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Exploring the relationships between perceptions of cultural competence, motivation, and proficiency in UK Spanish language classrooms

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Abstract

Culture and cultural understanding have long been considered integral parts in the language learning process but often receive little attention in the foreign language classroom. Especially in the input-poor MFL classroom settings in England and the UK, curriculum and assessment focus on linguistic achievement, leaving students without cultural competence skills. Alongside the lack of culture teaching, foreign language students in the UK also face incredibly low levels of motivation and often low linguistic proficiency. This mixed-methods classroom level case study sought to investigate the three variables of cultural competence perceptions, motivation, and proficiency together to explore relationships between student perceptions of cultural competence with the latter, specifically utilising Byram's (1997) Intercultural Communicative Competence model and Dörnyei's (2009) Second Language Motivation Self-System. Student and teacher-directed online surveys explored each variable, and student surveys were followed by semi-structured group interviews allowing participants to expand on their survey answers and discuss their perceptions.

Study findings validate previous research findings, showing that cultural competence is not being taught at length and students are only familiar with static culture facts about traditions, festivals, and the like. However, students and their teacher expressed a desire to learn and teach more culture and held positive perceptions of cultural aspects more closely related to cultural competence. Areas for future research which emerged were relationships between students' culture perceptions and attitudes towards their learning environment, and how to use culture and cultural competence as motivators in the foreign language classroom.

Keywords: Cultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, motivation, proficiency, secondary school students, teaching, MFL, Spanish

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List of Abbreviations

UK	United Kingdom
ICC	Intercultural communicative competence
CEFR	Common European Framework of References for languages
IDI	Intercultural development inventory
L1	First language
L2	Second language
EAL	English as an additional language
DfE	Department for Education
MFL	Modern foreign language
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
L2MSS	L2 Motivational Self-System
KS3	Key Stage 3
KS4	Key Stage 4
CUREC	Central University Research Ethics Committee

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1. Introduction

Culture is recognised as a fundamental component in second and foreign language (L2) learning. It has been argued that one cannot understand a foreign language without engaging with and understanding the culture of the speakers and communities who use the language (Littlewood, 2004). Specific to the foreign language classroom, culture is often taught through static facts: geography, history, art and literature, religion, and traditional celebrations are all introduced to students as representations of foreign culture (Kramsch, 1995).

However, these topics are not all that comprises culture. In an applied linguistics context, "culture" has been defined to include collective history, common representations of community, and social groups which use a shared language to communicate and interact (Kramsch, 1998). As a result of this, select language elements are inherently shaped by its community of speakers, and their lives and interactions. Integration of culture into language learning is then especially necessary in foreign language classrooms, where students often miss out on interactions with the foreign culture outside of curriculum and teaching (Harper, 2023).

Addressing the teaching of this definition of culture, Byram (1997) coined "intercultural communicative competence" (ICC), which defines cultural competence as acquisition of a set of skills in discovery, curiosity, openness, and critical understanding of a foreign culture rather than knowledge about explicit and historical culture facts alone. This view of cultural competence presents a promising view of students' potential sociocultural abilities, but its multifaceted nature has created difficulties in all of teaching, assessing, and researching it.

Teaching cultural competence is relevant in all foreign language learning contexts, but particularly so in England and the UK. British secondary school students have been found to be unmotivated and uninterested in language learning, and media are highly critical of this lack of motivation as indicative of a greater societal problem with perception of foreign cultures and languages (Lanvers & Coleman, 2013; Lanvers & Graham, 2022). National curriculum documents contain few mentions of teaching culture, and it is often included in addition to prescribed linguistic objectives rather than as a standalone learning goal (Department for Education, 2014; 2025a). Studies investigating the teaching of cultural competence in other countries describe national curriculum and student motivation barriers similar to those in the UK, but these are exacerbated in UK secondary schools, as foreign language teaching time is often considerably low compared to other subjects (Fielding, 2020).

Two relevant variables involved in the UK's 'language crisis' as it relates to school learning are motivation and proficiency. Dörnyei's Second Language Motivational Self-System (L2MSS) builds on previous motivation research and combines elements of psychology to describe language learning motivation: learners can be motivated by the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience (Dörnyei, 2009). Motivation research has reported that British

students lack strong motivation due to a lack of engagement with foreign culture and lack of value for learning about language and culture, as well as perceptions of usefulness of languages after school years (Coleman, 2009; Parrish & Lanvers, 2018; Peiser & Jones, 2013).

Despite language skills being the most easily measurable outcome of UK foreign language education, students often achieve relatively low proficiency even after years of instruction. Language education is only required from ages 11 to 14, and in these years, students are only expected to reach a CEFR level of A2 (Curcin & Black, 2019). Both students and language teachers also report that language GCSE exams are often more difficult than expected, and that marking is harsher than similar subjects (Collen & Duff, 2024).

Each of cultural competence, motivation, and proficiency are notably related. Academic achievement and proficiency are outcome measures inspiring powerful motivation, which could lead students to increased involvement with their lessons and target language (Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005). Further, cultural competence plays a key role in fostering the Ideal L2 Self (Dörnyei & Chan, 2013), which is itself a key component of motivation as conceived by the L2MSS, with motivation posited as being able to compensate for limitations in students' aptitude and deficiencies in the learning environment (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015). However, each of these variables and relationships between them have yet to be studied extensively, and despite these variables relating directly to the student experience, studies which do exist often focus on teacher perspectives (see Castro et al., 2004).

This exploratory study seeks to fill identified gaps in the literature by investigating perceptions of cultural competence teaching, and relationships between cultural competence perceptions, motivation, and proficiency in the Spanish L2 classroom. This study adopted a mixed-methods classroom-based case study approach in which Year 9 students and their teacher participated by completing an online survey with students also engaging in semi-structured group interviews in order to produce a picture of cultural competence teaching applicable to a wide range of UK secondary schools today.

The following chapters will outline existing literature on cultural competence, motivation, and proficiency, defining and bringing together theoretical and empirical research relevant to the purpose of this study. The research methodology will be described in detail, and data will be analysed and discussed in the context of previous literature as well as potential future research directions. The literature review, methods, and analysis undertaken in this dissertation seek to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is cultural competence currently taught in Spanish language classes?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of cultural competence content in language classes?
3. What are students' perceptions of cultural competence content in language classes?
4. What is the relationship between the extent of cultural competence teaching and:
    a. student motivation?
    b. students' Spanish proficiency?

5. What is the relationship between perceptions of cultural competence and:
    a. student motivation?
    b. students' Spanish proficiency?

2. Literature review

This chapter will begin by reviewing existing literature regarding cultural competence in foreign language classroom settings, and its relevance specifically in UK secondary schools. The following sections will discuss how language learning motivation and student proficiency relate to and interact with cultural competence and perceptions of culture in the classroom. Literature reviewed in the above sections will take care to examine the role language teaching and curriculum play in each concept. Finally, the chapter will close by presenting a short review of gaps in the literature, and in the context of these gaps and previous empirical research discussed, the current study will be presented.

