this comparison students were brought to reflect upon a similar situation taking place in their own country (the language barrier foreigners may experience in the UK) and furthermore reflect upon how they may be perceived abroad. The discussion would appear to have critically engaged students to reflect on 'otherness' on a deeper level. What the lecturer describes is a good example of how a film (cultural document) has been effectively explored in a discussion in order to foster students' development of critical cultural awareness. The evaluation in fact includes perspectives, practices and products in both the foreign and own culture. Immigration has always remained a subject, which has resulted in conflicting political views (perspectives), which often results in decision-making such as immigration laws concerning citizenship and rights given to those who are not citizens but permanent residents (practices) and lastly how these conflicting viewpoints and events are represented in cultural products such as texts and media (products). The example given also illustrates how the discussion has brought student to reflect upon how they may be viewed as 'the foreigners', hence 'the other'. This is a very important point as it describes a very important characteristic required of what Byram (1997) terms 'the sojourner' which surprisingly is not so clearly described in the ICC model composed of the five savoirs. The aspect of intercultural competence which refers to the learner recognising himself or herself as 'the foreign' or 'the other' among people of the target culture is hence discussed in further depth in section 7.8.1 Otherness and third spaces, as the ICC model does not appear to effectively highlight the importance of this particular quality of the intercultural speaker. While the language coordinator provides a

very good example of how the language curriculum made an effort to foster the development of critical cultural awareness, students did not make reference to this area of intercultural competence in interviews. Similarly the Head of German also felt that students did not necessarily show evidence of having developed a critical perspective on otherness. This is also further discussed in section 7.8.1. At university C, the Head of German described how the comparative approach is applied in the teaching of upper-level courses. While there may not be a direct link between a comparative teaching approach and development of critical cultural awareness, as is evident from some of the student interviews, it would appear to direct students towards a more reflective and evaluative perspective on the topics of discussion or texts studied. In reference to an upper-level content module she commented as follows,

> There are three main topics, the first deals with presence of the past – Nazi Germany, with special focus on resistance group and we call it German Zivilcourage and we try to make connections ultimately also to student's own lives and to contemporary life in the contemporary US, the world of Zivilcourage here in their lives.

The comparative nature of the approach may contribute first of all to the development of savoir comprendre, but could also be a 'first step' towards the development of savoir s'engager. JFK from university C commented that one of his upper-level German modules brought him to reflect upon what he would have experienced if he were East German.

> East Germany has a lot of the same problems […] that we do, you think about both sides and how you fit in where. And what happens when you place yourself in that society, what would I be like if I were East German, what would life be like?

Jennifer, also from university C, described how her year abroad, as well as her German studies modules, helped her better understand not only certain practices that her German father had, but also why people in Germany may have different perspectives on politics.

> Jennifer – I now understand why my dad does certain things, like we always had house-shoes, like slippers. Like Americans don't have house-shoes, but we always had house shoes. And one of my German friends, when I visited, asked me to take off my shoes and wear house-shoes. And also environmental consciousness – the Germans care more about the environment – <u>I've kind of swung in that direction,</u> <u>being a bit critical about America</u>.
>
> Researcher – Has it made you question previous beliefs?
>
> Jennifer – Yeah I had a lot of beliefs about how the EU should run, now I understand more where the discrepancy lies.
>
> Researcher– In a situation where you would have a different opinion from a German person, do you feel you are now able to discuss a topic without offending their views?
>
> Jennifer – I just realised that you are not going to be able to have a productive conversation with a German person ... that unions are bad or with an American ... that unions are good.

The example above provides good evidence for savoir s'engager.   Jennifer explains how through her observation of the value Germans place on environmental issues she has become more critical about her own country. The definition of savoir s'engager in fact refers to the ability to 'evaluate critically' practices in both the foreign and one's own country. The second example illustrates her understanding that for historical, cultural or political reasons, people from different nation countries may have even opposing viewpoints on an issue.   Evidence of critical cultural awareness also emerged from interviews conducted at university D.   The Language Coordinator at University D provided an excellent example of how the development of the critical dimension of intercultural competence was fostered in some of her content-based language modules. Once again, the discussion began with a comparison (savoir comprendre) but appears to have brought learners to a more critical reflection. The lecturer made reference to a

German module based on the play Draussen vor der Tür, previously cited in 7.3.4 and described students' developing critical engagement as follows:

> I think what makes it especially interesting for students and what I saw ..really a lot of engagement when they start to understand issues in their own county by discussing the same issues in another country.

What the lecturer describes is the students' developing critical cultural awareness. Through this comparative approach students could relate to the post-traumatic stress disorder described in the play. As with university C there were references, which emerged from the interview study, that appeared to describe an aspect of the development of intercultural competence but did not quite fit into any of the savoirs as formulated in Byram (1997). These are discussed in the following sections.

7.4 The invaluable contribution of content modules for the development of critical cultural awareness

The issues surrounding the separation of language and content in Higher Education have been discussed in detail throughout the thesis particularly in relation to its implications for students' exposure to the target language and opportunities to use the target language in a wider range of contexts. Previous studies and current findings of this investigation however, have also highlighted the invaluable role that content modules play in fostering students' development of intercultural competence. The findings are similar to those discussed in chapter 6 in relation to criticality development. In fact staff and students often referred to both the development of criticality and intercultural competence when discussing the educational experience of content modules. Content modules, or upper-level modules in the US, are generally more academic in nature compared to language modules or lower-level language modules in the US. The increased academic focus has a number of implications. Firstly it requires students to work independently and conduct

their own research. It also often provides opportunities to explore texts and media from a more critical perspective. The exploration of topics and themes linked to texts, which may be literary or cultural, may involve students in reflective discussions and debates. The nature of the assessments in these kinds of modules also tends to require a high intellectual challenge and encourages students to develop critical arguments where more than one perspective or interpretation on a particular issue or opinion is presented and supported by references. It is thought that the academic nature of these modules may be one of the most influential factors in fostering a development of intercultural competence in students, which is more sophisticated and critical. The approach moves away from merely learning 'about' culture and appears to coach students towards 'evaluation' of culture, where students are expected to question beliefs and practices rather than simply accept the fact that these may be different in foreign countries.   Aside from the academic nature, another common characteristic of content modules is their focus on text. Gonçalves Matos (2012) talks about literary texts in particular as 'doors' to intercultural dialogue. She notes that several authors have previously acknowledged the role books can play in developing intercultural understanding and names a few: 'Bredella (1996a, b, c; 2000; 2004); Delanoy (1993; 2005; Bredella and Delanoy 1996); Kramsch (2000a; 2003); Burwitz-Meltzer (2001); Rogers and Soter (1997)' (in Gonçalves Matos, 2012, p.1). She argues that while these authors come from different backgrounds, they similarly highlight 'how literature may help develop an essential feature of the intercultural personality: the ability to <u>decentre and take up the perspectives of the other</u>, <u>to see the world from another place</u>' (ibid. p.2, emphasis added). The ability to see things from the perspective of the other or from a 'third place' would appear to be one of the most important qualities of intercultural competence and, arguably, the one which is most often least developed. Gonçalves Matos (2012) also refers to how reading may facilitate 'critical reflection'.   She argues that,

> [...] to adopt a different point of view other than one's own, facilitates de-centring; interpreting

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is another crucial and shared procedure. Furthermore, <u>reading also stimulates (critical) reflection and self-awareness</u>, uncovering and clarifying unconscious areas both at the individual and societal level.

(Gonçalves Matos, 2012, p. 11, emphasis added)

Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) also highlight the importance of reading in the development of intercultural competence. They argue that being intercultural 'implies the engagement of the imagination' (p.138). They describe the experiences of the reader as follows,

It represents journeys into imaginary worlds and in the company of the imagination of others, past and present. It is a journey whose consequences and impacts will both continue and parallel the real-life journeys of actually 'being there' […]. Literature, far from being marginalised as a 'useless ornament', <u>should be central to learning to be intercultural</u>.

(Phipps and Gonzalez, 2004, p. 138, emphasis added)

Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) emphasise the importance of literature in Modern Languages for the development of intercultural competence, yet in many universities the 'content' areas of the curriculum only include literature as one of the possible stands within the larger 'area studies' context. In some university programmes in fact, students may complete a single or joint honours degree in Modern Languages without taking any literature modules. Coincidentally students who took literature-based content modules appeared to make more frequent reference to how the content and teaching approach adopted appeared to facilitate their development of intercultural competence. Zak from University A acknowledges the importance of being able to interpret knowledge and events from different perspectives.

The different ways of seeing things is certainly something that I've taken on and been able to develop through the programme.

When asked whether the content or language components of the degree played a more significant role in his development of intercultural competence, he replied 'content, the intellectual side definitely'.   Staff interviews across the universities similarly appeared to highlight content modules as one of the areas of the curriculum where students would be "coached" to develop a more critical approach towards knowledge. The Head of German described how she noticed the effect of students' engagement with theory on their critical thinking.

> What [University B] does is that it encourages engaging with theory as well and clearly theory sort of broadens your horizons straight away and it's very interesting to see the actual interaction between theory and the actual primary text because they start seeing things which they haven't seen before and vice versa, they start questioning theory.

The Head of German also felt that the Year Abroad did not play as much of an active role in fostering the development of intercultural competence, particularly the critical dimension, as much as the university's modules. She felt students needed more explicit guidance in order to develop a more critical and reflective perspective on their approach towards evaluating beliefs and practices of different cultures.

> I think this is more something that happens in our modules rather then doing it independently, it's rather when you start talking about things ... and they are guided through certain texts ... that you make them think, then they engage with it.

Interestingly, she refers to "texts" as well as the important role of the discussion, which "makes them think". The reference above describes in detail the steps that seem to best foster the development of a more critical perspective towards intercultural learning. The Head of German at University D similarly felt that in terms of developing a more sophisticated understanding of culture, upper-level modules adopted a more critical

approach, compared to lower-level language courses.

> I would say that the <u>lower-level language courses do not present German culture in any very critical way</u>. Here is how we do things, it's very different learn this first and they do, which makes them able to criticise their own culture. Certainly some of the <u>upper-division courses</u>, such as the holocaust course, <u>they've got to be heavily critical.</u>

The following section discusses the recommendations made in the MLA (2007) report for foreign languages in the United States in relation to the findings of this study. As the report specifically advocates for graduates with 'translingual and transcultural competence', the section explores whether evidence of these attributes emerged in the staff and student interviews.

7.5 The development of intercultural competence in American universities - addressing the recommendations of the MLA (2007) report for graduates with translingual and transcultural competence

The MLA (2007) report highlights some of the central issues in US collegiate foreign language study, which were found to play a significant role in interpreting the findings drawn from the US interview data. The report highlights certain objectives for language graduates such as the 'need to be able to see the world through the eyes of others' (MLA, 2007, p.2) and argues that 'the language major should be structured to produce a specific outcome: educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence' (p.4). The report also exposes some of the issues with the hierarchical structures present in American universities particularly in relation to faculty members teaching upper-level content courses and those teaching lower-level language. This is an issue that has also been recognised as problematic in British universities (see Worton, 2009 in section 7.6). The MLA (2007) report described the two-tiered structure as a 'narrow model' and argues

that this configuration 'defines both the curriculum and the governance structure of language departments' creating a 'division' between the language and literature curriculum. The report further highlights the implications of this division on the ability of foreign language instructors to have their say in the educational mission of their department.

The findings confirm the issues outlined in the MLA report and, although there was some evidence of sharing best practice and communication taking place between language and content / literature faculty members at both of the universities under study, this was greater at university C where the German curriculum had been fully re-designed with the aim of addressing the issue of a two-tiered structure. At University D, where a two-tiered structure was observable, while there were numerous examples of excellent teaching practice, upper-level content based language courses, for instance were taught by a single faculty member. This is problematic for a number of reasons: firstly, should the faculty member leave the department, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to ensure the next set of students are provided with the same educational experience; secondly, it is unlikely that this faculty member's extraordinary work will influence the teaching practice of colleagues in the department or even be fully recognised. The language coordinator at university D acknowledged the fact that while the German department did offer upper-level content modules taught and assessed in German in which students were coached towards a critical exploration of both language and culture, she was the only member of staff teaching these courses.

> Researcher - Could you describe your personal view on the two-tiered structure in relation what the MLA report states: "a two-tiered structure impedes a unified curriculum". Have you observed this to be the case in your institution?

LC – You know, it doesn't for me. We have lots of faculty leaving so I'm pretty much <u>the only</u> <u>person doing upper-division language courses.</u> It's probably not good for the department, there should be other people doing this. It's going to happen soon.

While the language coordinator did not feel that the two-tiered structure constituted a significant issue in the department, she did acknowledge the fact that having more faculty members involved in upper-level language courses would be beneficial. It should be pointed out here that at the time the data collection took place (April 2015), the German department at university D was undergoing a curricular transition, hence the number of staff members involved in both content and language teaching may have significantly changed. The Head of German also commented on the two-tiered structure observable at the university. He described the department as an "unusual situation" because, unlike what the MLA report describes, there was clear evidence of successful integration of language and culture teaching through the upper-level content based language courses taught by the language coordinator quoted above. He recognised, however, that there are upper-level courses offered by the department that bear little or no connection with the lower-level language courses or even upper-level language, such as German philosophy, for instance, which is also taught and assessed in English.

Head of German - Well I think [...] <u>we have an unusual situation here</u>, perhaps. Because it is <u>pretty well integrated in the language courses</u> but then in the <u>upper-division courses it's kind of</u> <u>half and half.</u> That's where the separation comes. [...]
Researcher – Yeah. You mentioned half and half. Could you elaborate a bit more?
Head of German – I would say that <u>our language instruction is fairly content based.</u> But then when you finish with the two digit courses, which end with 99, you finish with those and move into the 100 level courses, and those kind of split off. There are the <u>ones which are in German</u> <u>or about German literature, usually in German,</u> and <u>those are sort of continuous with the earlier</u>

courses.   And then you have courses such as the ones that I teach[17] which … just happen to be

in the German department and those are not continuous. So that's where the division comes.

We can see, however, that while the German department at university D did offer some German studies courses taught in English, which were not continuous to lower-level courses, the presence of upper-level content-based language courses, as well as some literature courses being offered in German, would appear to indicate that some change has taken place at the structural / curricular level, even in departments where a two-tiered structure is still present. This is encouraging as it may indicate that since the publication of the MLA (2007) report, some departments may have started to address issues raised in the document.   With regards to the educational aims for foreign language majors, the MLA (2007) stresses the importance developing language majors with a 'deep translingual and transcultural competence'. The report further argues that language majors should be able to recognise themselves as Americans among the TL community.