2.1 Cultural competence and perceptions of cultural competence in language education

2.1.1 Defining and understanding cultural competence in language education

Communication has long been considered a priority equal to linguistic abilities in foreign language learning. In early definitions of "communicative language teaching", communicative skills were prioritised in order for language learners to produce meaningful expressions in their target language, aside from grammatical correctness (Canale & Swain, 1980). Meaning being conveyed through language is constructed by collective and lived experiences of the communities in which the language is spoken (Simons, 1995). It can therefore be assumed that, for a language learner to successfully convey appropriate meaning in their target language, they need at least a minimal level of sociocultural knowledge about the target language communities (Littlewood, 2004). Kramsch (1995) reports that the "culturisation" of foreign language education has led to language teachers struggling to balance teaching linguistics and communication, and as a result, which type of "culture" to teach. Byram (2021) has further emphasised that while every school subject has the potential to impart cultural awareness unto students, it is necessary to address in foreign language education to create culturally communicative students and global citizens.

The definition and contents of culture can vary widely due to the expansive amount of human experience which can be considered "culture", and the lens under which it is being studied. Popular anthropological definitions of culture describe sets of values, beliefs, and traditions shared by a community (Spencer-Oatey, 2012). In educational studies, Nieto (2008) has defined culture to include political relationships alongside shared values, and emphasises the dynamic role of identity and experience in building one's culture. However, to analyse language and culture together, a more specific frame of reference is needed. Kramsch (1998) describes three dimensions of life which combine to create a "culture": shared history preserved in both memory and physical artifact, common imaginings and representations of community, and importantly, social groups which use language to interact and enforce common beliefs.

This multifaceted view of culture necessitates an educational approach that enables students to interact with each aspect of it. Interacting with culture is not just studying "big C" cultural elements of art or history, but involves knowledge about social practices and beliefs that will enable a foreign language learner to appropriately use the language when speaking with the target speech community (Kovács, 2017). It is here that the concept of cultural competence becomes relevant.

2.1.2 Frameworks of cultural competence

Cultural competence shares a similarly wide set of frameworks and definitions to culture itself. As summarised by Spitzberg and Changnon (2009), "competence" as used in language and culture teaching refers to understandings and sets of skills used to interact with the target language. Therefore, cultural competence does not connotate just one specifically teachable language skill, but implies a range of abilities related to language use and culture.

One of the most influential models of cultural competence is Byram's intercultural communicative competence (ICC) (1997). ICC was developed in alignment with the construction of the CEFR by the Council of Europe as a curriculum counterpart to language proficiency benchmarks, and hence, takes a Europe-centric approach to culture and language education (Council of Europe, n.d.). The concept of ICC embraces communicative language teaching and builds on its sociocultural component by emphasising communication in a modern, culturally fluid world (Byram, 2021). Byram's ICC outlines five *savoirs*, or knowledges and skills, which make up ICC and can be taught and assessed alongside linguistic skills in the foreign language classroom:

- *Savoir*: knowledge about explicit cultural references
- *Savoir être*: affective and cognitive attitudes, relationships built between one's own culture and the foreign culture
- *Savoir comprendre*: interpreting and relating to the foreign culture
- *Savoir apprendre/faire*: discovery about and interaction with the foreign culture, specifically through interaction with a native speaker
- *Savoir s'engager*: "critical cultural awareness", reflection on cultural values and social norms.

An explicit aim of the ICC framework is use for assessment of cultural competence in the language classroom (Byram, 1997). Byram and Zarate (1996) describe their recommended assessment methods for each *savoir*, including but not limited to formative, summative, situational, continuous, and student self-assessment - all of which students would collect in a "portfolio" to demonstrate their ICC skills. In a 21st-century critique of ICC, Hoff (2020) discusses how the standardised testing-based curriculums and classrooms of today are not compatible with expectations of ICC assessment, regardless of how important their content is. Byram has also written vaguely regarding the point at which a language learner could be considered interculturally communicatively competent, but this vagueness has lent itself to the ICC framework being adaptable to a wide variety of language learning classrooms and contexts (Harper, 2023).

There exists several more models of cultural competence aside from Byram's ICC, but not one has been studied and implemented as widely. Nonetheless, their conceptualisations are important to understand when speaking broadly about culture in the language classroom. Table 1 below briefly summarises some relevant models of cultural competence which apply to the foreign language learning context:

Table 1: *Popular models of cultural competence*

Model	Components	Outcome	Context
Intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997)	Five *savoir* skills including knowledge, relation, discovery, attitudes, and critical awareness	Intercultural citizenship, participation in a multitude of cultural settings through language (Byram, 2021)	Designed primarily for European foreign language classrooms, any level
Intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006)	Accomplishing individual communicative goals through positive attitudes, awareness, and adaptability	An ongoing process of self-discovery and discovery about other cultures	Higher education, primarily in English-dominant settings
Intercultural language teaching (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2023)	Observation and interpretation of foreign culture, active social engagement with own and foreign cultures	Successful student participation in intercultural communications	English L1 foreign language classrooms
Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity/Intercultural development index (Hammer, Bennet, & Wiseman, 2003)	Measures "orientations towards cultural differences": denial, defence, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation, integration	Used for guiding interventions related to international and intercultural citizenship	Job and living abroad training – most often an L2 setting but not always

Each of these models, along with many others, overlap theoretically in mentions of interacting with the foreign culture for understanding and relating to the learner's own culture, and developing positive attitudes towards it as well. The shared theoretical backing by most cultural competence models allows for eased comparison and evaluation of empirical research using any one model. Further, perhaps the most important commonality between every cultural competence model is their emphasis on empirical classroom evidence, which is crucial in developing useful and realistic pedagogical frameworks to help instruct more culturally competent students.

2.1.3 Teaching and measuring cultural competence

While many cultural competence theorists cite a very real dearth of empirical research regarding implementation of cultural competence goals in the language classroom, there still exists a small but relevant range of studies from various language learning contexts globally (Hoff, 2020). Cultural competence is often investigated alongside important variables related to applied linguistics including motivation and proficiency, both of which will be examined more closely in a later section.

Culture could be present in foreign language classrooms in a variety of formats, one of the most important being the textbook. Kaliska's (2022) review of the most popular Italian language textbooks used at the University of Warsaw found that culture presented to B1 and B2-level language students takes a primarily national perspective rather than an intercultural one. Kaliska observed that critical social issues are mentioned in brief compared to lengthy discussions about art, literature, and history, with a limited Italy-centric point of view; this difference in presentation of cultural elements indicates that in order to learn culture from textbook and curriculum, students need more well-rounded or diverse material discussing it.

Barski and Wilkerson-Barker (2019) expanded on the presence of culture in textbooks to investigate how American university students' cultural competence changed over a semester of beginner language courses in Spanish and French. They cite that instruction in these courses is primarily textbook-driven, with little inclusion of culture as defined by Byram's ICC *savoirs* (1997). Assessing cultural competence using the IDI in a pre- and post-semester test (Hammer, Bennet, & Wiseman, 2003; Hammer, 2009), Barski and Wilkerson-Barker found that students made only incremental progress along the IDI. The majority of students tested into culture "minimisation" at both stages, and only at the post-test stage did 2 students of the n=25 sample test into "acceptance". The small sample in this study necessitates considerable further research on the topic of textbook cultural content, but it does indicate that inclusion of more cultural content in the curriculum could boost student cultural competence.

Building on the need for evidence from classrooms on cultural competence, Aski et al. (2023) conducted a cultural competence intervention over the course of a year-long beginner Italian course at an American university. The researchers cite Deardorff's (2006) conceptualisation of cultural competence, and measured students' cultural competence using the IDI (Hammer, 2009) as well as post-course interviews with students. Class interventions included reading and image discussions, a talk with Italian L1 speakers, and a reflection question on their final exam. Aski et al. report that, similar to Barski and Wilkerson-Barker's (2019) results, students showed little growth in their IDI scores, if any. However, in interviews, students described that they value cultural competence and felt more educated on it, if not actually more culturally competent.

As Aski et al. (2023) only mention it in brief, one variable paid little attention in this study is the class teacher's influence on student perceptions, and the teacher's ability to impart cultural competence – the researchers share that this could have held back students' development considerably, and the role of language teachers needs to be explored much deeper. Castro et al. (2004) investigated Spanish EAL teachers' perceptions of teaching cultural competence, finding that teachers' own perceptions of language class objectives were influenced by their own learning experiences which, at the time, were focused on linguistic goals rather than sociocultural. Castro et al. also concluded that while teachers do value delivering cultural content, the "culture" being taught promoted access to the foreign society rather than cultural competence skills.

Reporting mixed methods results of a cultural competence intervention in an intermediate French class at an American university, Hoyt (2016) argues that students can become more culturally aware over the course of short-term language courses. Hoyt's intervention required students to learn about cultural competence, conduct culture-focused interviews with French L1 speakers, and reflect on the experience. Specifically questioning students on cultural competence as defined in Byram's (1997) ICC, Hoyt found that students showed the highest skill levels in savoir *comprendre* and savoir *s'engager*, due to the interactive and investigation-based nature of the intervention. These results are presented positively: including culture in both teaching and assignment content increased students' overall cultural competence. However, Hoyt's position as both the researcher and class instructor deepens the rift between theoretical cultural competence research and teacher practice (Hoff, 2020). It is difficult to conclude that this intervention is accessible or practical for a teacher less experienced with cultural competence.

One of the largest studies employing Byram's ICC (1997, 2021) is Sercu's (2005) investigation into foreign language teacher perceptions and practices regarding cultural competence. In this study, n=424 teachers from seven countries were surveyed about their "conceptions" (or perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and knowledges, as defined by Sercu) regarding culture teaching. Sercu concludes that despite teachers holding a diverse array of conceptions regarding cultural competence in language education, no matter their attitude towards it, they struggle to integrate culture into their classes outside of static interpretations of history, literature, and traditions.

This conclusion is similar to Byram and Kramsch's (2008) discussion about teacher preparedness in the face of culture in higher-level language classes: even if both students and teachers feel culturally competent, the foreign language curriculum does not allow for enough discourse or discussion to help students practice it. These studies all emphasise that culture is an incredibly relevant part of any foreign language curriculum, but requires more dedicated research to assist teachers in delivering it.

2.1.4 Teaching culture in Spanish as a foreign language

The issues described above in teaching and measuring cultural competence are more evident in teaching Spanish as a foreign language. Spanish is spoken across over 20 countries, and by over 400 million people as a first language (Berges Institute Spanish, n.d.). In each of those countries, Spanish speakers and their communities use the language differently as shaped by local histories of colonialism and political conditions (Train, 2007). This colourful history of language evolution is primarily due to linguistic and political authority held by Spain and its global power and presence. The Spanish government operates two institutions dedicated to the promotion and protection of the Spanish language: the Real Academia de la Lengua Española (Royal Academy of the Spanish Language) (RAE) and the Cervantes Institute. While both organisations promote Spanish as a diverse and global language, at their core, they represent the history and power of Spain alone, and regularly peddle a "neutral" variety of Spanish in their language education resources – a variety which closely mirrors Castilian Spanish spoken on the Iberian Peninsula (Mar-Molinero, 2008).

Despite the repression from global powers within and outside of Spanish-speaking communities, the language is used regularly as a vessel on which speakers can represent their local, national, and social identities (Mar-Molinero, 2008). In the face of this language diversity, one of the most pressing questions Spanish language educators have is in which variety of Spanish to teach, and which aspects of culture from Spanish-speaking communities to include in that curriculum. Answering this question, Sparks and Lipski (2009) conclude that classroom education is not able to teach enough language to the point that students develop a specific accent; thus, teaching whichever variety is most geographically or socially useful for students is best, while making sure they are aware of variability throughout the language. However, can the same conclusion be made regarding culture?

If the goals of language education, as mentioned above, are to create intercultural communicators as well as proficient language users, Spanish language students should arguably be knowledgeable and at least minimally aware of Spanish and Latin-American cultural differences, in order to be prepared for intercultural interactions they might encounter (Lallana & Salamanca, 2020). In both curriculum and instruction, however, this standard of culturally competent instruction has seldom been studied or achieved.

2.2 Cultural competence in UK language education

2.2.1 Current state of UK language education

The popularity of Spanish as a global language lends itself to an equally vast body of research on teaching and learning the language, but it is often America-centric due to the close sociopolitical relationships between countries such as the United States and Mexico (see Quan,

2021). While the British Council's most recent Language Trends publication (Collen & Duff, 2024) shows Spanish as the most popular MFL choice in schools, it did not achieve this popularity until as recent as 2022 (Collen, 2022). This has led to empirical research regarding MFL learning often focusing on French and German; despite this, studies discussing languages other than Spanish and in different international contexts can still be used to review the relevance of cultural competence in English and UK language education.

Specifically in the UK context, it has been assessed that the MFL landscape is quite grim. Broady (2020) writes that schools report declining uptake in MFL exams over recent years, and express concern towards the implications of 'Brexit' (Britain's exit from the European Union) on attitudes towards multilingualism. Lanvers and Graham (2022) also describe the ongoing "crisis" that is Britain's approach to language learning, characterised by low student participation and enrolment in non-mandatory L2 courses, and general L2 ability in the UK (in England moreso than Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales) lagging considerably behind the rest of Europe.

Lanvers and Chambers (2013) analysed that British media cast fault for this "language crisis" primarily onto the government for poorly enforcing language learning standards. However, it was also found that teachers are criticised for poor lecturing causing students to lose interest in language learning, and that British society are to blame for failing to prioritise multilingualism. Graham and Santos (2015) conducted a similar media analysis, and expressed concern over how language skills are portrayed as a school subject rather than a life and social skill, which could contribute to the societal blame placed on governmental language learning policies. Investigating discourse surrounding MFL enrolment, Coffey (2018) reported that students feel unmotivated to take language courses in school even if they value language as cultural capital or a life skill.

In the face of the above criticisms towards the state of MFL education, it is necessary to evaluate policies and practices as well as empirical evidence in order to assess the largest issues presented. It is also important to note here that while the literature reviewed in this study often refers broadly to "British" or UK-wide policies and practices, the majority of research has been conducted in England. Educational policies in each of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales differ greatly, and the present literature review and following study will focus on MFL education in England specifically to avoid casting generalisations which may not apply to the other British nations (Donnelly & Brown, 2022).

2.2.2 Culture in England's national MFL curriculum and assessment schemes

Cultural competence can be seen at the forefront of the majority of UK national curriculum documents, but lacks the same teaching guidelines provided for language content.

2014's Secondary National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2014) mentions culture once, describing learning foreign languages as "a liberation from insularity" which should "foster pupils' curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world". The most recent MFL GCSE

Subject Content document (2025) is less conservative in its approach to culture, stating that studying for a language GCSE should "build students' confidence and broaden their horizons, enabling them to step beyond familiar cultural boundaries, develop new ways of seeing the world, and better understand relationships between the foreign language and the English language". The GCSE Subject Content also specifies that linguistic content should, where appropriate, be taught through cultural themes, enabling students to develop language and culture skills simultaneously. However, culture is not specifically discussed after the first six pages of the document.