> They are also trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture. They learn to comprehend speakers of the target language as members of foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans—that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others. They also learn to relate to fellow members of their own society who speak languages other than English.

<div align="center">(MLA, 2007, p. 3-4, emphasis added)</div>

The educational aims outlined in the document indirectly challenge a syllabus for language teaching, which has for years been primarily influenced by the theoretical framework of communicative language teaching (CLT). The failure to achieve native or even near-native competence in the foreign language is a real concern for students as it can

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[17] German philosophy taught in English.

have implications for their own self-efficacy beliefs (see Busse, 2012) and hence affects motivation. Furthermore the adequacy of the native speaker model has been numerously questioned by language educators (see Byram, 2008, Kramsch, 2009). The MLA (2007) report hence advocates for a new educational objective for foreign language learning at tertiary level.   The report adopts the terminology of 'translingual and transcultural competence' hence avoiding explicit reference to any specific theoretical model. Yet the educational aims described closely mirror Byram's model for Intercultural Communicative Competence. The ability of students to function as 'informed and capable interlocutors with educated native speakers in the target language' also appears to echo Byram's Intercultural Speaker model.

> The intercultural speaker is someone who is aware of cultural similarities and differences, and is able to <u>act as a mediator between two or more cultures</u>, two or more sets of beliefs, values and behaviours.
>
> (Byram, 2008, p.75)

Interestingly the MLA (2007) report also appears to draw on the theoretical conceptualisation of otherness and third spaces by arguing that foreign language students learn to 'grasp themselves as Americans—that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others.' As mentioned previously, there was little evidence that students had developed intercultural competence to this extent, but some evidence did emerge from the analysis. All references to otherness and third spaces are discussed in section 7.8.1.   The report also suggests a particular kind of curricular reform, one that would '<u>situate language study</u> in cultural, historical, geographic, and cross-cultural frames within the context of <u>humanistic learning.</u>' (p.4, emphasis added).   It also argues that if courses incorporate 'cultural inquiry at all levels' more students would continue to study languages.   From the analysis there was certainly evidence that cultural enquiry constituted one of the objectives of both

language and content courses in the American universities under study, however this was primarily a characteristic in the upper-division even at university C, where the curriculum was very well integrated. The language coordinator at university C described the integration of language and content as follows,

> we do content from the start, language to the end, which means that the introductory courses are content-based courses but the language integration in the <u>advanced level courses</u> is focused on particular <u>domains of knowledge like literature, business, the environment</u>, language training is part of it is as well.

From the description of the content, it appears that advanced courses are situated within the 'context of humanistic learning' although lower-level courses, while content-based, do not quite fall into this category. Situating lower-level language courses into the context of 'humanistic learning' would present a challenge due to the limitations of a still developing linguistic competence. At university C the integration of a genre-based syllabus from the start is carried out rather successfully yet in interviews some students failed to understand the rationale behind this, which caused frustration for some. Heather, of university C, for instance, did not particularly enjoy her experience in the lower-levels.

> Intro (first year) was my least favourite of all the German classes that I've taken. I think they still <u>tried to base things on text</u>, a lot of the times the assignment would include an article or piece and then you would need to answer questions about it, focusing not just on the content but on use of language like writing techniques. And lower level where <u>you can't really read anything substantial</u> in terms of content because <u>you just don't know enough</u>, the work just <u>seemed kind of meaningless</u> whereas now when we're reading more interesting articles and we have more tools it's just more interesting.

Her frustration is attributed to her developing linguistic competence, which limited her

from being able to effectively engage with texts. Clearly a genre-based approach is realisable only to a certain extent at a beginner's level. Another student also commented on a similar issue in relation to the lower-levels.

Researcher – Were you aware of the curriculum?

Alice - Honestly the only reason I am clear about the curriculum is because I took a graduate class explaining that, I feel like the department doesn't always do a very good job of explaining – I know a lot of my friends who started with a lower-level language classes ended up kind of leaving it because it was different from what they were used to and they didn't really understand it so they just kind of left. [...]   I feel that on the first day of class … there was no particular explanation on what the point of all this was. It wasn't fully clear…only later when I leaned about it I was thinking "oh yeah ... that is what you guys did, that makes sense!".

While the recommendations made in the MLA report are ambitious, it needs to be acknowledged that adopting a genre-based curriculum from the start presents a challenge even in the most prestigious institutions. The findings would also seem to indicate that perhaps more research is needed to better understand the implications of adopting a genre-based language syllabus and how to best increase students' intrinsic motivation for this innovative approach towards language teaching. Nonetheless German studies programmes such as the one at University C remain very successful and popular among students. While it may be advisable for the department to explain more explicitly the rationale behind the different pedagogical approach towards lower-level language teaching, it was evident that once students progressed onto the advanced levels they were very pleased with the progress they made and the continuous feedback on both content and language, which they continued to receive. Costable-Heming (2011) points out that while the MLA (2007) report prompted considerable discussion in the sector 'in the years since the report's publication, many departments have not taken substantive steps to transform their majors' (p.403). The curriculum at university C presents an exception, however one

needs to consider that the recommendations made in the report are substantial and require a complete reconfiguration and restructuring of both curricula and hierarchical structures at faculty level. Costable-Heming (2011), however, points out that it appears that those programmes, which have started to address some of the recommendations made in the report, have remained strong and are not in any danger of closing, while others are now facing the challenges of trying to keep programmes running with a decline in student numbers.

> Good programs are growing; weak programs are being eliminated. What is the secret to these good programs? There are several characteristics that strong programs have in common: an innovative curriculum supported by excellent teaching; strong connections to other programs on campus as well as off; and a keen understanding of the changing landscape of higher education and emerging new contexts for language study. Such strong programs have embraced the essence of the MLA report.

> (Costable-Heming, 2011, p.405)

Hence the recommendations made in the MLA (2007) report would appear to offer a new landscape for foreign languages in American higher education. Coincidentally there are similarities between the issues identified in the report pertaining to American institutions and those observable in the United Kingdom. Likewise, the recommendation of coaching language graduates towards becoming individuals with deep 'translingual and transcultural competence' is one which is also evident in reports on the current state of the Modern Language discipline in the U.K. The following section discusses these recommendations in relation to the findings drawn from the staff and student interviews conducted in the two British universities.

7.6 Intercultural Competence in UK policy documents - addressing the recommendations of the Worton (2009) report, British Academy Position Statement (2011) and the QAA (2015) Benchmark Statement.

The future of languages as a discipline in higher education, according to the Worton (2009) report has been described by language departments as being in a current state of 'crisis'. This is primarily due to feelings of uncertainty due to cuts in research funding and a continuing decrease in student numbers for language specialists. "Across the community, there is considerable anxiety about funding and about the long-term future of languages in HE" (Worton, 2009, p.6). Situated in this context, the report puts forward arguments for a curricular and structural change for both specialist and non-specialist study of languages in Higher Education. The report argues that one of the complexities of the discipline is its 'dual nature'.

> 'Modern Foreign Languages' as a discipline has an identity which is vague and uncertain as a result of its dual nature.

> (Worton, 2009, p.7)

The report also refers to the crucial role of intercultural competence and intercultural interactions.

> There remains no sense nationally or internationally that the UK is committed to multilingualism and thereby to informed intercultural interactions. (ibid., p. 15)

It argues that the important role of developing both linguistic and intercultural competences needs to be voiced by the Higher and Further Education sector.

> As part of its advocacy to Government, the languages community in HE and FE must emphasise the importance of linguistic and intercultural competencies as key skills that need to be developed and maintained as a core part of lifelong learning. (ibid., p. 19)

Intercultural competence is also mentioned in the conclusions and recommendations section, where the report argues that 'the decline in modern language learning in England is a cause for real concern [...] for the UK's international position and our ability to negotiate in all fields with in-depth intercultural competence' (ibid., p.34, emphasis added). Several references to intercultural competence appear throughout the document, highlighting the value of the educational purpose of language learning. The two UK universities under study differed significantly in the way intercultural objectives were operationalised in the language and content syllabus. At university A there was little evidence that the language modules were guided by any specific objective other than developing a solid communicative and linguistic competence in the target language. In interviews students did make reference to cultural learning in language classes, however it appeared that the target culture was not presented in any critical way. Sarah described some of the activities taking place in the written strand of her language modules. She gives an example of a reading comprehension activity where students were given a text to read and a set of questions to answer.

> Researcher – What kind of activities do you do in writing?
> Sarah - The focus is more on… reading paragraph activity and questions – you have to understand and respond to a text. Like the one coming up, we've got the text and then 5 or 6 questions sort of content based and some are like analysing sentences – what does it mean in that context – like [the tutor] picked out a metaphor or something.

The example illustrates how in this instance the text has not been explored as a starting point for a discussion or exploration of the cultural product, rather it has been strictly utilised for linguistic purposes. It would appear that the activity had the sole scope of testing reading comprehension and perhaps building knowledge of vocabulary. Sarah was also skeptical about how England's history may have affected modern British life, which

could indicate that a comparative approach was not adopted when exploring practices and products of the foreign culture.

> Researcher – Did any aspect of your degree programme make you think about culture in a different way?
>
> Sarah – Maybe the 2nd year content modules - we were sort of talking about what defines them[18], what makes them…culture / stereotypes
>
> Looking back at Germany's wartime past
>
> Researcher – Did that make you reflect or compare?
>
> Sarah – I guess ... I've just never though about it before. I don't think the past of England has anything to do with me at all but to think that in Germany ... who have issues with their past.

The student states she has never thought about comparing how history affected modern German society to the way it may have affected British identity and the values, beliefs and products of British society. She feels that England's past has 'nothing to do' with her, yet she acknowledges that she has 'never thought about it before' indicating that the modules she took probably did not adopt a comparative approach where students were made to reflect upon what shapes beliefs, values and products in their own culture as well as in the target culture.

The importance of intercultural competence as a graduate attribute has further been emphasised in the QAA (2015) Benchmark statement.   In section 5.6 titled Intercultural awareness, understanding and competence, the document describes students' expected skills in this domain as follows,

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[18] "them" refers to the people of Germany or the speakers of German.

All students of languages develop awareness of the similarities and dissimilarities <u>between</u> <u>other cultures</u> and societies, and <u>their own.</u> This is gained <u>through their studies</u> and through their contact with the target language and associated cultures. [...]

The skills and attributes they develop include:

i <u>critical understanding of other cultures and practices other than one's own</u>

ii ability to function in different cultures

iii ability to articulate to others the contribution that the culture has made at a regional and global level

iv ability and willingness to engage with other cultures, appreciating their distinctive features

v ability to appreciate and evaluate critically <u>one's own culture.</u>

<div align="center">(QAA, 2015, p.16, emphasis added)</div>

The document highlights both the ability to develop a 'critical understanding of cultures and practices other than one's own' as well as the 'ability to appreciate and evaluate critically one's own culture' as skills and attributes, which language graduates are expected to achieve. The statements closely echo Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). The introductory statement draws upon the definition of Savoirs (knowledge) as it describes students' 'awareness' of both the practices and products of the foreign and own country / culture. The five attributes which subsequently follow, also make reference to the other savoirs, including the critical dimension, expressed in points i and v. From the analysis, while students at university A did demonstrate to have acquired at least some of the attributes of intercultural competence, the one area which seemed to be least develop was the reflection upon their own culture. While some students did begin to reflect upon their own culture as a result of exploring the target culture, it did not emerge in the analysis that coaching students to develop a critical evaluation of their own culture formed part of the objectives of either the language or the

culture / content curriculum. Zak, cited in section 7.3.5, describes how he started to reflect upon his own culture after being engaged on a critical discussion in two German content modules: one focusing on terrorism and the other on modern women writers.

While this student was able to achieve a well-developed intercultural competence, which includes the ability to critically evaluate both the foreign and his own culture, he appears to represent an exception rather than the norm. It is clear that the content modules played a significant role at university A in coaching students to critically reflect upon practices and products of the target culture, yet it appears, from the student interviews, that a comparative approach was not adopted; in fact only exceptional students were able to demonstrate the ability to reflect upon the "known" and question the beliefs, practices and products within their home culture / cultures. Referring back to the QAA (2015) Benchmark Statement cited above, the interview data was able to identify some evidence of students' development across these attributes, particularly for points ii, iii and iv. Points i and v refer specifically to comparisons between other cultures and one's own, comparable to critical cultural awareness, for which less evidence was found.

Findings at university B differed slightly and comments drawn from the staff interviews were also helpful in understanding how the teaching methodology and curriculum could foster students' development of intercultural competence as defined in the QAA (2015). Sam, of university B, described how the language modules (the example given is drawn from his French studies as he was a joint-honours student) played a role in providing an opportunity to discuss the public situation in England and compare it to France. He also describes how the year abroad experience allowed him to discover how British people are viewed in Germany, however he also states that he did not feel the experience "changed" him much.

     Researcher – When you came back from your year abroad, did you recognise that people do things differently or was it more than that?

Sam – I sort of already knew that though, [...] I don't think I've changed, I think I already had that view before the Year Abroad [...].

Researcher – Did you see how they perceived you?

Sam – They perceived "English" as a lot better than "American" so I suppose…but I didn't really think about it too much.

Researcher – And did the experience help you critically compare other cultures to your own?

Sam – This is mainly the language modules more than the content / cultural ones. Because the culture they pick in the language modules is more relevant, more up to date … it's given me the opportunity to see what's going on in other countries to compare and contrast what is going on in other countries - we don't have to – but this is something you might want to do in the oral exam, speak about the public situation in England and compare it to France, different public opinions on the situation.

It is interesting to note that Sam points out a very interesting observation i.e. that, in his view, being "English" is perceived as "a lot better" than being "American". His observation demonstrates awareness of how national identity can influence people's beliefs about a community. It's also interesting to note that he chose to compare English to American, possibly indicating his view that language, in this case English, plays a role in defining identity as well as nationality. Yet, he admits that he "didn't really think about it too much". This highlights a potential missed opportunity which could have been explored further and may have contributed to the student's development of intercultural competence. While there is certainly still room for development at university B, as is evident from the reference above, the skill as described in point i 'critical understanding of other cultures and practices other than one's own' in the QAA (2015) Benchmark Statement, generally appeared to have been better developed. One of the factors contributing to this difference could be linked to the different rationale towards the teaching of language and content. The language coordinator, who was responsible for teaching both language and content modules at university B, offered an excellent example

of how students were prompted to move beyond mere observation of the "other" and explore the factors which may have contributed to the beliefs, practices or products they observed.

> Perhaps if we think about the tasks that students have when they are on their year abroad, quite often they will notice very obvious differences and then they start to think critically - […] For example the idea of protests as well – political developments – how does that differ? There seems to be so much more initiative and awareness, desire to voice an opinion through political demonstrations, that kind of thing. They notice that so much more in Germany than in the UK. So why is that? Then look back and think what is it about German society, German culture that could explain these differences.

The important role that the tutor / lecturer plays in prompting students to make those comparisons and move beyond noticing differences and towards evaluating and exploring factors behind the differences they observed, appeared to be a key factor in ensuring students developed the skills described in the QAA (2015) statement on intercultural competence.

The value of intercultural competence is cited also in the British Academy (2013) Summary Report, which refers to the skill as one of the goals to consider for diversifying the language profession.

> Goals – linguistic skills, but also cultural and intercultural understanding, language learning techniques and strategies, knowledge about language(s), etc.
>
> (British Academy, 2013, p.131)

Previously, the British Academy (2011) Position Statement similarly emphasised the importance not only of understanding other languages but also other cultures and societies.

Understanding the languages, cultures and societies of others, as well as the way in which languages interact with each other and with English, is important means of improving intercultural interactions and enhancing social well-being at home as well as overseas.

(British Academy, 2011, p.5)

While there was evidence from the data that students in all of the four institutions had developed intercultural competence to a certain degree, some departments / schools demonstrated a clear rationale to foster its development while in others development of intercultural competence appeared to result from the experience of studying towards a language degree per se, hence resulting in quite different student profiles. The following section explores the different curriculum models at the universities under study in relation to the role they played in fostering students' intercultural competence development.

7.7 What curricular models appear to better foster the development of a critical perspective on cultures among Modern Language students?

The research project purposely selected four institutions with very diverse German curricula and rationales towards language and content teaching. The universities also differed in student numbers, size of the department / school and admission requirements. While these factors need to be considered when interpreting the findings, this section focuses on the curriculum specifically as a central factor in fostering students' development of intercultural competence. From the findings, it appeared that curricula with greater integration between language and content could provide students with a wider range of contexts and opportunities for students to develop intercultural competence. At University B, for instance, while the contribution of content modules may have been greater, there was clear evidence that students were prompted to critically reflect on culture across both language and content strands. There was also evidence that the YA

assessment required students to explore the cultural differences they noticed on a deeper level. At University A, a less integrated model, students interviewed differed significantly in their range of competences and it appeared that the main contributing factor to their development of a more critical and reflective perspective on understanding both the foreign and their own culture was predominantly attributed to content modules. At University C, arguably the most integrated model, students often referred to the upper-level content-based language and content classes and specifically to the way the courses enabled them to learn both about their own and the foreign culture. There was little reference to how the lower level language modules contributed to this, but the genre-based approach arguably served as a starting point for students to learn to engage more reflectively with cultural products, thus preparing them to become more critical in the upper-levels. The situation at university D was atypical as students demonstrated very high levels of intercultural competence, yet this was most often attributed to the outstanding teaching practice of one faculty member, who, at the time, was the sole member of staff teaching upper-level content based language modules. While, as language coordinator, she did oversee the teaching of lower-level language modules, student did not feel that the cultural learning that took place in those modules played a significant role in developing their intercultural competence. The diagram below visually represents the curricular structure of the four institutions and the ways in which the different strands appear to play a role in the students' development of intercultural competence.

Table 19: Curriculum overview

University A

Language modules	Content modules	Year Abroad
* primarily aimed at developing linguistic / communicative competence (taught and assessed in both English and German) * speaking *about* culture - giving an opinion on a text	* *critical evaluation* of cultural products of the Target Culture (taught and assessed in English)	* choice of work experience or study at a German speaking university * YA assessment task

University B

Lower-level language classes	Upper-level content based language classes	Study abroad
* initially aimed primarily at developing communicative competence but from the intermediate level onwards focuses also on critical evaluation of both the foreign and one's own culture. (taught and assessed in German)	* *critical evaluation* of products and perspectives of both one's own and the target culture (taught and assessed in German)	* choice of work experience or study at a German speaking university no explicit assessment task while abroad

University C

Language modules	Content modules	Year Abroad
* aimed at developing communicative competence but also developing perspectives on cultures (taught and assessed in German) * co-operation between language and content teaching staff results in greater integration of themes and learning objectives	* *critical evaluation* of products and perspectives of both one's own and the target culture (depending on the year of instruction, taught and assessed in English and / or German)	* choice of work experience or study at a German speaking university * YA assessment task - clear focus on critical cultural awareness through research-based assessment

University D

Lower-level language classes	Upper-level content based language classes	Upper-level content classes	Study abroad
* aimed primarily at developing linguistic and communicative competence * students learn facts *about* culture	* *critical evaluation* of products and perspectives of both one's own and the target culture (taught and assessed in German and English)	* critical exploration in a theme / topic of the target culture (taught and assessed in English and German)	* work or study experience * no specific assessment activity yet influential to the students' development of intercultural competence

While the diagrams above do not seek to provide a detailed description of the curriculum, they serve to highlight some of the differences between the components of language degrees across different institutions. The two UK universities have a similar structure as they both teach language and content as parallel modules independent of each other, yet university B offers a large portion of its content modules in German and staff responsible for teaching content, like the language coordinator herself, were also involved in the teaching of language. The increased cooperation between language and content staff, as well as adopting German as the medium of instruction, appeared to increase relevance and hence allowing some of the more critical and evaluative approaches towards exploring cultures to be adopted not only in content but also in language modules and the year abroad assessment task. The result is a more continuous and holistic learning experience which appears to provide increased opportunity for students to develop intercultural competence. The two American models similarly differ in the way the development of intercultural competence is fostered across the curriculum. There was little evidence that the lower-level language classes played a significant role in students' intercultural learning. When students referred to the way culture was represented in these modules, they often made reference to learning about cultural practices and beliefs or about the geography and food of the country. Upper-level modules, on the other hand, clearly

pushed students towards a more reflective and critical evaluation of both the foreign and one's own culture through a comparative method. From both of the American universities under study, it appeared that the upper-level content-based language modules were the most effective in fostering students' intercultural competence development. Students were overall very satisfied with these modules because they continued to provide feedback on language, challenged them to use German in a wider range of contexts and at the same time were intellectually challenging and hence served well to develop students' academic writing and discourse. At both universities a comparative approach was adopted to increase students' interest and comprehension and also challenge pre-existing beliefs about both their own culture, beliefs and practices as well as those of the culture studied. The following section explores intercultural competencies, which emerged from the analysis but reveal aspects of intercultural learning which extend beyond Byram's ICC model. These emerging findings can help inform theory and are hence discussed separately from the data which could be coded using Byram's ICC model.

7.8 Emerging new competencies - beyond the five savoirs

The exploration of intercultural competence development in students of German at the universities understudy resulted in some emerging findings, which could not be coded using Byram's ICC model as they described different facets of intercultural competence which arguably extend beyond the five savoirs framework. The theoretical concepts of otherness, tertiary socialisation and third spaces / places, on the other hand, were very helpful in interpreting these findings. The MLA (2007) report, discussed previously in this chapter, also makes reference to the importance of students being able to identify themselves as American. This can be more broadly interpreted as the ability to recognise themselves as foreign among the TL community. The sections below discuss the findings on intercultural competence development that add to our understanding of whether students do develop competencies in these areas and, if so, what aspect of the curriculum

or teaching methodology appear to foster them.

7.8.1 Otherness and third spaces

Drawing from the staff and student interviews, there was clear evidence that students across all four institutions had developed some degree of intercultural competence. Yet, while some students merely developed an awareness of beliefs, practices and products of the foreign culture, others demonstrated much more perceptive and critical abilities. Byram's more recent work on intercultural competence has extended our understanding of these competencies beyond his original ICC model presented in Byram (1997). Byram (2009) makes reference to some of his earlier work where the notion of 'intercultural speaker' was first mentioned, and highlights the important function of acting as a mediator 'between' languages and cultures. He makes reference to Zarate (2003), who described the language learner as 'someone "between" / entre deux, emblematic of the conditions of many people in postmodernity, whose identities and identifications are far less simple than those prompted by identification with nation-states' (Zarate, 2003 in Byram, 2009, p. 326). The description of the language learner as a 'cultural mediator' is helpful as it locates the learner outside of the 'familiar' yet also not within the TL culture but rather in a space or place between the two, from which he or she can mediate between cultures. The concept echoes Kramsch's (1993) theoretical concept of third place, and the work of Bhabha (1994) on third spaces. Bhabha (1994) argued that,

> the two places ('You' and 'I') are mobilised to produce meaning in the passage through a Third Space which 'constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated. rehistoricised and read anew'.

> (Bhabha, 1994, p.37 in Feng 2009, p.75)

Kramsch (2009) revisits the earlier notion of third places theorised in Kramsch (1993)

under a new term: symbolic competence. As with the former, the focus is on a space 'in between' from which the intercultural speaker can mediate, but the latter acknowledges the multilingual subject.

> By using the term 'symbolic competence' in language education, I wish to resignify the notion of communicative or intercultural competence and place it within the multilingual perspective [...]. Symbolic competence does not replace (intercultural) communicative competence, but gives it meaning within a symbolic frame that I had earlier called 'third place' (Kramsch, 1993) [...]. Multilingualism, always the norm in many regions of the globe [...] prompts us to rethink the notion of 'third place' proposed in the 1990s under various names in applied linguistics.
>
> (Kramsch, 2009, p.199)

Kramsch (2009) emphasises the importance of being able to distance oneself from the beliefs and values of one's own culture. She argues that growing into a multilingual subject 'is precisely establishing a distance vis-à-vis one's usual habitus and explicitly reflecting upon' (p.116). Luke (2003) similarly emphasises the importance of 'dissociation' from the familiar in order for language learners to become critical.

> For the critical to happen, there must be some actual dissociation from one's available explanatory texts and discourses, a denaturalization and discomfort and 'making the familiar strange' [...]
>
> (Luke, 2003, pp. 11-12 in Kramsch, 2009, p.193)

The importance of positioning oneself outside of both one's own cultural perspective and that of the target culture is further emphasised in Kramsch (2009, p.189) in her description of the multilingual subject

> the symbolic self of a multilingual does not merely abide by the symbolic order of the Other. It retains an outsideness that enables it to play with various objective and subjective meanings.

From the data, a number of references were made to the concept of otherness both in staff and student interviews. Students' ability to distance themselves from their own cultural perspective emerged as evidence of intercultural competence. The concept of otherness mirrors Byram's definition of a sojourner as well as Kramsch's discourse on third spaces (1993) and symbolic competence (2009). The level to which students developed their ability to distance themselves from their own perspective differed between students. While some described an ability to view practices and products from a third place, others referred to looking at things from the perspective of the target culture (C2). While the latter indicates students did not quite develop the ability to distance themselves from either position, it nonetheless provides evidence of being able to decentre themselves from their own culture (C1). Zak of University A, previously cited in section 7.3.5, described how the Modern Women Writers module helped him view things from a Russian person's perspective.

One of the staff interviews from universities D also provided an interesting perspective on students' ability to distance themselves from their own culture. The language coordinator at university D illustrated how her students gradually were able to distance themselves from their own point of view.

> They (the students) obviously argue and like to portray their points of view but they are also liberal and are open to exploring these types of issues. I think what makes it especially interesting for students and what I saw ... really a lot of engagement when they start to understand issues in their own county by discussing the same issues in another country.

Interestingly, she placed emphasis on the importance of comparisons in ways in which they can support students' development of critical cultural awareness.

There is another dimension of intercultural competence however, for which less evidence was found in this study. This refers to the ability of students to recognise themselves as

'foreign'. The MLA (2007) report emphasises this point as an important graduate attribute, yet it would appear that a large number of students do not necessarily develop the ability to view themselves as foreign and re-examine their own culture, practices and beliefs as a result of assuming this different viewpoint.

7.8.2 Recognising themselves as foreign among the TL community

The MLA (2007) report addresses the specific skill of students being able to recognise themselves as 'Americans' among the TL community. It describes language graduates as 'educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence' (p.3) and who, aside from being 'capable interlocutors' also possess the following intercultural competencies.

> They are also trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture. They learn to comprehend speakers of the target language as members of foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans—that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others.   (MLA, 2007, p.4)

Yet in interviews staff felt that while students, as a result of their study and experience abroad, did become 'aware' that certain practices and beliefs may belong to their own culture / cultures, there was little evidence to indicate that they were able to recognise themselves as 'foreigners' in the target culture. The Head of German at university D felt that while students were able to recognise that there is such a thing as an 'American framework' they did not necessarily view themselves a foreign.

> Head of German – Many of them have spent some time by that time in German speaking countries. So they have their own views. They're <u>not completely outside the American framework</u> but I think <u>they know that there is an American framework</u>, which is a very helpful thing to know.
>
> Researcher– Would you say that they're able to recognise that people view them as Americans?

Head of German – I think that may be another step, to realise that other people are looking back at them and seeing that they're Americans, I'm not sure they're at that level. But they do understand that they're different from other nationalities.

The Head of German at University B similarly felt that students may not have developed their ability to view themselves as foreign. While they demonstrated an ability to notice differences and perhaps reflect on the differences observed, they still viewed the Germans as the foreigners, even while abroad, immersed in the target culture.

Researcher– Upon returning from their year abroad, do you feel students were able to recognise themselves as British or realise that people in other countries view them as British?

Head of German – I was never under the impression that there was such a feeling, I think this is the one thing that I really don't think they start seeing themselves as foreigners, no. [...]

I don't think there is that epiphany of "wow, people see us that way" I never felt that this happened for them.

Probably the Germans are very interested about other cultures "oh that's so interesting, tell us more". This specific thing I never observed in students. But they might not tell me. It's more about commenting about the Germans, it's really that. They experience foreignness but they don't see themselves as the foreign element.

They feel that the Germans remain quite impolite or very friendly…

They attribute the differences to the Germans and not themselves.

I never had someone come back and said "oh it's very interesting to see how our politeness is very kind of limiting" never, it's always "oh they are so rude" or "oh they are very straight-forward"

The Germans are still the foreigners even if you are in Germany, this is my impression, that's something I strongly feel, that doesn't change.   Clearly I'm not with them, they might feel differently. This is the way they describe it, the way they choose to describe it. Obviously it's a mathematical thing, if there are two entities and one of them is foreign, you are foreign too but it's still interesting that they would turn it that way and that they are just abroad and that observe different tribes in a sense. It's never "wow, maybe we're doing things in a weird way", I never encountered that.