The purposes for study summarised above align with several definitions of cultural competence, but sound especially similar to Deardorff's (2006; 2011) conceptualisation, which highlighted developing skills of discovery and exploration of language, culture, and society. These skills are also highlighted by the British Council's 2024 Language Trends report (Collen & Duff, 2024). The paper, which reports on country-wide surveys of language teaching and learning, holds the view that "An internationally connected Britain needs more and better language skills. In our increasingly globalised economy, language skills and intercultural understanding add value and widen opportunities for individuals, communities and society". However, despite its specific mention of intercultural understanding as a goal of foreign language education alongside language skills, the rest of the document fails to describe any cultural competence learning data.

Each of the two largest GCSE exam boards, Pearson Edexcel and AQA, share a similar lack of specificity to the above documents in their Spanish exam specifications: cultural awareness, sensitivity, and understanding are highlighted several times throughout each, but describe no learning goals or measurable objectives related to culture (AQA, 2024; Pearson Education, 2023).

2.2.3 Importance of teaching cultural competence

Inclusion of culture and teaching cultural competence is incredibly important to the landscape of MFL education in the UK. As investigated by Krusemann and Graham (2024), perceptions and portrayal of German culture in UK media were the largest influences on learner attitudes towards German speakers. Further, learners who held more positive images of German culture were more likely to continue learning the language. This finding on culture impacting language course uptake is especially relevant in secondary schools – MFL class enrolment in England has been declining for at least the past two decades (Fisher, 2001; Rodeiro, 2017). Fisher (2001) explained that students and teachers are aware of the importance of cultural competence in MFL education, but "vocabulary-heavy" syllabi leave little time to teach any elements of culture, let alone cultural competence.

Specific to learning Spanish, it has been evidenced that culture is a necessary curriculum inclusion for English L1 speakers. de Pablos Ortega (2010) described how Spanish and English have vastly different social standards for conversation variables as common as pragmatic politeness. A 1990 review of language and culture in U.S. Spanish textbooks found that

conversations and informal dialogue were some of the most common formats in which vocabulary and culture are practiced and instructed (Ramirez & Hall, 1990). Despite the importance of culture in even the most introductory language education activities, it is rarely included at a level equal to language content (Kramsch & Vinall, 2015).

Evidently, if progress is to be made in the position of MFL education in England and the UK, conflicting presentations of and views on language learning need to be reconciled with what curriculums actually entail, with what teachers are doing in class. One major way in which teacher impact can be evaluated is in studying language learning motivation, and its models which place importance on the role of educator and educational context as some of the most influential variables in student motivation and achievement.

2.3 Motivation in foreign language education

As just one variable of many in language learning, definitions and conceptualisations of motivation have been defined in broad and varying contexts. Specific to second and foreign language acquisition, Gardner (2006) describes that a motivated individual "is goal directed, expends effort, is persistent, is attentive, has desires (wants), exhibits positive affect, is aroused, has expectancies, demonstrates self-confidence (self-efficacy), and has reasons (motives)." Not only does culture fit neatly into this definition as a potential positive motivator, but it is also the basis of a wide range of seminal motivation research.

Gardner's (1985; 2001) socio-educational model of language learning motivation highlights attitudes and integrative orientations as the primary variables influencing a learner's motivation, which contributes to potential language achievement. "Attitudes" are specifically defined in the socio-educational model as emotionally evaluated mental stances, and Gardner acknowledges the influence of attitudes towards both the learning environment and target language community as impacting one's motivation (Gardner, 2006). Culture is highlighted in Gardner's socio-educational model in the "integrativeness" variable, which is seen as one's level of desire to learn about and integrate with the target language community (1985). This target language community is, according to Gardner, separate and foreign, and classroom instruction is one of the most important influences on attitudes towards this community in school contexts where students have little contact with speakers of the language. Therefore, a socio-educationally motivated student will be interested in acquiring cultural knowledge specifically through classroom study and will develop positive attitudes towards the target language community's culture.

Ushioda (2011) argues that Gardner's classification of culture as something separate and foreign does not accurately reflect the modern, globally connected nature of language today. Culture relevant to language education has been redefined to include intercultural and communicative competences, rather than static facts about foreign language communities (Lange & Paige, 2003). A more modern and culturally appropriate conceptualisation of motivation is Dörnyei's Second Language (L2) Motivational Self-System (L2MSS).

The L2MSS reclassifies integrative motivation and internalised instrumental motivation as the "Ideal L2 Self", a language learning-specific image of one's ideal future self (Dörnyei, 2009). Dörnyei also introduces the "Ought-to L2 Self", which corresponds with extrinsic motivators, and language learning attributes one ought to possess, and a third component of the "L2 Learning Experience", which describes the impact teaching and curriculum can have on a language learner's motivation. Empirical support for the L2MSS as a measure of language learning motivation has been cemented by several large-scale studies (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Taguchi et al., 2009), as well as literature meta-analyses (Al-Hoorie, 2018).

More specifically investigating a relationship between proficiency and motivation, Takahashi and Im (2020) compared participants' intended effort and vocabulary proficiency within Self-Determination Theory (Lanvers, 2016) and L2MSS frameworks. The L2 Learning Experience construct from the L2MSS was found to be one of the strongest predictors of both intended effort and L2 proficiency, which itself correlated highly with the Ideal L2 Self; these results indicate that influences from the learning environment impacts not only students' ability to achieve linguistically, but their motivation to continue achieving as well. While the L2 Learning Experience has been studied considerably less than the Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves, each play an important part in capturing language classroom motivation moreso than other frameworks are able to (Li, 2023).

Culture and cultural competence play considerable roles in motivation, especially within the possible L2 Selves constructs. Dörnyei (2006) directly cites cultural interest as an influence on attitudes towards L2 speakers, which further influences integrative motivation and the Ideal L2 Self. Dörnyei (1998) also agrees with previous research that the Ideal L2 Self is likely involved in the foreign culture and regularly navigates unfamiliar cultural contexts (Noels & Clément, 1996).

2.3.1 Motivation and cultural competence in the UK language learning context

Motivation is an incredibly important language learning variable in the context of MFL learning in England and the UK. The current Secondary National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2014) requires KS3 students to take at least one foreign language, and the 2024 Language Trends results (Collen & Duff, 2024) report that a majority of state secondary schools offer more than one MFL to KS3 students. Parrish and Lanvers (2018) found that students were more likely to feel motivated in their language course when they had a choice of languages, and

when language was compulsory; a primary factor in student choice to enrol in any language was perceived usefulness of the language. This finding is shared by Taylor and Marsden (2014), whose experimental intervention targeting attitudes towards popular MFL options found that students reported higher motivation if their target language was perceived as socially and culturally relevant. However, both of these results are presented as tentative due to use of shallow conceptualisation of motivation – capturing motivation under a specific framework is necessary in order to increase language classroom motivation.

Peiser and Jones (2013) investigated L2 motivation related to student perceptions of "intercultural understanding", which they liken to Byram and Zarate's (1996) intercultural communicative competence. Employing a mixed methods approach, this study reports that students were open to cultural competence in language curriculum and felt positively about it, but struggled to see its benefits due to language-heavy curriculum and teaching. Peiser and Jones also concluded that student perceptions of cultural competence and foreign cultures, as well as language learning motivation, mirror societal views of foreign cultures: student expectations of the usefulness of cultural competence were based on their experiences abroad, which were reported to be primarily touristic. These findings, while useful, were not centred on any specific motivational or cultural competence framework, and require closer study to validate.