The Head of German at University B clearly expressed the view that students did not return from their experience abroad with an understanding of themselves as foreigners. The two references cited above, from university D and B, would seem to indicate that if departments want to ensure their graduates meet the expectations of the MLA (2007) report (at least for what concerns the US context) greater focus needs to be placed on guiding students towards a more critical understanding of otherness and foreignness. The Language Coordinator at University B was slightly more optimistic in this regard but also recognised that only in the best of cases students returned from their year abroad with an understanding of how others viewed them.

> Researcher- Would you say that upon their return from their year abroad – did they go through an experience where they recognised how other people see them?
>
> Language Coordinator – I think in the best cases yes but in most cases …

The important role of tutors / lecturers in prompting more deep and evaluative explorations and understandings of 'the foreign' has been previously discussed in the chapter in relation to the contribution of content modules for the development of intercultural competence. Yet Kramsch (2003) also highlights issues in the tradition of language teaching.

> Traditional thought in foreign language education has limited the teaching of culture to the transmission of factual information about the people of the target country, and about their general attitudes and world views [...] It has not dealt with general sociolinguistic competence or with social awareness across cultures. In particular, it has not dealt with the awareness of one's own ways of speaking, reading and writing, and the way one's own discourse is culturally marked as well.
>
> (Kramsch, 2003, p.21, emphasis added)

From the interviews it appeared students were still very much looking outward for 'the foreign' rather than looking inward. The point that Kramsch makes reflects students' difficulty in being able to perceive the foreigner within themselves and realise that others are looking at them and viewing them as 'the foreigners'. It would appear that language education could benefit from more attention to this specific dimension of intercultural competence.

7.8.2.1 Savoir se reconnaître - an emerging savoir of intercultural competence

The new dimension of intercultural competence, which emerged from the data as an area in which only a small minority of students demonstrated a developing competence, has been defined here as *savoir se reconnaître.* The use of the French term deliberately draws a link to Byram's (1997) ICC framework as it proposes an additional dimension with the aim of revising the current model. *Savoir se reconnaître* is hence also defined by adopting a similar terminology and is summarised in the diagram below.

Figure 31 - Savoir se reconnaître - A sixth savoir of intercultural communicative competence

Savoir se reconnaître / awareness of otherness within self- The ability to critically reflect on the world and themselves from a perspective situated outside the learners' own culture/cultures and that of the target culture (TC). Through this critical reflection, learners are able to recognise themselves as members of a society that is foreign to others and discover how their own beliefs, behaviours and discourse are comparably culturally marked.

It should be noted that language plays an important role in *savoir se reconnaître* as it also places emphasis on discovering one's own discourse through the experience of learning a foreign language and is hence best understood as a contribution to

Byram's (1997) ICC model, which already takes into account the role of communication in a foreign language. *Savoir se reconnaître* draws upon the concept of recognising one's self as 'foreign' whilst among the TL community and is thus distinctly different from Byram's *savoir être*, defined as 'attitudes, curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own' (Byram, 1997, p.91). While *savoir être* stresses the importance of suspending judgment about other cultures and one's own, it does not situate the learner outside of his or her own culture/s, nor does it highlight the ability of the learner to recognise that his or her own values, practices and beliefs may be viewed as foreign by members of the TL community.

From the analysis of the data it was evident that language as well as the culture and content elements of a Modern Language degree both played a significant role in students' development of intercultural competence and hence it is argued that the use of a theoretical framework for intercultural competence, which takes into account the linguistic dimension, is preferable and more applicable to the educational aims of language learners.

Summary of chapter 7

The findings from the study served to illustrate students' development of intercultural competence in Modern Language degree programmes. The frequent reference to learning about the target culture appears to highlight cultural awareness of the C2 but mostly provides evidence for knowledge (savoirs) rather than critical cultural awareness. Where students and staff made reference to the educational / critical dimension, this was often attributed to the explicit teaching strategies and academic nature of the upper-level modules in the US and content modules in the UK. In some instances the contribution of elements of the language modules also played a significant role. Overall there was some difference between how the different programmes supported students' intercultural

competence development although the main factor linked to a more integrated language and content curriculum was the extent to which language and content staff members were able to work collaboratively. Factors such as offering at least some content modules in the target language also appeared to allow staff to establish connections between the two areas of the curriculum possibly extending some of the more evaluative and critical discussion on culture taking place in content to also take place in the language modules. Furthermore there appeared to be more emphasis placed on comparisons in the two US universities, which helped students learn how to critically evaluate their own culture as well as the target culture. Across all four universities upper-level modules (US) / content modules (UK) were identified as the modules that played a critical role in fostering criticality development. This was the case also at university C, where the department has "done away" with the bifurcation of language and literature into upper and lower division. In spite of the very innovative curriculum in place, students still felt that the beginners courses did not really encourage critical thinking about culture. It should be noted however that intermediate courses at university C did explicitly foster intercultural competence development particularly through the thoughtful selection of content and by employing a comparative approach towards class discussions. This emerged in both staff and student interviews and the finding provides encouraging evidence of the possibility of language modules to achieve this even with students of intermediate language proficiency.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study was undertaken with the purpose of investigating the dichotomy of language and content in Modern Languages, placing particular focus on the implications for students' development of intercultural competence and criticality. The study is situated in a current climate of crisis for language degrees, particularly in the UK, as identified in the Worton (2009) report.   Reports on foreign language teaching in Higher Education issued both in the U.K. and USA highlight the importance of developing a curriculum that encompasses both the language and content area of the discipline; the reports similarly place emphasis on the value of developing language graduates with deep intercultural competence (Worton, 2009; MLA, 2007; QAA, 2015).

The study explored implications of Modern Language curricula across German Studies programmes in four universities, two based in the U.K. and two in the USA. The programmes were selected on the basis of the curricular structures observable at the time as well as the researcher's own familiarity with the geographical location as well as the universities' willingness to take part in the study. As the investigation was primarily inductive and guided by an exploratory focus, the aim was first of all to explore the phenomenon of separation between language and content as it was observable in the curriculum and degree structures within the four universities. The research questions guiding the investigation helped frame the study and design the research instruments employed: a student questionnaire with follow-up interviews and staff interviews.   This chapter discusses conclusions drawn from the findings in relation to the research questions and proposes recommendations for theory, further research, policy and practice in relation to students' development of intercultural competence and criticality within language degree programmes in both the U.K. and USA.

8.1 Application of theory to the study's main findings

While the study's findings confirmed the effectiveness of current theoretical frameworks for intercultural competence, particularly Byram's (1997) ICC model, and criticality (Barnett, 1997), in describing students' development across these competencies, the data drawn also points towards new directions, thus broadening our understanding of these theoretical conceptualisations. The new facets to the development of intercultural competence and criticality, which emerged from the analysis, are summarised below and discussed further in section 8.1.2 and 8.1.3 in relation to implications for existing theory and further research into the field.

8.1.1 Communicative Criticality

In reference to students' development of criticality, as discussed in chapter 6, a new facet emerged from the analysis; this was defined as communicative criticality. The concept builds upon Barnett's (1997) criticality model and thus makes reference to his terminology of levels and domains but describes a new form of criticality, which develops through the experience of learning a foreign language. Communicative criticality may be observed in language learners as they begin to critically reflect upon the linguistic systems of the known languages and those of the language or languages studied. It is a form of criticality which is comprised of transformatory critique and the reconstruction of self. While Barnett (1997) theorised three separate domain of criticality (Knowledge, Self and World - as has been previously noted in chapter 6), Criticality Development, as it emerged from the analysis, appeared to be much more fluid with utterances often making reference to more than one domain simultaneously. It is argued that Communicative Criticality could be primarily situated within the domain Self, as it describes students' reconstruction of self, yet this occurs as a result of a critical engagement with Knowledge, which in this case is comprised of the linguistic and semiotic systems. Communicative criticality describes a

higher form of criticality in which the reconstruction of self occurs through the process of understanding one's own thinking and an experience of discovery of one's own and the foreign language's limitations. Through the critical comparison of the different semiotic systems and ways in which meaning can be made, students recognise that certain concepts are better rendered through certain languages compared to others. In the context of the study of foreign languages, students may become more critical when reading or producing translations and be able to challenge the translator's semantic or structural choices when trying to transfer meaning from one language to the other. As a result of this process, they become more critical about their own thinking when relating meaning in the different languages they know and develop a greater awareness of meaning-making more generally.

8.1.2 Savoir se reconnaître – awareness of otherness within self

With regards to students' development of intercultural competence, as outlined in chapter 7, it was found that the existing framework, particularly Byram's (1997) ICC model, did not account for all the dimensions of intercultural competence, which emerged from the analysis. The questionnaire and interviews purposely included questions regarding whether students demonstrated the ability to view themselves as foreign among the TL community. The responses to this particular question were interesting; while staff generally felt that this may be a 'step further' and hence felt that students were still 'looking outward' for the foreign, there was some evidence, particularly from university D, that students had developed at least an awareness of how they may be perceived for instance as 'Americans' when in Germany. The MLA (2007) report highlights this dimension of intercultural competence as a goal for language graduates:

> They are also trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture. They learn to comprehend speakers of the target language as members of foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans—that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others. (MLA, 2007, p.4)

While Byram's (1997) ICC model does not include recognising the self as foreign as a separate 'savoir', the concept of sojourner discussed in Byram (1997) as well as much of the author's later work (see Byram, 2008; 2009) makes reference to otherness and its role in the development of intercultural competence. The work of Kramsch (1993) on third place and symbolic competence (2009) and Bhabha (1994) on third space also played a significant role in understanding the importance of distancing one's self from one's own position, generally situated within the home language and culture, in order to be able to discover both the known and the foreign (the target culture) from a third perspective. Recognising the self as foreign emerged from the analysis as a valuable dimension of intercultural competence, yet evidence of its development was very weak. As outlined in chapter 7, the researcher proposes this dimension as an additional 'savoir' of intercultural communicative competence, known as savoir se reconnaître / awareness of otherness within self, defined as follows,

> Savoir se reconnaître / awareness of otherness within self- The ability to critically reflect on the world and themselves from a perspective situated outside the learners' own culture/cultures and that of the target culture (TC). Through this critical reflection, learners are able to recognise themselves as members of a society that is foreign to others and discover how their own beliefs, behaviours and discourse are comparably culturally marked.

The importance of explicit guidance towards students' development of intercultural competence had been repeatedly acknowledged throughout the thesis. Yet educators need to be fully aware of what is understood as intercultural competence as a graduate attribute in order to be able to fully support students' development across these competencies. The additional dimension, which emerged from the study and is described as savoir se reconnaître, helps address the gap inherent in the current widely employed ICC model with the aim of exposing awareness of otherness within self as an important dimension of intercultural communicative competence.

8.2 Findings and review of research questions

This section presents and discusses the main findings of the thesis. The findings are discussed in relation to ways in which they provide evidence in support of the research questions. The aim of Research Question 1 (RQ1) was to explore the effects, if any, of curricular structures in Modern Language degrees on the student experience. The findings in relation to RQ1 are hence not directly linked to students' development of intercultural competence and criticality but rather look at other aspects of the student experience. Research Question 2 (RQ2) explored the relationship between curricular structures, in particular ways in which language and content were taught with less or greater integration, and students' development of intercultural competence and criticality. The third research questions (RQ3) had the aim of identifying key factors, which emerged from the data as contributing to students' development of these competencies. As discussed in chapter 4, the first two research questions draw upon both the data from the questionnaire and the interviews, while the third research question draws primarily on the qualitative data.

Research Question 1

Do current degree structures affect the student experience in relation to ICC and criticality and if so in what ways?

Among other findings, which are discussed in detail in chapter 5, three emerged from the questionnaire and interview data as providing specific evidence in support of the first research question. It was found that in programmes where there was greater integration between language and content, such as at universities B and C, students had a greater exposure to the target language across the curriculum. This often led to a greater confidence when using the target language, for which evidence was drawn primarily from the student interviews. The third key finding relates to the students' own understanding of the relationship between language and culture, which emerged from the interview data as

possibly being linked to students' experience of their degree programme.

Exposure to the Target Language

The analysis showed that degree structures, particularly the way in which the language and content curriculum appeared to be less or more integrated as well as the way in which the TL was employed across the curriculum, did play a role in affecting the student experience. The results indicate that students in programmes where a large portion of content modules are taught in the TL had increased exposure (opportunities to listen and read in the TL) as well as opportunities to express themselves in the TL in a variety of different contexts. In University A students' exposure to spoken German remained mostly limited to the language modules (particularly the oral strand) and the Year Abroad. Students' exposure to written German was greater as many of the sources students were required to read for their content modules were in German. In interviews students from university A highlighted the use of English as the primary medium of instruction for content modules and also for the grammar components of the first and second year writing strand. Compared to the other universities, which took part in the study, students had less exposure to the Target Language in classroom settings as a result of the degree structure. At university B, on the other hand, many content modules were taught and assessed in German, thus extending the contexts in which students were exposed to the TL. University C offered all courses for the German major in German and the instruction was fully carried out in the TL throughout the degree. At university D, while a number of upper-division content courses were taught and assessed in English, upper-level content-based language courses were taught and assessed primarily in German as well as lower-level courses. This resulted in students still being offered a wide range of opportunities to experience and produce work in the TL. The degree of exposure to the TL was significantly different between the four institutions and this was found to primarily be linked with ways in which the degree programmes were structured.

Confidence using the Target Language

Students in programmes, which offered a large portion of content courses taught in German, such as those of Universities B and C in particular, generally expressed a more assured confidence employing the target language in a variety of contexts. Students from university A, on the other hand, who had no experience of content taught in German described the difficulties they experienced in such courses during their Year Abroad. Students at university A also appeared to be reluctant to employ the language outside the classroom. The words "hard" and "challenge" emerged frequently in student interviews from university A in reference to being taught and assessed in the target language. Aside from the medium of instruction, universities with a more integrated language and content curriculum appeared to better support students prior to their year abroad. University C for instance ensures that students studying abroad will be assessed in a way similar to how they are assessed at their home university. University B also presented a good example of how the Year Abroad assessment tasks would be relevantly linked with work carried out in language modules.

Students' understanding of the language-content relationship

Students across the four institutions demonstrated different views on the language-content relationship. For the most part students who experienced a language and content curriculum taught in parallel, particularly observable at university A, appeared to view language as separate from content and to an extent agreed with the ways in which the university regarded them as distinct strands within the degree programme. Some stated this more clearly than others, yet such a view of the relationship between language and content was also observable at university B. The increased focus on accuracy of written production over content in language modules was viewed by some of the students

interviewed as inevitable and perhaps also as an advantage for those students who, in language modules, focus primarily on the quality of their writing. While some would have preferred for the content of their writing to play a greater role in language modules, others understood the aim of these classes as being oriented towards building linguistic accuracy and proficiency.

Student views on the language-content relationship differed significantly between the American and British universities. At university C particularly, but to an extent also at university D, students talked about language and content as an integrated whole, for instance when describing the upper-level content-based language courses at university D and most of the courses offered at university C (the most integrated model). Students in the American universities generally demonstrated very positive attitudes towards modules which were taught and assessed in German and where they received feedback on both the linguistic aspect of their written and oral production as well as the content. At university C in fact student needed some clarification in order to understand the purpose of my investigation because all courses included both a clear focus on language and on content from the beginners to the advanced levels. This in turn affected ways in which they understood culture as being part of language, which may present an interesting area to explore through further research.

Research Question 2

What curriculum models appear to best develop criticality and intercultural competence in students?

While the study only examined four universities, this research question can only in part be answered through the data, which emerged from the analysis. The four universities, however, provided examples of entirely different approaches towards the teaching of language and culture and hence expose the diverse opportunities with regards to Modern

Language curricula. Two key findings emerged from the data as being relevantly linked to this research question: a unified language and content curriculum and upper-level content-based language classes.

A unified language and content curriculum

University C presented by far the best integrated model across the four universities offering all of its courses taught in German and maintaining an emphasis across teaching, assessment and feedback both on language and content throughout the degree. The curriculum thus presents an exception to the two-tiered model observable across many American universities. The MLA (2007) report identified the issue of bifurcation between language and culture as a characteristic, which 'impedes the development of a unified language-and-content curriculum across the four-year college or university sequence' (p.4). While the extent to which the two strands of the curriculum were integrated was not found to significantly correlate with an increased intercultural competence or criticality in students, programmes with greater integration appeared to create greater opportunities for critical reflection and exploration. At university C, for instance, the fact that the university had explicitly redesigned its German Studies degree in order to offer a content-based genre-oriented curriculum meant that students were brought to engage with a more sophisticated understanding of culture as early as the intermediate level. An invaluable aspect of more integrated programmes such as German Studies at university C and to an extent university B (in the UK), was also the extent to which staff across both the language and content strands of the curriculum worked cooperatively to achieve certain aims. It was evident that staff members at university C for instance were fully aware of the department's innovative curriculum and individual modules, including beginners and intermediate levels, were designed in accordance to these specific learning outcomes. At university B the use of German as a medium of instruction across both the language and content strands (at least in part) allowed some staff to teach across both

types of modules thus enabling them to develop links across the curriculum and present an alternative model to the often observable hierarchical differences identified both the Worton (2009) and MLA (2007) reports.   This greater degree of unity between the two strands of the curriculum also had implication for ways in which the year abroad (YA) experience could be more effectively employed to enable students to make the transition from observation of culture to exploration.   This was particularly evident at university B, where the language coordinator illustrated how the choice of task and explicit guidance provided to students while on their year abroad helped them reflect and explore in greater depth what they had originally merely observed as 'different'.

Upper-level content-based language classes (USA)

The data analysis resulted in an emerging finding, which the MLA (2007) report and much of the literature on foreign language curricula does not address.   This concerns the contribution of upper-level content-based language classes observable in American foreign language degree programmes. These are inherently language modules, generally taught in the third or fourth year (upper-level) of the university degree sequence. The modules have specific linguistic and communicative learning objectives but are taught in content. Students are therefore taught and assessed against both language and content objectives. At University D reference to upper-level content-based language modules was made both in staff and student interviews in relation to how the course content and the lecturer's teaching style helped prompt students towards critical comparisons across cultures. It is argued that these modules provide a successful example of how language and content objectives may be effectively integrated at modular level. While degree programmes in the US, which offer content-based language modules and yet still maintain a two-tiered structure, do not fully address the issues identified in the MLA (2007) report, they do provide an effective example of how this practice, with time, may be extended across the curriculum.   More importantly, these modules emerged from the data as making a

significant contribution to students' development of intercultural competence and criticality and hence further research into this particular context for language learning may help yield new insights into students' development across these competencies.

Research Question 3

Is the development of criticality and IC facilitated through more integrated programmes and if so, in what ways?

The findings provide some evidence to indicate that criticality and IC development may be better fostered through more integrated programmes. Firstly though, it should be pointed out that there are multiple ways of understanding what is meant by 'integrated programmes'. Throughout the thesis the term has been employed to refer to the integration of language and content within Modern Language degree programmes. Programmes in which the language and content modules are taught with little or no relevance between each other and where the use of the target language remains for the most part an aspect of the language syllabus rather than extending across the three strands (language, content and the year abroad) have been described as 'less integrated'. On the other hand, those in which a clear attempt has been made to address this issue at least in part, for instance through the teaching of some of the content in the TL, as in university B or offering upper-level content-based languages courses, as in university D, have been described as 'better integrated'.   University C had been regarded as the most integrated model as it had consciously addressed this issue and redesigned the entire curriculum with the aim of creating a more holistic degree sequence.

The data generally indicated that better integrated programmes provided students with greater opportunities to develop IC and criticality, although it should be pointed out that evidence of students' development across these competencies was found across all four universities, thus indicating that the degree of integration may be regarded as one factor

among others, which may play a role. The factors, which were found to be linked to the curriculum, concerned ways in which more integrated programmes were better able to follow a whole-school approach towards the subject area. A further factor concerns the explicit guidance towards criticality and IC development, which is relevant to all institutions and not specifically linked to any given curriculum.

A whole-school approach

The Worton (2009) report places emphasis on the importance of collaboration between language centres and language departments within British Higher Education arguing as follows:

> It is crucial that Language Departments and Language Centres learn to work more effectively together to reconceptualise, redefine and promote foreign languages as a discipline, both internally and externally and to Government and funding agencies.

> (Worton, 2009, p.36)

The MLA (2007) report, with regards to American universities (in particular the larger, more established institutions), similarly highlights the lack of cooperation between language and content staff as problematic.

> At doctorate-granting institutions, cooperation or even exchange between the two groups is usually minimal or nonexistent. Foreign language instructors often work entirely outside departmental power structures and have little or no say in the educational mission of their department, even in areas where they have particular expertise.

> (MLA, 2007, p. 2-3)

The effective communication and collaboration with all teaching staff emerged as an essential factor in ensuring that students' development of intercultural competence and criticality can be supported across the different component of their language degree programme. At university A, for instance, a number of students made reference to the

way a specific content module guided them towards critical reflection. There was clear evidence that this particular module had helped provide students with a learning experience in which their criticality could be fostered. Yet there was little evidence to suggest that the outstanding contribution to criticality development linked to this particular content module (and the lecturer who taught it) was in some way linked to a broader whole-school objective. A similar scenario emerged from university D, where only one staff member was offering and teaching upper-level content-based language modules. While, once again, the modules offered by the lecturer strongly supported intercultural competence and criticality development, the excellent practice remained primarily linked to the lecturer's own teaching style and personal beliefs about what attributes language graduates should possess. In more integrated programmes, particularly at university C, it was apparent that all staff were clearly aware of the curriculum's objectives and hence planned their own courses accordingly. At university B there was also more evidence of collaboration across language and content staff, and, while I did not interview all language lecturers, it was clear from an informal conversation that the majority were aware, at least to an extent, of the school's rationale for offering content modules taught in German. There was also some evidence that language modules, at least in part, built upon similar topics and themes as some of the content modules.

Adopting a whole-school approach in which learning outcomes for criticality and intercultural competence are clearly articulated emerged as factor, which may play an important role in supporting students' development across these competencies. At University D, for example, all upper-level content-based language modules were taught by one lecturer. In fact most of the evidence for intercultural competence and criticality development drawn from the student interviews made reference to her courses. The identification and sharing of good practice in order to better understand how these competencies can be developed in Modern Language degree programmes is essential and

can provide training for less experienced faculty members who are new to the profession.

Explicit guidance towards criticality and IC development

Another finding, which emerged from the analysis, was the important role of explicit guidance towards IC and criticality development. Chapter 6 and chapter 7 similarly highlight the role of content modules, and the lecturers who taught these courses, in prompting students to reflect more critically and in more depth on explorations of culture and understandings of self and other. While emphasis is placed on the unique contribution of content modules as these courses were repeatedly mentioned in both staff and student interviews in relation to ways in which they supported students' development across these competencies, it should be first of all pointed out that the discussion includes the upper-level content-based language courses (observed in the American universities) which are essentially language modules. Another very effective example, which emerged from the analysis, was the explicit guidance students received at university B with regards to the year abroad assessment task. Once again, while the lecturer in question also taught content modules, this specific task was drawn from the language strand of the curriculum and was aimed specifically at guiding students towards a critical reflection on culture. It is argued that in order to fully support students' development across these competencies, both language and content staff need to acknowledge that intercultural awareness and development is unlikely to occur of its own accord (Holmes, 2015). It may be that as a result of the language syllabus being generally guided by primarily communicative and linguistic learning outcomes, staff teaching language may not have explored the full potential of the courses they teach. Yamada (2012) argues that 'the contact with a foreign language is an encounter with otherness' (p.58) and hence the experience of learning a foreign language per se can be explored as a context for intercultural learning. The potential of language courses and their teaching staff to effectively and more explicitly support students' develop across these competencies is further discussed in relation to

implication for teaching practice.

8.3 Emerging differences between the US and UK universities

While the separation between language and content was identified as problematic in both a US and UK context, ways in which the separation translated into curricular structures was inherently different. This is an important point as it also has implications for the extent to which findings drawn from the two contexts may be compared.   The separation of language and content in American universities refers primarily to the two-tiered degree structure, while in British universities the separation is observable throughout the degree programme with the parallel teaching of language alongside content (see chapter 3).   With regards to ways in which the US and UK curricula helped foster the development of intercultural competence and criticality, one of the main differences observed concerned the ways in which staff placed emphasis on comparisons between the American and German culture in order to engage students in critical discussions (see chapter 7). Overall the target language appeared to be employed more broadly across the curriculum, thus unifying the diversity of modules offered through a common aim: learning the foreign language. Another difference, which emerged between the two contexts, was the level of intellectual challenge in content modules and its contribution to criticality development. It was generally found that students in British universities made more frequent reference to ways in which their content modules provided them with opportunities to critically engage with knowledge at a very deep and sophisticated level, which helped them develop their criticality (see chapter 6).   Differences between the universities are discussed throughout the thesis but not as separate sections, as the issues concerning the separation of language and content, while manifested somewhat differently, resulted in comparable issues and implications for foreign language curricula, staff hierarchy and degree structures.

8.4 Significance of the study and contributions to the field

The study explored the issue of separation between language and content and its implication on the student experience, more broadly, and, more specifically, on students' development of intercultural competence and criticality.   As this issue emerged in the literature and policy documents describing both American and British foreign language degrees, this supported a rationale for a comparative study.   The study focused on German Studies and student views are drawn primarily from students near degree completion, who could look back and comment on many aspects of their degree programme.   While the study did not explore the issue beyond German Studies, it may be argued that in many ways outcomes may have been similar, should the investigation have looked at students studying a different language.   It should be pointed out however, that German Studies at university C was an 'exception to the rule' and the other language degrees offered at the same university did not undergo the same or even similar curriculum restructuring process. Results may therefore have been significantly different for university C, had the study explored a different language degree.

The study's findings however offer implications and recommendations relevant beyond the German Studies curriculum. There are implications for the theoretical frameworks of intercultural competence and criticality, for Modern Languages as a discipline and languages in Higher Education more generally, for policy and practice and further research.

8.5 Towards an expanded model of students' development of intercultural competence and criticality

While there was evidence that students across all four universities developed some degree of intercultural competence and criticality, the data also highlights areas for development.

Only a minority of students demonstrated an intercultural competence ranging across all five of the savoirs theorised in Byram's (1997) ICC model. Similar results were also found for criticality development, where only a small number of students' utterances could be coded as transformatory critique and even fewer made reference to the domain world. While on the one hand the results are encouraging as, at least in part, they confirm the effectiveness of the programmes in supporting students' development across these competencies, they also highlight areas for development.

An aspect of this doctoral research, which is innovative compared to previous studies on criticality and intercultural competence within Modern Language degrees, is the focus on both criticality and intercultural competence within one investigation. While the two theoretical conceptualisations are distinct from each other, and hence even the findings are discussed separately (with chapter 6 focusing on criticality and chapter 7 on intercultural competence), it was found that in some cases examples offered in the interview study could provide evidence both of intercultural competence and of criticality development. While Barnett's (1997) criticality model was designed for Higher Education and not specifically for Modern Languages, the present study and previous studying exploring students' development of criticality in Modern Language degrees have illustrates its applicability to the field.

Since the Southampton Project (2002-4) (Brumfit et al. (2005), doctoral studies have also explored criticality in Modern Languages; Yamada (2008) focused on a beginners Japanese course and Romero de Mills (2008) explored criticality development in undergraduate students of Spanish. Both make reference to the Southampton Project (Brumfit, 2005; Johnston et al. 2011), which exposed the applicability of Barnett's (1997) model to the discipline of Modern Languages. The findings of this study help illustrate the close relationship between criticality, as it is theorised in Barnett (1997), and Byram's (1997) conceptualisation of ICC as well as his later work (see Byram, 2008) Savoir

s'engager (Critical Cultural Awareness), in particular, makes reference to the learner's 'ability to evaluate critically and, on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries' (Byram, 1997, p.63). The aspect of criticality, which seemed to be most closely linked to savoir s'engager was the subdivision of criticality into the three domains: Knowledge, Self and World (Barnett, 1997) as these inevitably would require the student to reflect firstly on what is being read or otherwise acquired (knowledge), then evaluate how this knowledge may prompt a critical reflection on the self and subsequently on the world. For Modern Languages students the reflection on self and the world may also be fostered through critical comparisons between one's own language and culture and the one studied. Thus Barnett's work was found to be particularly relevant to the field of intercultural competence, and, in particular, to critical cultural awareness.