Parrish (2020) discusses that students are interested in culture if they feel it is relevant to their future aspirations and community life. Allowing students to explore individual interests and outcomes in their language learning could contribute positively to both their L2 Learning Experience by fostering positive attitudes towards the classroom, and contribute to their interest in achieving language goals. Lanvers (2016) discusses how the L2MSS is the most applicable motivation theory to Anglophone language classroom contexts, but reiterates that little research had been conducted up to that point using the L2MSS to study English L1 students learning foreign languages. In these contexts, cultural competence is a relevant factor in many other common language learning variables.

2.4 Proficiency and cultural competence in foreign language education

As Byram's (1997) ICC framework was developed alongside the CEFR language proficiency scale, foreign language linguistic proficiency is just as relevant a variable in foreign language education as cultural competence. Proficiency has not often been studied as related to cultural competence in second language acquisition despite their socio-educational links; despite this, there still exists a small body of relevant research investigating relationships between the concepts.

Under an applied psychological lense, Ng et al.'s (2025) meta-analysis of language proficiency and cultural competence (analysed as cultural intelligence) found that increased abilities in both are correlated with job performance and cultural adaptation. Importantly, this study

also concludes that cultural intelligence skills can supplement low language proficiency in some cultural contexts. While the theoretical backing of this study is not associated with linguistic concepts of cultural competence, its implications for the psychological aspect of motivation are still relevant.

In a Moroccan university EAL setting, Amiri and El Karfa (2021) investigated environmental factors influencing language learning academic achievement. Descriptive survey results from the study indicate that increased cultural awareness and distance between one's own culture and the target foreign culture contributed to academic success, and the authors recommend increasing cultural competence infrastructure by way of teaching and curriculum to assist students in developing positive cultural awareness. A similar study investigating effects of cultural competence on academic and linguistic performance of international Chinese university students found that cultural competence and academic and linguistic abilities are mutually beneficial: levels of cultural competence explained 30% of self-reported academic performance, and that increased language proficiency led to increased cultural awareness (Wang-Taylor & Milton, 2019).

Proficiency and academic achievement are relevant to MFL education in England and the UK, but have yet to be investigated thoroughly. The 2024 Language Trends report (Collen & Duff, 2024) shares that teachers and students perceive skewed achievement in exam results and assignment marks in MFL lessons, which teachers believe has decreased uptake of language courses. Jones (2023) found that perceived difficulty was one of the most common factors impacting Welsh students' enrolment in MFL GCSEs, alongside a lack of multicultural awareness.

The above relationships between cultural competence, motivation, and proficiency are evident, but have yet to be investigated in conjunction with each other. The following section will further present research gaps related to cultural competence in foreign language education and other relevant variables.

2.5 Present study and research questions

Copland and McPake (2021) write that language education and motivation are two of the most important pieces in creating a new "public idea" about the UK as a multilingual and diverse nation, rather than an unmotivated, English-dominant one. This literature review has found that cultural competence is a vital aspect of motivating students in MFL education but, thus far in UK Spanish teaching, has received little attention.

Educators feel unprepared to teach the complex cognitive skills which cultural competence requires (Sercu, 2005), and students and teachers alike are being failed by curriculum and learning standards that value linguistic abilities considerably more than intercultural communication (Parrish, 2019). Additionally, cultural competence is difficult and controversial to assess, which has led to a dearth of empirical research into students' abilities and attitudes on the subject (Sercu,

2005). This reported lack of preparation to teach culture has been acknowledged by K. Byram and Kramsch (2008), who report that when teachers are unprepared to deliver difficult cultural concepts, students struggle to understand them as well. Sercu (2005) suggests that teachers need clearer standards and more intensive instruction in how to handle cultural content in their curriculum. Even if the curriculum is not designed for cultural competence, this preparation could help them feel more prepared to handle potential intercultural communication development and discovery in class.

In discussing the positionality of cultural competence and foreign language teaching research, Byram and Fang (2005) emphasised that future research should investigate relationships between cultural competence and teaching materials, motivation, and methods. Despite this call for research, the higher academic field of cultural competence has remained sparse. The GCSE MFL curriculum was updated as recently as winter 2024, and the DfE recently initiated a Curriculum and Assessment Review for the subject, inviting student, parent, and educator feedback on curriculum content (2025b). Prior to 2024, the GCSE MFL curriculum was last updated in 2014 (Department for Education, 2025a). This review, as well as the overall need for increased research attention to cultural competence in foreign language teaching, indicates that feedback regarding perceptions and opinions on the curriculum is highly relevant.

To assess the state of cultural competence in language education, this study will employ an in-depth exploratory examination of student and teacher perceptions of cultural competence, as well as relationships and correlations between perceptions of cultural competence, student motivation, and proficiency. This will be accomplished using the following research questions:

1. To what extent is cultural competence currently taught in Spanish language classes?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of cultural competence content in language classes?
3. What are students' perceptions of cultural competence content in language classes?
4. What is the relationship between the extent of cultural competence teaching and:
    a. student motivation?
    b. students' Spanish proficiency?
5. What is the relationship between perceptions of cultural competence and:
    a. student motivation?
    b. students' Spanish proficiency?

3. Methodology

This chapter will explain the methodology used to answer the research questions previously introduced. Research for this study was undertaken through an exploratory mixed methods case study. Participants included 16 students studying Spanish in Year 9 and their teacher (n=17), recruited from a comprehensive secondary school in the East Midlands, UK. Data was collected via online survey followed by small group interviews with student participants, and was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively in order to answer this study's research questions. Following an explanation of the study, this chapter will also clarify ethical considerations taken while researching. Methodological limitations will be discussed in Chapter 5.

3.1 Study design

A mixed methods case study approach was selected for this study to explore each variable (cultural competence perceptions, motivation, and proficiency) within the context of a single Spanish language classroom as broadly as possible, through extended surveys disseminated to students and their teacher. This survey involved long-response questions for the teacher participant and student surveys were followed by semi-structured group interviews.

The aim of mixed methods in this study is to reconcile the individual weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research methods, as well as providing robust findings by triangulating qualitative and quantitative results. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) describe that mixed methods research (MMR) in the "questionnaire + interview" format has become a standard in modern motivation research. Additionally, mixed methods will be used to bridge the methodological divide between quantitative methods often used in studying motivation and second language acquisition, and the qualitative, context-focused case study approach (Duff, 2014).

MMR is also growing in prominence in the research of cultural competence and its perceptions. Deardorff's (2006) review of cultural competence assessment in higher education concluded that MMR is the best practice to assess as many dimensions of cultural competence as possible. Within cultural competence research, there have been calls for smaller-scale studies designed to investigate variables in student motivation and language enrolment (Coleman et al., 2007). This study has been designed to use MMR in the context of a classroom-level case study in order to explore cultural competence perceptions related to student motivation and proficiency as closely as possible.

As stated above, this study adopts an MMR approach in the context of a single classroom-level case study design. Griffee (2012) explains that case studies are often classified as qualitative practices, but reminds that the definition of a "case study" is broad, and that case studies are strengthened through use of diverse materials and methodologies. While this study was originally designed to be conducted on a larger scale involving multiple classroom sites, the methodology

used aligns well with common case study design. The *Encyclopaedia of Case Study Research* (Case study research in education, 2010; Quick start to case study research, 2010) describes that case studies are especially effective in education research as they allow for discovery and exploration of variables at a deeper level. Further, while the design of this study is not purely exploratory due to the range of past empirical research available, analysis of the data discovered will aim to uncover variables for future study and investigation (Brink, 1998).