8.6 Implications for theory, research, policy and practice

From the data analysis, Modern Language degrees emerged as having the potential to significantly contribute to students' development of intercultural competence and criticality, thus confirming previous research findings (see Yamada, 2008; Houghton and Yamada, 2012; Guilherme, 2000; Romero de Mills, 2008; Brumfit, 2005; Johnston et al. 2011). While there was evidence of students effectively developing across these competencies, from the student interviews, developing linguistic and communicative competence still emerged, for the majority of students, as the main aim and expected outcome of their Modern Languages degree. For some students the critical exploration of culture and the reflection on their pre-established beliefs and world-views was described as an unexpected component of their degree. It was evident that many students did not fully understand the educational aims behind their degree programme, in particular with regards to the content area of the curriculum. This is likely to be linked to the misrepresentation of languages as 'purely functionalist, utilitarian skills that will get

young people good jobs at the end of their studies or schooling', which is ironically employed as a way of recruiting students to 'largely literary programmes' (Phipps, 2007, p.36).   From the data, however, content modules emerged as a positive component of Modern Language degrees and, while students often did not expect these modules to guide them towards critical reflection and reconsideration of both the 'known' and the 'other' in the texts and topics studied, they welcomed this 'discovered' dimension of their studies and often found a renewed intrinsic motivation in their learning as a result.

8.7 Implications for existing theory

The present study has provided evidence both in support of the theoretical frameworks, predominantly Byram's (1997) ICC model and Barnett's (1997) criticality model, which informed both the research instruments design and the data analysis, as well as exposing a gap in current theory.   Current theories should be able to fully account for data (Popper 1962, 1975), yet, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, new dimensions of criticality and intercultural competence emerged from the analysis.   The primary contributions to theory resulting from this study concern the coining of two new terms, namely Communicative Criticality, which adds to our understanding of criticality while placing a specific focus on the role of language learning, and Savoir se reconnaître/ awareness of otherness within self, proposed as a sixth savoir of Intercultural Communicative Competence.   These are summarized earlier in this chapter and discussed in greater detail in chapters 6 and 7 respectively.   Further implications for theory concern ways in which the much-debated relationship between language and culture are understood and how this translates into curricular aims for foreign language pedagogy.   It should be emphasised that while 'cultural studies' is often employed as an umbrella term in Modern Language degrees to refer to literature, media and cultural modules, which have a common aim, i.e. to explore the culture or cultures where the TL is spoken, the term culture itself has become increasingly more difficult to define.   Kramsch (2009) for instance makes

reference to the multilingual subject, and Risager (2006, 2007) proposes a transnational alternative to the national paradigm. Transnational and transcultural communication has become increasingly more frequent and accessible with the rise of virtual communication, that 'one can say that the whole field of foreign and second language learning, one of the fields of intercultural communication in general, rests on practices which are transnational par excellence' (Risager, 2017, p. 41). Implications for theory hence also concern reconsiderations of the national paradigm as well as the notion of native speaker versus intercultural speaker models, as proposed in Byram (1997, 2008). If language learning is, as Risager (2017) suggests, moving towards a transnational paradigm, the foreign language curricula should reflect this turn both from a theoretical perspective and in practice, through materials and teaching practices. Materials and teaching methods would need to take the transnational paradigm into account by presenting models of societies, which move away from more traditional notions of 'nation cultures' and portray the true transcultural image of a 21st century society.

8.8 Implications for further research

Outcomes of the study have provided a new perspective on intercultural learning in Modern Languages as well as exposing some of the issues with degree structures and curricula in the ways they affect the student experience. While the study aids to our understanding of intercultural competence and criticality development, further research could explore in more depth ways in which certain curricular models may be better designed to develop these competencies in students. The empirical study explored student views on the curriculum as it was being taught, but it may be interesting to explore alternative teaching approaches, for instance through action research methodologies. Furthermore this was the first doctoral study exploring both intercultural competence and criticality within the same investigation, which may prompt prospective researchers to similarly take a look at both frameworks. This may also lead to Barnett's work on

criticality becoming increasingly more relevant to research into foreign languages in Higher Education. The data analysis also revealed parallels between some descriptors of criticality and ICC, which at times resulted in the same interview extract being repeated in the discussion chapters. The extract from John's interview (University D), for example, provided evidence for transformatory critique both across the domain self and world as well as evidence of intercultural competence development, in particular *savoir être*. Similarly utterances drawn from Zak's interview (University A) provided both evidence for criticality, in particular reflexivity and transformatory critique across the domains knowledge and self, as well as for ICC, in particular *savoir s'engager*. The fact that some of the data provided evidence for both ICC and criticality development further highlights the relevance of Barnett's work to the literature on ICC as well as exposing some of the challenges in employing the frameworks for coding interview data. It should also be highlighted that *savoir s'engager* and *savoir être* emerged as the two savoirs that were more closely linked to Barnett's criticality model as they involve reflexivity and critical evaluation.   Further research may also draw on this finding in order to further illustrate the interconnectedness between the two frameworks.

8.9 Implications for policy and practice

The present study has implications for policy and practice both for Higher Education and foreign language teaching more generally.   It firstly presents a challenge to the portrayal and promotion of the study of languages as an additional 'skill', which may increase students' employability as the findings expose the much broader educational benefits drawn both from the humanities side of the degree, the content modules, as well as from the reflection, reconsideration and restructuring of the self which often takes place as an outcome of learning a foreign language.   Policy documents issued in the U.K. acknowledge the educational purpose of languages (see QAA 2015; Worton, 2009) as well as the increasingly important role of intercultural communication. The White Paper on

International Dialogue – "Living together as equals in dignity" (2008) further argues that 'intercultural competences should be taught and learned; spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened; and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level' (p.4). Yet the specific role of Modern Language degrees and the invaluable potential that language graduates can offer is not as clearly articulated in policy documents. The MLA (2007) report, on the other hand refers specifically to language degrees and argues that the 'language major should be structured to produce a specific outcome: educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence' (p.3). It is argued that policy documents should state more clearly the unique graduate attributes achieved through a Modern Language degree with the aim of promoting not only language learning in general but also specialist study at university. As Kelly (2003) points out, 'the main concern of government is with a general increase in language learning, and it is not specifically concerned to address the issue of a fall in students specialising in languages at university' (p.107). The progressively decreasing number of students studying towards language degrees, particularly in the U.K., has implications for employability as well; indeed finding suitably qualified linguists to fill vacancies which require near-native competence in a foreign language without recruiting overseas may become increasingly more challenging, particularly in the aftermath of Brexit. Implications for practice concern on the one hand ways in which language and content may be better integrated, both from a methodological perspective, through CLIL or CBI based pedagogies, as well as from a structural perspective, by restructuring Modern Language curricula in order to increase relevance across the three strands of language degrees, namely: language, content and the year abroad. With regards to the development of IC and criticality, implications for practice also concern staffing, in particular with regards to language tutors / instructors who are often fairly new to the profession and, as Klapper (2006) points out, many of the language teaching positions are

on a part-time or limited contract basis (Klapper, 2006). The situation is similar in the USA, where the lower-division language courses are often taught by non-tenure track faculty members, part-time lecturers or graduate students (MLA, 2007). Guidance and training hence should be offered in order to adequately support staff members in their efforts to incorporate IC and criticality objectives into their teaching.

8.10 Research reflections and limitations

The study explored the separation of language and content in Modern Language degrees by adopting a mixed-methods research design, which comprised a student questionnaire followed by an interview study. While the research instruments were effective, and generated both quantitative and qualitative data, thus providing the researcher with a reasonably comprehensive overview of both staff and students' perspectives on the phenomenon, other research designs such as grounded theory approaches, longitudinal studies or action research may have been able to explore students' experiences and their development of IC and criticality in greater depth. Nonetheless, given the comparative nature of the investigation, the limited time frame, ethical considerations concerning collecting data from human participants and limitation in funding, the chosen research design was very effective in generating enough data to gain a comprehensive picture of both student and staff views. A further advantage of the chosen design was that some of the data could be collected remotely, through the online questionnaire and Skype interviews. This was particularly important as it allowed students to take part in the follow-up interview even when the researcher was not on campus. Overall staff members at all four universities were very supportive of my research, without which the project could not have been undertaken as planned. Across all four universities, 56 questionnaire responses were returned of which 21 students volunteered to take part in the follow-up interview. Additionally 7 faculty members also agreed to be interviewed and their views played an invaluable role in the analysis.

Limitations of the study concern sample sizes, particularly for the questionnaire, as it would have been preferable to have a larger number of responses returned. The aim of the investigation, however, was not to prove causality, and hence the questionnaire was also guided by an overarching exploratory purpose with the aim of identifying patterns and trends in the data. The research findings are also not generalisable beyond the participants themselves, yet they add to our understanding of the experiences of Modern Language students. If the study were to be replicated with students studying a language other than German or in other universities, it would be unlikely to yield comparable results, yet similarities may be found with regards to the following areas: students' preference for being taught content in the target language (see also McBride, 2001, 2002, 2003), an identification of content modules as an area of the curriculum which effectively fosters criticality development (see also Brumfit, 2005; Mitchell and Johnston, 2004), a view that the experience of learning a language per se guides the learner towards a reconsideration of his or her own language / languages and a preference towards approaches which offer students both greater opportunities to employ the target language as well as texts and topics which are intellectually challenging across the curriculum. Findings also may vary according to the type of institution selected. Universities B and C in particular are regarded as prestigious institutions nationally and internationally. This inevitably affects the calibre of the student intake and arguably the degree to which students are committed to their university education. Further research may be able to gain a more comprehensive perspective of the phenomenon through longitudinal studies, which explore the experiences of students throughout the undergraduate programme or even through a larger-scale quantitative survey administered across a much larger number of Modern Language programmes.

Closing statement

This doctoral research has significantly evolved since the original proposal I submitted for my application. The initial literature review led me to the discovery of the complexity behind the separation of language and content both in ways in which it was observable in degree structures, and more broadly in the relationship between language and culture as it is extensively discussed in the literature. Gieve and Cunico (2012) was a very influential publication as it summarised some of the issues addressed in this thesis, for instance by recognising the separation between language and content in Modern Language degrees as problematic, as well as making reference to Byram's work on intercultural competence. Following an extensive literature review, I also came across the Southampton project and doctoral work on criticality in Modern Languages that was undertaken afterwards. This opened a new direction for my thesis allowing me to explore both theoretical models in my investigation. The rationale for a US-UK comparative study was also drawn from the literature review, particularly after having recognised ways in which the separation between language and content appeared to affect both educational contexts. The experience of studying towards a PhD has furthermore both increased my knowledge and interest in conducting further research and affected my own teaching practice, for example in the ways in which I carefully select texts and topics that can help students develop a more critical perspective on culture. As Byrnes (2008, p.116) points out,

> If we want our students to develop high levels of literacy and a critical orientation, we must engage them, at all levels, in an explicit focus in language. Not just language, but explicitness about how language works to mean.

The thesis aimed to expose precisely this: if the aim of a Modern Language degree is to develop both 'high levels of fluency' and a 'critical orientation', both the language and content elements of the programme need to be designed in such a way that students' literacy in the foreign language continues to be developed even in content modules.

Furthermore the teaching of language needs to be more critically explored in order to enable students to view language as having a meaning-making function.

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Questionnaire survey

The dichotomy of language and content - Implications for Criticality and Intercultural Competence

1 = strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= slightly disagree 4= slightly agree 5= agree 6 = strongly agree

1. DEGREE OF INTEGRATION (BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CONTENT)

1.1 There is a good level of integration between language and content modules

1.2 Tasks in language modules are relevant to content modules

1.3 Feedback provided in content modules was similar to that provided in language modules

1.4 Content module tasks are helpful in developing the linguistic competence needed in language modules

1.5 Both content and language modules provided feedback on language (e.g. errors in grammar, spelling, vocabulary) as well content.

1.6 Topics in language modules are relevantly linked to those covered in content

2. TARGET LANGUAGE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

2.1 German is the main medium of instruction in content modules.

2.2 When asking clarification in content modules, students mostly use German

2.3 Most of my content modules are assessed in German (e.g. the essays / papers need to be written in German).

2.4 When responding to questions in content modules, students mostly use German.

2.5 German is the main medium of instruction in language modules.

2.6 When asking for clarification in language modules, students mostly use German.

2.7 Most of my language modules are assessed in German (e.g. grammar / language skills exams, writing tasks).

2.8 When responding to questions in language modules, students mostly use German.

2.9 I prefer content to be taught in German.

2.10 In content modules, I prefer German to be the language used for teacher – student interaction.

2.11 In content modules I prefer German to be the language used for assessments.

2.12 I prefer language modules to be taught in the German.

2.13 In language modules, I prefer German to be the language used for teacher – student interaction.

2.14 In language modules, I prefer German to be the language used for assessments.

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CONTENT

3.1 The separation between language and content reduces opportunities to use the target language (in this case German) across the curriculum.

3.2 The separation between language and content makes language look less important.

3.3 I feel that language and content should be better integrated.

3.4 There are fewer opportunities to use German because content is often taught in English.

3.5 I believe the separation between language and content causes confusion.

3.6 I work harder in content modules because they are more important.

3.7 I chose to study German at this university because I feel the programme attempts to better integrate language and content.

3.8 My institution offers language modules, which are taught in content, this is certainly an advantage.

3.9 I like the fact that relevant links are made between language and content topics.

3.10 At my institution I like the fact that content is mostly taught in

German.

3.11 The fact that language and content appeared to be relevantly incorporated at my institution was one of the reasons I chose to study here.

3.12 The fact that content is taught in German is a great characteristic of my programme.

3.13 In my programme I particularly like the fact that attempts are made to make language topics relevant to content topics.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICALITY

4.1 When reading a text, I carefully consider the writer's views.

4.2 I now have a more critical outlook at interpreting texts (compared to pre-university).

4.3 I am now more critical about accepting interpretations of texts.

4.4 German studies has transformed my approach at interpreting what I read.

4.5 My university experience has helped me reflect upon my own beliefs.

4.6 My education has made me reflect upon how traditions shape my way of thinking.

4.7 In my daily life I am now more critical in accepting other people's beliefs.

4.8 Through my university experience I feel I have changed as a person.

4.9 My university experience has enabled me to solve problems in intercultural real world situations.

4.10 My university experience has helped me develop my own view on cultures.

4.11 When I find myself in a difficult intercultural communication situation, I now carefully reflect upon the best solution

4.12 I am now more confident in taking action when it comes to defending my own beliefs about world cultures

5. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

5.1 The topics covered offered opportunities to gain some insight into cultural awareness.

5.2 German studies overall helped me value beliefs in other cultures.

5.3 Topics covered have stimulated my curiosity for other cultures.

5.4 The university experience has helped me decentre my own beliefs when exploring other cultures.

5.5 My German studies programme has helped me develop insight into how cultures are represented in texts.

5.6 I now have a greater awareness of the relationship between cultures and their representation in authors' views.

5.7 When confronted with a cultural practice (e.g. celebrating a religious holiday) I compare it to my own culture / cultures.