3.2 Population and participants

3.2.1 Population

The target population of this study is students learning Spanish in UK secondary schools and their teachers. When investigating potential research sites for this study, the specific setting of Year 9 students at English state secondary schools was selected for several reasons. Firstly, the majority of students in the UK reside in England and attend state schools, thus data obtained in an English state school setting could apply to as many students outside the sample as possible (Department for Education, 2024). Additionally, KS3 is the only stage of education in the UK in which foreign language education is required and standardised, and in Year 9 (the final year of KS3), students will have more years of experience with the MFL curriculum than any other year group. Students in Year 9 are also preparing for GCSE exams, but often have yet to select specific subjects to study for; because of this, Year 9 students will ideally represent a wide range of motivation and proficiency (Coleman et al., 2007).

3.2.2 Recruitment

In the first phase of recruitment for this study, 21 secondary schools throughout Oxfordshire which fit the population parameters above were contacted via email with an introduction to the project and a letter to the head teacher (Appendices 1, 2) with information about the study and an invitation to participate. Unfortunately, the response rate to this recruitment approach was extremely low. Follow up phone calls were made to schools within the sample, however this also met with no positive responses. Given the limited timeframe within which to conduct this research, the decision was made to conduct a smaller-scale case study using contacts currently working in schools rather than through cold recruitment.

Contact with 4 new potential research sites in which the researcher had personal contacts was made via email, again with an introduction to the project and letter to the head teacher. After discussing the research timeline and availability with each, the school selected for participation in this revised study design was the most willing to participate, and the most accessible to the researcher within the timeframe.

3.2.3 Participants

The Year 9 class participating in this study is located in a state-funded comprehensive secondary school in the East Midlands, UK. The school has a total of 1200+ students and was rated "Good" by Ofsted in 2023. They are a part of a multi-school trust, with certain classroom and curriculum practices standardised throughout the trust, such as lesson structure by subject and assessment procedures.

Throughout their KS3 MFL learning experience, students at this school receive 3 language lessons per week. They offer KS4 lessons in French, German, and Spanish. Students in KS3 are not able to select their language. Rather, they are placed onto one of two "routes" in Year 8. Students on route A are all required to take a language which rotates for each year group, and students on route B are not required to take the language but can opt in to lessons. Further, KS4 language students are able to enter in any of the French, German, or Spanish GCSE subjects, with Spanish being their most popular choice, alongside support offered for students entering GCSE language exams for a home or heritage language.

The 17 participants in this study include 16 Year 9 students and their 1 teacher. There were 10 female and 6 male student responses given for gender, and 1 male response for their teacher. Every student participant was aged 14 years old except for one, who was 13 years old at the time of the study. 9 students identified themselves as speaking 2 languages, but when asked in the interviews which languages they speak, they all clarified that they included Spanish and English in their response. The remaining 7 students responded that they speak English only. Each student participant in the study has been enrolled in Spanish for the entirety of their KS3 education, and none of them have previously learned an MFL in school.

Their instructor is male, and 55 years old. He reports that he has taught foreign languages for 33 years, and currently teaches both German and French alongside Spanish, which he instructs at several different key stages.

3.3 Instruments

This study utilised three instruments: a student survey containing cultural competence perceptions, motivation, and proficiency items, a teacher survey, and the student semi-structured interview protocol. Items in the surveys written for this study were taken from several sources. A full list of survey question items from both the student and teacher surveys can be found in Appendices 7 and 9. Both the student and teacher-directed surveys were hosted on Microsoft Forms due to its accommodation of the survey length.

The goal of the surveys used in this study is to explore behaviours and attitudes as related to cultural competence and motivation in education, and the goal of the interviews is to provide information regarding the sociocultural classroom context for the survey responses (Riazi & Candlin, 2014). While the proficiency test instrument is attached to the online student survey, as clarified by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009), is not part of the cultural competence and motivation survey. The proficiency test questions will be used to generate inferences on student participants' linguistic abilities, and evaluated in context with their survey and interview responses.

3.4.1 Student survey

The student-directed survey is organised by type of question: the first section contains brief background questions, the second contains cultural competence perception questions, the third contains motivation questions, and the fourth is a brief vocabulary test. All questions were "required", meaning student participants had to select an answer for each before proceeding to the following page or submitting the survey. The survey had a total of 123 question items, and the average completion time was 22 minutes. Question types in the survey include multiple choice, select all that apply, six-point Likert scale choices, and ranked choice; open-ended items were omitted to ensure accessibility to students of different literacy levels.

Background questions for the student survey were written by the researcher with the goal of providing biographical and environmental context for student responses, while also retaining their anonymity throughout completion of the survey. While there are many background variables and differences that can impact foreign language learning and cultural perceptions or reactions, those variables were outside of the scope of the present study.

Questions in the cultural competence section were adapted from Sercu (2005). As the original survey is of considerable length, questions used were selected based on relevance and applicability to students in this study's target population. Question topics cover the foreign language learning experience, what the students' teacher tries to achieve as a language teacher, students' relationship with the foreign culture associated with their target language, teaching materials used in their language class, and broad opinions on cultural competence in language learning. Further, as the original survey is directed towards teachers, selected questions were edited for the student participant. Questions in this section were made up multiple choice, select all that apply, six-point Likert scales of agreement and familiarity, and ranked choice items.

The motivation section contains questions adapted from Dörnyei (2006), and Taguchi et al. (2009). Both surveys were included in order to generate more thorough data on student participants' motivation profiles. Questions for this study were selected based on applicability to the target population, and then included or removed to avoid repetition, and ensure the survey was an appropriate and accessible length. Attention was taken to ensure finally selected items contained

relevant themes to the L2MSS motivation framework outlined by Dörnyei (2006; 2009). Final survey questions were edited for the Spanish L2 learning context; for example, adapting a question's language from "French" to "Spanish".

In order to most accurately assess motivation within the L2MSS model, and to accommodate the differing question grouping used in each original survey, four motivational constructs based on original analytical categories were identified for use in this study: Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, Cultural Attitudes, and Learning Attitudes. Question items associated with each construct are specified below in Table 2.

Table 2: *Motivation constructs for data analysis*

Construct	Items from Dörnyei (2006)	Items from Taguchi et al. (2009)	Motivation question item
Ideal L2 Self	Integrativeness	Instrumentality (promotion), Ideal L2 Self	2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 38, 39
Ought-to L2 Self	Family influence, milieu, instrumentality	Instrumentality (prevention), Ought-to L2 Self	1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46
Cultural Attitudes	Cultural interest	Attitudes towards the L2 community	30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 26, 37
Learning attitudes	Linguistic self-confidence	Attitudes towards L2 learning	25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 40, 41, 47

Questions in the proficiency test section were taken from an online test published by the Cervantes Escuela Internacional (Cervantes E.I., n.d.). Cervantes E.I. provides Spanish L2 educational materials, and hosts a variety of online and on-location Spanish classes globally. Their materials are accredited by the Cervantes Institute, an organisation funded by the Spanish government which offers Spanish language and culture certifications. While this specific test has not been validated for empirical research use, Cervantes E.I.'s accreditation from the Cervantes Institute confirms the test's rigorous academic backing. Items from the online Spanish test from Cervantes E.I. were selected according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) most closely aligned with Year 9 Spanish language learning goals (Curcin & Black, 2019). All of the question items from the A1 level test were included, and a random selection of half of the items from the A2 test, totalling 12 multiple choice questions in the proficiency section.