5.8 My university experience has provided me opportunities to compare other cultural practices with my own culture / cultures.

5.9 The experience in your degree programme helped you explore cultures through research.

5.10 Researching about cultural practices in other countries was a skill developed in your course of study.

5.11 My university experience enabled me to critically evaluate practices and beliefs of the foreign culture.

5.12 Through comparisons I have learned a lot about my own culture / cultures.

5.13 My degree programme has created opportunities for me to critically compare other cultures to my own.

6. COMPARING LANGUAGE AND CONTENT MODULES

6.1 Content modules provided greater opportunity to develop a critical awareness of cultures than language modules.

6.2 Group discussion in content modules helped me develop my critical thinking skills.

6.3 Discussion in language modules made me reflect on cultural practices of different countries.

6.4 The year abroad was the most influential experience factor to help me develop my understanding of culture.

6.5 Language modules place greater emphasis on critically comparing different cultures than content modules.

6.6 After my year abroad I was able to better understand both the Target Culture (in this case German culture) and my own.

6.7 Class activities in language modules made me reflect upon different cultural practices.

6.8 Class activities in content modules contributed considerably to my development of critical thinking.

7. STUDENT SATISFACTION

7.1 My German studies programme has helped me develop cultural appreciation.

7.2 My German studies programme has given me opportunities to compare other cultural beliefs with my own.

7.3 My German studies programme has provided opportunities to practice the Target Language

(German).

7.4 My German studies programme has provided a good balance between language and content courses.

7.5 My German studies programme has ensured that students are offered a good number of language and content modules to choose from.

7.6 My German studies programme has provided a good proportion of classes (language and content) taught entirely or mostly in German.

7.7 Overall I am very satisfied with the language modules in general.

7.8 Overall I am very satisfied with the content modules in general.

7.9 Overall I am very satisfied with the year abroad experience.

7.10 Overall I am very satisfied with overall educational experience

8. Which of these is your institution?

University A University B University C University D

9. Have you spent a period abroad?

Thank you for participating in the survey!

10. Please provide your email address if you would like to take part in the follow up interview.

_____

STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY'S GERMAN STUDIES PROGRAMME

- Could you describe the German degree programme here at University A/B/C/D in terms of how the language and content modules are structured– who teaches them and what is taught?

TARGET LANGUAGE

- What kind of feedback is the programme getting on content taught in the TL?
- How does teaching content taught in German impact student motivation / satisfaction with the programme?
- What is the rationale from the educational perspective to teach content in the target language?
- Would you say this helps increase the relevance between the language and content modules?
- Some academics have argued that one cannot reach the same level of breath and depth when teaching and assessing content in the target language, what's your view on this?

LANGUAGE & CONTENT

- Do you feel language and content could be better integrated? How?
- Do students still receive feedback on language even in their content modules? Would this be possible if they were taught and assessed in English?
- Are students assessed on content in their language modules?
- What kind of exposure to cultural knowledge do they receive in language modules? – learning about culture i.e. geography, food, linguistic expressions with cultural references or exploration and comparison?

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

- With regards to the development of intercultural competence, would you say that finalist students demonstrate the ability to compare cultural practices and beliefs of the foreign culture to their own?

- Do you feel their experience of studying a foreign language and culture helps them understand what it means to be British or others' views on British people?

- Does the year abroad play a significant role in making students critically reflect on pre-established beliefs and notions of culture?

- Do you feel students are able to make connection between the aspects of culture learned at university during their year abroad in a German speaking country?

CRITICALITY

- When comparing language and the content modules, which of these do you feel best prepares students to critically reflect upon how culture affects beliefs and customs in different cultures? Why?

- From your teaching experience within the German department, would you say that students (particularly in their earlier years of study) find it difficult to accept different views for instance on history, politics or beliefs more generally? - How do their attitudes change over the four-year period?

YEAR ABROAD, CRITICALITY and IC

- Generally, are most student pleased with the year abroad experience? What do they like about it?
- Have any reported difficulties due to cultural differences?
- In which way does the year abroad help transform students' attitudes towards beliefs about the foreign culture and their own?
- Does the year abroad play a significant role in making students critically reflect on pre-established beliefs and notions of culture?
- Upon their return, do you feel the experience has helped them transform their views on "the foreign" and extend this to the way they view the world and take action in their daily life?
- In which way do the language or content modules help guide students towards developing as intercultural beings (the understanding of the varied and multiple reality of which we are part) / (intercultural speakers) a mediator of both languages and cultures?
- What does the year abroad assessment task consist of and how does it help guide students towards a critical reflection on culture?
- What do students particularly enjoy of their learning experience?
- What do you feel is the greatest educational value they take with them upon graduation?

STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

(The interview guide does not include all questions asked to students as questions related to the questionnaire responses differed for each student interviewed. The interviews employed the following questions as a guide and questions may have been formulated differently and may have appeared in a different order.)

SEPARATION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CONTENT

- How would you describe the difference between the language and content modules you have taken? (upper-level / lower level for US interviews)
- In which way was culture taught in your language / lower-level classes?
- Was your knowledge of culture assessed in language classes? How?
- Did you work harder in language or content classes? Why?
- Does feedback in content / upper-level still include some focus on language (grammar, vocabulary)?

INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE AND CRITICALITY

- Which classes (language or content) have created more opportunities for you to critically reflect on the foreign culture?

- In which way have they helped you compare the foreign culture to your own?

STUDY ABROAD / YEAR ABROAD

- Have you studied abroad?
- Has this experience changed your perspective on different cultures? In which way?

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE – CRITICALITY

- Has your university experience helped you solve problems in intercultural real world situations?
- Are you now more confident in taking action to defend your own beliefs about world cultures?

UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE – INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Do you feel your university experience enabled you to de-center yourself from your own culture or cultures and see things from an outsider's perspective?
- Were you able, for instance, to recognize how people view Americans / British people abroad? Did this help you understand your own culture better?

TARGET LANGUAGE

- Do you prefer your content courses to be taught in German or English? Why?
- Do you feel that being taught in German helps to maintain an awareness of language in content courses?
- How do you feel about content courses taught in English? Have you taken any?
- Would you have preferred for them to be taught in German? Why?
- What did you enjoy most at your university? Why?

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND INFORMED CONSENT – STAFF AND STUDENT INTERVIEWS

Participant Information Sheet

Invitation

Dear [Student / Staff],

I am a PhD student in applied linguistics at the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures at the University of Hull, in the United Kingdom.   My research study aims to explore different approaches toward curricular structures in Modern Language degree programmes both in the U.K. and in the U.S. Some institutions have adopted more integrated degree structures with the aim of reducing the separation between language and content (literature, cultural studies etc.), while others follow a more traditional curriculum and thus language and content are taught in parallel. Although degree programmes in the U.S. and the U.K. differ in many ways, the issue of integration between the two components is one that has been raised in the literature of both counties.

[While the primary aim of my study is to explore student views on the phenomenon, I am also interested in gaining a better understanding through interviews with members of staff who have been involved with curriculum design / decision-making within your department.] STAFF INTERVIEWS

Before deciding to take part in the study, please read the following information carefully.   If there are any aspects of the project, which are unclear to you, please ask for clarification or more information.

How is the research being conducted?

The semi-structured [student / staff] interviews consist of a number of questions to frame responses while allowing the interviewee to elaborate on any particular point. The interview will take approximately 20 – 30 minutes and every effort will be made to ensure it is scheduled on a day and time, which is convenient for you.

Rights and benefits of taking part in the study

The research will be conducted in accordance with the ethical requirements of the University of Hull, UK. Your participation is fully voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.   You may also choose not to answer questions that you do not wish to.

As a benefit to your department, you will have access to the findings of this study as well as any publications resulting from this research.

Who is funding the research project?

The study is not externally funded, rather it is an independent doctoral research project overseen by the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures at the University of Hull.

What will happen to the results?

The research results will form the empirical study of the doctoral thesis. Additionally, some results, findings and conclusions drawn from the study may be published in peer-reviewed journals concerned with language learning, intercultural competence, criticality development and the study of languages in higher education. If you are interested, I would be pleased to provide you with some of the results from this study or a copy of the published results. You are welcome to ask any questions about this study either before its commencement, during the data collection process or afterwards.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Kind Regards,

Elinor Parks

Informed Consent

Investigating dualistic degree structures in Modern Languages – Implications for Criticality and Intercultural Competence

Interview Consent Form

This study explores the dichotomy of language and content in Higher Education with particular focus on the implications for the development of Intercultural Competence and Criticality in undergraduates. [While the study examines a student perspective on the phenomenon, staff interviews are invaluable in informing the researcher about the complexity behind curricular decisions and gaining a more in-depth perspective on the phenomenon.] STAFF INTERVIEWS This study is undertaken by Elinor Parks, doctoral student at the University of Hull, School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures.

I have read and understood the information about this study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study without consequences at anytime simply by informing the researcher of my decision.

I understand who will have access to identifying information provided and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.

I am aware of whom to contact should I have questions following my participation in this study.

I give my permission to the researcher to use recordings and any notes taken during the interview for research purposes.

I understand that this project has been reviewed by and received ethical clearance through the University of Hull Research Ethics Committee.

I agree to participate in this study.

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

INTERVIEW CODING – SELECTED SAMPLE FROM A STAFF INTERVIEW

Researcher – Could you briefly describe how the upper level and lower level are structured within the German department? For example what kind of courses are offered at each level?

STAFF – When you talk about lower level, are you talking about..

Researcher - Yeah, I'm referring to German 1-6.

STAFF – Ok so German 1-6 is the cycle of 2 years in German. 1-3 is the first year and 4-6 is the second year.   The first year is based on a textbook, Vorschprung and supplemented with a book on culture in English, Germany unravelling an enigma.

[CURRICULUM – Teaching of language is supplemented with an extra text in English specifically on CULTURE – levels 1-3 A1 – B2 (intermediate) Raise awareness about the importance of CULTURE learning about culture, history geography grammar cultural awareness – advanced language course – based on Tagesschau (different topics) – content based course – based on a play abut returning soldiers.]

So we follow the textbook for German language and I try to incorporate culture units in English for the first year. What I'm trying to do with this is to raise awareness among students how important it is to talk about culture together with the language and again I think it is best to do this in English at the beginning. But I'm also trying to bring in things in German, simple things in German that we can try to discuss even with their simple language. In the second year the textbook that we are using, Denk Mal, is really structured around culture so … there is a lot about cities in Germany, about history and about Germany and the German people. In addition to this I'm using a Grammar book Handbuch zur deutschen Grammatik. So, again I'm trying to integrate as much culture as possible but the first few years are still focused on students mastering the German language as much as possible but with a very strong cultural awareness. In the upper-division courses I move to a more … hybrid approach, meaning I am doing both. In German [class code], [class code], which are called advanced language courses, I base them on whatever is happening in Germany. So they are both based on news, so we do Tagesschau in 100 Sekunden, they are both based on what is happening in Germany. And the vocabulary exercises are based on the vocabulary being used and I introduce some more complicated grammar points, but I try to integrate this as much as possible, so for example the passive voice is used a lot in news or Konjunktiv, I so I'm incorporating those too within the framework.

Researcher – Yeah, so they can see the purpose..

STAFF – Yeah exactly. That's for German [class code]. As for German [class code] that's based on a play Draussen vor der Tür which is a post-war German play that deals pretty much with post-traumatic stress disorder that the German soldiers came with ..at home and I'm trying to connect it with the problems of veterans that we have right now in the United States.

[5 Cs – connections / comparisons

IC – savoir comprendre "Skills of interpreting and relating: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.". MLA (2007) report – Links to P.3

"Americans need to be open to the world; we need to be able to see the world through the eyes of others if we are going to understand how to resolve the complex problems we face."

CRITICALITY – Level 3 - Refashioning of traditions / Domain WORLD (mutual understanding]

Researcher – Wow, that's very interesting actually so you make them reflect on and make comparisons between something that is happening in the United States.

STAFF – Yeah, actually this is something I try to do a lot. Like the Business German or multicultural Germany or this course with the veterans …, obviously looking at World War 2 and raising awareness among students about what is happening in the world nowadays is very important and.. using German material. I mean you could use any language produce, you could just bring in what's happening in the country and tie it in to what's happening in the US.   I don't know if…

Researcher – No, that's perfect. This is exactly one of the points I wanted to explore because it links to criticality. So if you're giving them an opportunity to make comparisons between their own culture and a different culture then not only can that facilitate their development of intercultural competence, ability to recognise different cultures and communicate effectively across cultures but possibly also develop a critical view on perspectives…

STAFF – Yeah that's my main thing. What is for me personally important as a person, as a teacher is to raise critical thinking, like social engagement on political and social issues.

[Prompting students towards critical action through critical thinking]

Researcher – And how have students reacted towards activities that cause them to reflect upon..

STAFF – You know students are actually very open. You know in a college environment I think in a way it's very privileged because people are very open minded. I mean those kinds of lessons I think would be a thousand times more useful in communities that are not as open-minded.

[Importance of foreign language teaching in schools and foreign language requirement for university – possibly an argument for compulsory foreign language learning in schools – to promote intercultural understanding

TELLING

If these discussions / comparisons increase intrinsic motivation for language learning at university they may also work in schools]

I think it may help them think in different ways. Students react to it … never in a defensive way.   They obviously argue and like to portray their points of view but they are also liberal and are open to exploring these types of issues. I think what makes it especially interesting for students and what I saw ..really a lot of engagement when they start to understand issues in their own county by discussing the same issues in another country.

[IC – saviour comprendre Potentially applicable to all the savioirs including critical cultural awareness -

Critical cultural awareness: an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries]

 It's goals like culture but also culture that is understood a bit broader…   like in the Business German that we're doing right now just for example looking at the unions and how workers are unionised in Germany and this constant struggle with unions on the part of the republicans.

I mean here what rights people have in Germany when they work versus the rights they have here. Also the minimum wage in Germany, even the tax brackets, how taxes are structured. I mean even students who don't have much interest in economy I could see this really helps them understand how everything impacts

even their own lives and what are the values that different cultures have and how they fit into individual people

Maybe I'm going off on a tangent but culture for me, studying culture, teaching for me is not only about knowledge, but for me personally it's about making a world a better place. So I want the students to …

[Critical being – taking action]

like I happen to study German but you could use this with any language, that's why I think studying language and culture is so important.

Researcher – Yes because it can have that social / transformational role. Highest level of criticality in Barnett's framework – critical being, the highest level– beyond critical thinking, critical being is when you encompass that.. [more on definition – left out]

You act in a different way on the basis of your ability to critically evaluate what is going on in the world and this affects your own behaviour. I was wondering whether you think that's actually taking place in your students. Whether their experience of being students here has transformed their actions.

STAFF - I think in some small ways it does. I'll give you a specific example, I hope it's not going to be personal because it's about head-covering. We had this class on multicultural Germany and we talked a lot about the headscarf and all the debates in Germany and how it became this symbol for many people of islamophobia. And one of the students said that there was a talk here at [university name] and she was helping seating people and there was a student with a headscarf and she had a backpack. A couple of people came up to security and asked specifically to check this woman's backpack. And "I was outraged", she said. The way that I could analyse it and think and even respond to those people, she said … I wouldn't have had enough tools and ways to talk about it if I hadn't taken his class.

[Links between content course and critical action / critique in action

Clearly fostered through instruction]

Researcher – Yeah, that's a clear example of how the class made her change her way of thinking and made her examine something in a completely different context.

STAFF – Exactly, and she even said something..

Researcher – So she took action.

STAFF –So she took action.

Researcher – Yeah that would be achieving the highest level. Yeah that's excellent. So this was a student who took your course.

STAFF – Yeah, I mean obviously not all students will act.

Researcher – But even the fact that it's disturbing them…recognizing discrimination in a completely different context.

Well that's excellent! Let's see if we can move onto one of the other points. We've discussed the linguistic focus. With your personal view on the two-tiered structure, if we look at that the MLA report states – a two-tiered structure impedes a unified curriculum. Have you observed this to be the case in your institution?

[Two-tiered – not affecting her courses because those are indeed content based]

STAFF – You know, it doesn't for me. We have lots of faculty leaving so I'm pretty much the only person doing upper-division language courses. It's probably not good for the department, there should be other people doing this. It's going to happen soon. Since my view is that I try to integrate those two together like the examples I gave you like [class code], [class code], even the title "composition and conversation on contemporary German issues" but it's still focused on language versus the "Business German" and

"Multicultural Germany" which focus on the literature, like for me yes there is a bit more focus on language in those first two classes because we work a bit more intensively on vocabulary but in terms of…

[Clear examples of content-based courses that maintain a linguistic focus as well, taught in German – a good example of bridging / overcoming traditional challenges of a two-tiered structure]

I mean there are so many over-lapses, even if you teach the language, if I take a random exercise from a grammar book or if you base the same exercise from a content piece it makes a difference in what you're trying to do.

[Importance of basing even grammar exercises in content]

But I'm not saying I wouldn't get rid of what is considered traditional language teaching in terms of.. I mean I think you have to do grammar and you have to do vocabulary

Researcher – but you are able to integrate it in a content..

STAFF - I try to integrate it, it doesn't always work but I try

Researcher – So within your content courses there still remains a linguistic focus

STAFF – Well, you know…I mean yeah I would say there is always this linguistic focus. When you say linguistic focus it seems like that's what we do. I'm always very flexible, I try to base it… it's also content based but I also go by the group of people that I get. I try to tailor it as much … like if I feel that students need more of the grammar and language instructions then I put more emphasis on that. But you know also having the content..

Researcher – And are your content courses taught in German?

STAFF – They are taught in German …for the multicultural class we do some theory reading in English, just to open some thinking.

Researcher – And are they being assessed in German as well?

STAFF – Well sometimes… again.. yeah, so the multicultural Germany.. all the primary literature,

[Taught mostly in German – assessed at least partially in German]

literary texts, newspapers we discuss those in German and they write about it in German but.. when we have some theoretical texts we read them in English and discuss them in English.

Researcher – Do you feel that similar same level of communicative and linguistic competence could be achieved if lower level courses were taught in content? I mean if there was a particular theme like in the upper-division courses.

STAFF – I don't know. I think it could be too repetitive in terms of the content because with very limited language there is only as much as you can say about the content. So if you only have just one particular theme I think you would limit the vocabulary and it would become very repetitive. So I mean content yes but I wouldn't limit it to one theme. I would probably open it to a spectrum of themes. Because you cannot really go in depth so since you cannot go deep then you need to widen it.

Challenges of content-based curricula in lowest level – suggest a spectrum of themes Links with CLIL and CBI literature

Researcher – Ok so we've sort of discussed this already, but with regards to the development of intercultural competence, would you say that students for example towards the end of their degree demonstrate the ability to compare cultural practices and beliefs of the foreign culture to their own?

STAFF – Well some do and some don't. Most do, I think. Because this is something that's so important to me personally and because I place so much emphasis on this in class, the comparative aspect. Even being more practical. I just try to move them to what you called so nicely "critical being", I cannot obviously force them to do anything. But you know with small projects like "what would you do if you had the means to… or what world problem would you start to tackle or what is the most important issue for you.

[Questions prompting critical thinking in the world domain and imagining to take action - Fostering criticality]

Researcher – And would you say it's the content courses that have a greater emphasis on building this ability?

STAFF – Yeah they do. mean I try again to do it with the lower level but since it is in English and many students just see it as…"ah you know, I came here to learn German, why are you giving me all that culture stuff in English.

[Issue with lower-level – some students fail to understand why they need to learn about culture]

Researcher – yeah they don't understand the relevance of it

STAFF – I mean I'm trying to do my best to really show them the relevance but you know I think for people who just came to take their language requirement and don't really plan to continue with the language… I mean maybe some of them will get it but many of them won't because they just don't think it's important.

Researcher – So maybe the aim of a language course needs to be redefined where students understand that the purpose of learning a foreign language isn't just to achieve communicative competence.

STAFF – Yeah and I think many students have that notion like they just think they come to learn the language. They understand language as..divorced from culture. I think that's a good point that we should really redefine for students what learning is, I mean if you want really want to learn language then buy a Rosetta Stone.

[LANGUAGE & CULTURE Issue with the image or pre-conceived beliefs about language learning - i.e. attaining communicative competence Needs to be re-defined, understood differently]

Researcher – Yes, exactly, which is an instrumental approach.

[HE – language learning should be understood as more than achieving fluency – many alternatives for instrumental language learning]

STAFF – Exactly yes that's a good way of saying it.

Researcher - And that too has been identified in the literature. Sometimes in higher education it seems like some language courses are offered almost for an instrumental purpose. And many researchers have argued that within an educational context the purpose of language learning should be an educational purpose. So they're not just learning to communicate but it needs to shape..

STAFF – Yeah. At the same time I think that language learning is a process that really open up people even if they learnt it for the instrumental value,

[The process of language learning per se opens the learner towards discovery, curiosity, enquiry – as stated in one of the student interviews – for some learners this is unexpected, transforms their interest / attitudes towards language learning]

mainly, I mean there is something happening to people when they start communicating in a second language, something opens up.. I mean you cannot really be antagonist towards culture   because language…

[Language learning per se may bring the learner closer to the Target Culture]

Researcher – of course there are cultural references within a language

STAFF – and I think for students it's a very rewarding experience because after a short time you've really learnt quite a lot so I think even learning for an instrumental purpose opens up people but again doing the culture…

Researcher – and have you taught some students who have already been on their year abroad, and do they come back changed?

STAFF – yeah they do, they always do

Researcher – in which way?

STAFF – oh they want to go back.

[Increased intrinsic motivation]

Culture plays a more important role once students have learnt more about the language – achieving fluency may no longer be the most important goal

I think they are more open to the culture, to learning more about culture.

Researcher – do you feel they have incorporated aspects of German culture and incorporated them in the things that they do?

STAFF – Well they like Berlin, you know people coming from [name of city] they love Berlin, they like European, German cities, big cities. They want to travel more…actually.. now that I'm thinking about it, people who went abroad like to Germany and opened up to German culture they start opening up more towards their cultures, like they want to start exploring other cultures

[CRITICALITY - Level 4: TRANSFORMATORY CRITIQUE

World domain - now want to explore other cultures as well. Educational purpose - 5Cs Communities Extending learning experiences from the world language classroom to the home and multilingual and multicultural community emphasises living in a global society. And something more – look for literature on extending curiosity for the TL to a broader curiosity for the foreign in general – check Kramsch / Byrnes other on IC]

I had this student who was very much into German and he went for several months to Germany and then he came back and was still into German but then he got interested in Japan. And in Japan he met some Japanese people who lived in Germany and now he's passionate about Japan and Germany.   And I think for other people who go to Germany they start travelling around Europe. They want to learn even another language. So I think they crave more of this being exposed to something different and embrace it.

Now that they've embraced German culture to some degree they want more of this..

So I think this a great..

Researcher – Ok , looking at final students, what is their particular reason for choosing this department?

STAFF – I think most students come to [name of university] because they want to study something else and then they start taking German classes and they like it so much that want to stay with it, then they expand it to either a minor or a second major or some even switch to a German major which I don't always recommend.

[Importance of high quality teaching / increasing intrinsic motivation / acknowledging and rewarding progress / The language modules are a way to increase enrolment and general interest for continuing to study foreign languages. The importance of a foreign language requirement]

Researcher – And is it a language or a content course or either one?

STAFF - I think it's either one, it usually starts with the language but some people come who already speak German and start taking content courses. I think it's both.

Researcher – and I think the variety, your department offers a variety Jewish studies, linguistics..

STAFF – yeah

Researcher – Have any students raised concerns that they are not able to reach the same level of depth when writing in German or are they concerned about their grade?

STAFF - No, not really. I always take that into consideration.. well you have to. And in some classes if I feel that there is really so much depth in the topic they would not be able to do it in terms of thinking in German ..then I just let them write an essay in English.

[Students do not feel discouraged to write papers in the target language. Sometimes they are given the option. The importance of a foreign language requirement.]

  Not for every assignment because in some I just want them to master the skill – the language – but some I open up. Last quarter I taught a film class and there was one essay they had to write in German, one in English and one they had the choice to write the essay in German or in English.

Researcher – Would you say that students generally prefer to be taught in German?

STAFF – Yeah, they do.

[Students prefer to be taught in the TL – confirmed by student interviews and questionnaire results]

Researcher – They have expressed that?

STAFF – Actually, yes. And they also like this.. because it helps them master the language. Also because they still have this … because it helps the master the language

Researcher – Plus if they have an interest in the language, they enjoy hearing it..

STAFF – Yes, right, they enjoy hearing it and it's great. But students also like this multicultural Germany class when there is a lot in Germ but theory in English, they like that very much too.

Researcher – None of the courses you teach are taught entirely in English?

STAFF – No.

Researcher – Have any students expressed a wish for more classes taught in German?

STAFF – No..

UNIVERSITY OF Hull

PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY[19] AND RECEIVE A SOUVENIR FROM LONDON!

Project title:
Investigating dualistic degree structures in Modern Languages – Implications for Criticality and Intercultural Competence

A mixed-methods comparative study in two UK and US Higher Education Institutions

WHERE AND WHEN:

I will be visiting [University's name] in week commencing 30th March and will be on campus throughout the week.

About the research study:

The study aims to:

- **Explore student views on the separation between language and content at university**
- **Compare different curricular approaches to the teaching of Modern Languages**
- **Investigate the implications of the separation between language and content on the development of intercultural competence and criticality**
- **Evaluate which curricular structures best support student development of the above**

How is the data collected?

- **The study consists of an online questionnaire / a paper version is also available**
- **At the end of the questionnaire you will be asked if you would like to take part in the follow up interview**
- **Some of the interview questions may be based on your survey responses so it is very important that the responses reflect your views**

NOTE: When completing the questionnaire, one of the questions will ask you to select your institution. To maintain confidentiality, you university will be known as **UNIVERSITY C.**

What is meant by *language* and *content?*

'Language' refers to lower-level classes, which focus on developing the linguistic and communicative competence needed to access upper-level courses.

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[19] To receive your London souvenir you must also be selected to participate in the interview study. Those taking part in the survey only will still be able to pick up a postcard from London (while supplies last).

'Content' refers to the upper-level courses, which focus on an area of German studies (e.g. literature or film).

What is meant by *intercultural competence* and *criticality?*

Intercultural competence is understood as the ability to interact effectively with people of other cultures that we consider to be different from our own.

Criticality is a similar concept to critical thinking but it is drawn from the work of Barnett (1997). Criticality encompasses three domains: knowledge, the self and the world, three forms: critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action and four levels: critical skills, reflexivity, refashioning of traditions and transformatory critique (the highest level).

Questionnaire web-link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/language_and_content

Invitation
Dear Students,
I am a PhD student in applied linguistics at the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures at the University of Hull, in the United Kingdom. My research study aims to explore different approaches towards curricular structures in Modern Language degree programs and their implications for students' development of intercultural competence and criticality.
Your participation in this study is greatly valued, as it will help develop a better understanding of the student perspective on this phenomenon.
Before deciding to take part in the study, please read the following information carefully.

How is the research being conducted?

The research project consists of an initial questionnaire survey and subsequently follow-up interviews for participants wishing to take part. The questionnaire will be available online and will take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete while the interviews will take about 20 minutes.

Benefits and rights of taking part in the study

Taking part in this international research project would give you the unique opportunity to gain insight into timely issues, which have recently featured in conferences and appeared in journal articles published both in the UK and the USA. If you have an interest in languages in Higher Education, the relationship between language and culture or applied linguistics, taking part in this study would provide you with an opportunity to engage with theory as well as critically reflect upon your own learning experience.

The research will be conducted in accordance with the ethical requirements of the University of Hull. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any point. All questionnaire responses are confidential and personal data will not be collected at any point.
If you wish to take part in the interview study, please state this at the end of the questionnaire by entering your email address. Participants taking part in the interview study will receive a souvenir from London!
Depending upon the number of students wishing to participate in the interview study, you may or may not be requested to take part.

Who is funding the research project?
The study is not externally funded, rather it is an independent doctoral research project overseen by the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures at the University of Hull.

What will happen to the results?
The research results will form the empirical study of my doctoral thesis. Additionally, some results, findings and conclusions drawn from the study may be published in peer-reviewed journals concerned with language learning, intercultural competence and the study of languages in higher education. If you are interested, I would be pleased to provide you with some of the results from this study. You

are welcome to ask any questions about this study either before its commencement or during the data collection process.
Thank you taking the time to read this information sheet.

Kind Regards,
Elinor Parks