In regard to the six-point Likert scale question items throughout the survey, a decision was made to omit a seventh middle "Neutral" response option to both ease statistical analysis and encourage more honest answering (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). These Likert scale items were used

for each of the 47 motivation questions, as well as 3 of the cultural competence perception questions.

3.4.2 Teacher survey

All of the survey items in the teacher-directed survey were taken from Sercu (2005). These are the same items used in the student survey, but with no wording edits as the original study was written for teachers. Identical items were selected for both the student and teacher survey so as to ease analytical comparison between responses from both groups. Several explanatory long-response questions from Sercu's original survey were also included for the teacher survey. As interviews were not conducted with teacher participants, the aim of including the long-response questions was to provide qualitative data in written form.

3.4.3 Interviews

Four semi-structured in-person group interviews with four students each were conducted by the researcher following completion of the surveys. Interview questions, available in Appendix 8, match the open-ended questions asked in the teacher survey to allow for cross-examination of responses. Several questions were also added to allow for elaboration on themes from the student survey questions, and the full interview protocol is available in Appendix 8. Group interviews were selected for this study rather than individual interviews to create a more comfortable and familiar environment for student participants, in order to encourage discussion (Stewart et al., 2007). Further, semi-structured interviews were used rather than structured or non-structured interviews in order to allow for more open-ended discussion and exploration of survey themes (Adams, 2015).

3.4 Procedure

Both the student and teacher-directed surveys were piloted with two adult teacher trainees familiar with the age group being researched. Issues raised and fixed during this round of testing included minor typos, increased clarification of some questions, and changing the order of responses on Likert scale questions from "Strongly agree" / "Slightly agree" / "Agree" and vice versa for disagreement to "Strongly agree" / "Agree" / "Slightly agree" and vice versa.

Correspondence to coordinate the in-person visit and consent procedures with the school and class teacher took place two weeks prior to conducting the study. Consent forms and information sheets (Appendices 4 and 5) were shared with the school to allow time to review and ensure materials aligned with school privacy policies, and after review, approved consent forms and information sheets were disseminated to parents and guardians by the class teacher one week

before the scheduled school visit. Per the school's privacy policies, parents were required to consent to both the survey and interview at once, rather than opting in or out of the survey and consenting to the interview

On the day of the in-person visit to the school to conduct the study, student information sheets (Appendices 5a and 5b) were given to students whose parents and/or guardians had consented prior to opening access to the online survey form. At this point as well as throughout completion of the survey and semi-structured interviews, students were also given the option to opt-out of the study if they did not wish to participate. After student information sheets had been disseminated and any questions were answered, the class teacher shared the link to the student survey (questions in Appendix 7) to participating students before reading his own information sheet (Appendix 6), consenting to the study, and opening the teacher survey (questions in Appendix 9).

As students finished the survey at their own pace with the researcher present to provide any help needed, the class teacher selected four students at a time to join the researcher in an adjoining classroom to participate in the group interviews. Once students were seated, interview information sheets (Appendix 5b) were distributed. The researcher then started the interview recording and read the student interview assent questions (Appendix 5c) before beginning the interview protocol (Appendix 8). After each interview, the students and researcher returned to the classroom to respectively return to their classwork and collect the next group of four students until four total group interviews were completed.

Student survey responses were collected on the researcher's Microsoft Forms results page, and interviews were recorded with Microsoft Teams with transcription enabled to ease later analysis of qualitative data. Following completion of the school visit, the participating class was thanked over email for their contribution to the study.

3.5 Analytical procedures

3.5.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative survey data from this study was downloaded from Microsoft Forms into Microsoft Excel and cleaned. From Excel, it was then transferred to RStudio for processing analysis. Descriptive statistics were run separately for each question type, in order to examine and assess normality for further analysis. A Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = 0.93$ confirmed a high level of internal consistency for the entire student survey.

The wide range of question types in this study's survey demanded an equally wide array of data analysis measures. Multiple choice, ranked choice, and select-all data were each assessed for normality, then analysed with frequency and descriptive statistical tests. Proficiency was assessed from the vocabulary test questions, and graded out of 12 resulting in scores of 4, 6, 9, etc.

rather than percentages. In order to investigate the relationships between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation, student survey questions 12 and 17 (Appendix 7) respectively investigating cultural familiarity and culture teaching perceptions. Further explained in Chapter 4, Likert scale responses were quantified as numerical from 6 (Strongly agree/Very familiar) to 1 (Strongly disagree/Very unfamiliar) and average response scores per student from each question were used for further analysis.

As previously described, questions in the motivation section were taken from two different studies, and as such, each study utilised slightly different motivation variables. For ease of analysis and applicability to the data generated in this study while maintaining the theoretical soundness of each respective study, motivation questions were re-grouped into four new constructs shown in Table 2 above.

Survey data was examined carefully after being downloaded from the Microsoft Forms results prior to analysis in RStudio, and interview data was reviewed several times before coding in order to produce the most accurate transcription. During these reviews, it was found that one participant reported completion of several survey items without full engagement. As such, their responses were not considered a reliable reflection of their perceptions and experiences, and were omitted from analysis. The final sample size for analysis was n=16, with n=15 student participants and n=1 teacher participant. Likert scale motivation construct responses for each participant were further analysed with appropriate non-parametric tests. Table 3 below shows which survey questions were used to answer each RQ. A full list of student and teacher survey questions is available in Appendices 7 and 9.

Table 3: *Survey question correlation with research questions*

Research question	Survey section(s)	Question numbers
1. To what extent is cultural competence currently taught in Spanish language classes?	Cultural competence perceptions	9, 14, 15
2. What are teachers' perceptions of cultural competence content in language classes?	Cultural competence perceptions (teacher survey)	14-28
3. What are students' perceptions of cultural competence content in language classes?	Cultural competence perceptions	7, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17
4. What is the relationship between the extent of cultural competence teaching and: 4a. student motivation? 4b. student proficiency?	Cultural competence perceptions, motivation, proficiency	12, 18-64, 65-76
5. What is the relationship between perceptions of cultural competence teaching and: 5a. student motivation? 5b. student proficiency?	Cultural competence perceptions, motivation, proficiency	17, 18-64, 65-76

3.5.2 Qualitative data

Qualitative data in this study consists of the semi-structured interview recordings, as well as written responses to open-ended questions in the teacher survey. Interviews were automatically transcribed in Microsoft Teams, and the transcripts exported to Microsoft Word in order to edit for accuracy. Deterding and Waters' (2018) "flexible coding" procedure was undertaken to allow for as much exploratory analysis as possible, as well as to ensure organisation and compatibility with quantitative data collected. The method of "flexible coding" used to analyse interview data also assisted in generating findings more closely situated in existing theoretical and empirical findings. Flexible coding entails identifying broad index codes, generating analytic codes from the index coded data, and finally identifying thematic codes from the reduced and already analysed data. Deterding and Waters (2018) explain that this coding method is most applicable to a large dataset, but the case study approach used here requires a similar in depth and analysis-based approach. Each of the index and analytic codes used are described in Appendix 12.

Interview codes were subject to reliability checks in order to ensure proper analysis. While there are a variety of inter-rater procedures and standards currently used, the small qualitative data sample in this study did not require the same extensive procedures that a large sample would have. Thus, interview inter-rating in this study loosely followed Hemmler et al.'s (2020) analysis procedure, which prioritises conversation and communication in order to develop the most accurate codes possible. The enlisted inter-rater received 50% of coded interview data as well as the first piloted codebook. After a first round of coding, the researcher and inter-rater discussed coding results, and identified uncertainties or questions leading to differences in coding. Following this discussion, the codebook was recalibrated, and the inter-rater once again coded 50% of the data, which helped reach consistency across each set of coded data.

By nature, the written responses in the teacher survey are much shorter than interview responses. and as such, were not able to be analysed using the same in-depth coding process. However, data themes that were in line with any of the interview codes used were analysed as such. Additionally, while none were identified, qualitative teacher data was combed through with equal rigor to qualitative student data for any teacher-specific codes.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval to conduct this study was granted on 21 March, 2025 by the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) (Ethical approval reference: EDUC_1305120) and is available in Appendix 1. Data collection, storage, management, and destruction was undertaken following the University of Oxford's Data Management best practices and guidelines. Prior to participation in this study, potential participants were asked to read a

detailed information sheet (Appendices 5a and 5b). Participating teachers were required to complete a consent form prior to accessing their survey (Appendix 9), and parents were able to return opt-out forms for their child's participation in the survey portion of the study (Appendix 4b). For the interview portion of the project, parents were required to return completed consent forms for their children (Appendix 4d). Both the information sheets and consent forms detailed the University of Oxford's data management procedures and specific data management procedures for this project, and ensured that all participants were informed before continuing on with the study.

Survey data was processed in Microsoft Forms, and exported to Microsoft Excel. Interviews were conducted in-person with a Microsoft Teams meeting recording and transcribing audio. All data collected during this study was stored on the researcher's password-protected device, on the University of Oxford's password and dual-factor authentication-protected Nexus 365 account. Any emails communicating with schools, head teachers, and teachers were deleted following completion of the study, and scheduling information related to interviews was deleted following their completion. Throughout the project, no personal data was purposefully collected as the survey was completely pseudonymised – any personal information collected in the interview portion of the study was redacted and removed from final transcripts.

Throughout the study, the researcher took care to interrupt the school and each individual student's learning process as little as possible, with the survey and interview protocol designed to be completed within as little time as possible.

4. Findings

This chapter will present the quantitative results of the surveys and proficiency test used in the present study, as well as qualitative data collected in the semi-structured interviews with student participants. The data will be used to address each research question introduced in the previous chapter. The nature of cultural competence teaching in the case study classroom will be documented (RQ1), followed by a presentation and analysis of teacher and student perceptions of cultural competence teaching (RQ2, RQ3), with the relationships between cultural competence perceptions and student motivation and proficiency analysed last (RQ4, RQ5). Where possible, the quantitative and qualitative data sources will be triangulated to provide depth of insight into the nature and relationship between cultural competence and student motivation within the classroom. Teacher and student data will also be triangulated to present a nuanced picture of this Spanish language classroom in relation to the variables under question.

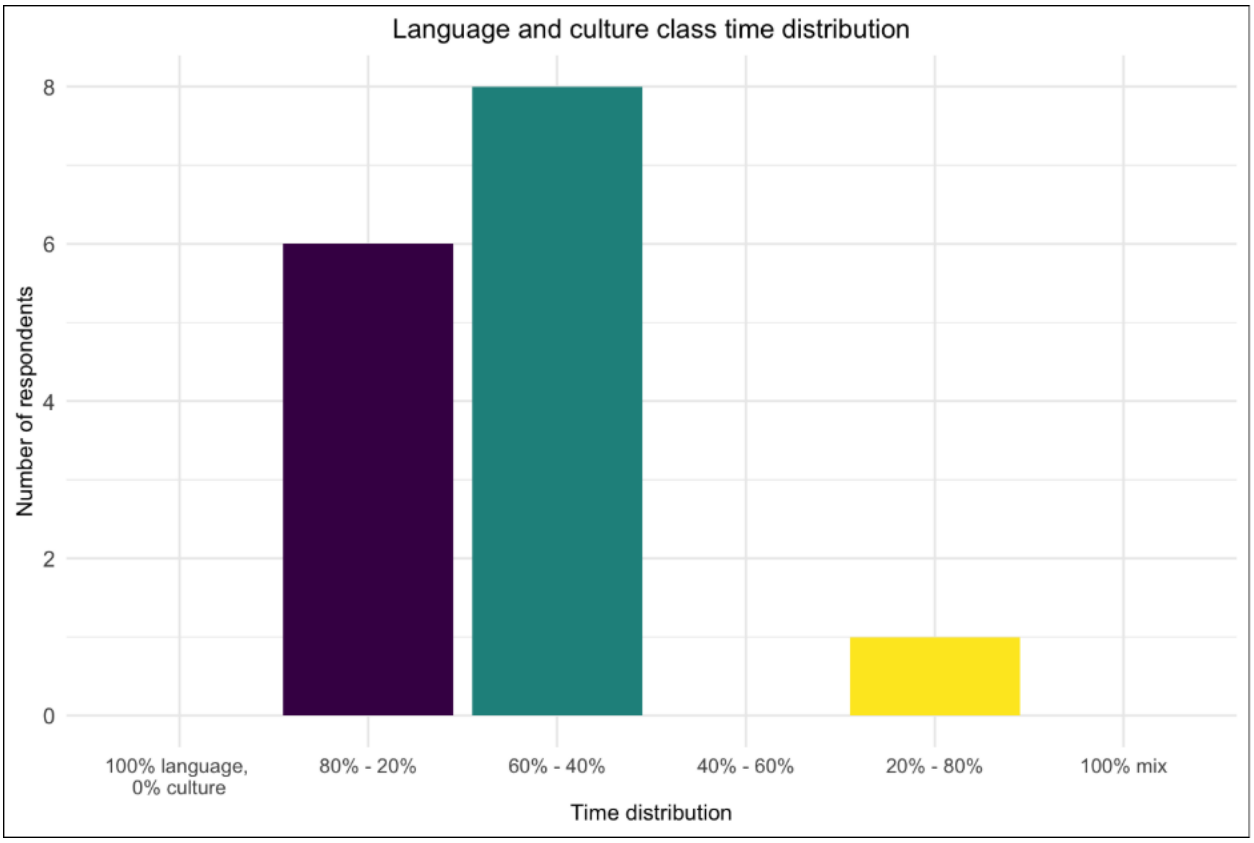
4.1 Extent of cultural competence teaching

This section reports on findings relating to RQ1: To what extent is cultural competence currently taught in Spanish language classes?

4.1.1 Quantitative findings

Survey Q9 asked participants to select one multiple choice option representing how they believe their class time is distributed between language teaching and culture teaching. A Chi squared goodness-of-fit test was conducted to investigate any difference between observed and expected responses. A result of X^2 (5, N = 15) = 25.4, p = *.0001166* indicated that students responded significantly differently than an expected uniform distribution. Figure 1 below visualises the frequency with which students selected each response. The most commonly selected option, chosen by 8 students, was that their class time is distributed 60% to language teaching and 40% to culture teaching. 6 students selected 80% language teaching to 20% culture teaching, and 1 student selected 20% language teaching to 80% culture teaching.

Figure 1: *Survey Q9 response frequencies*



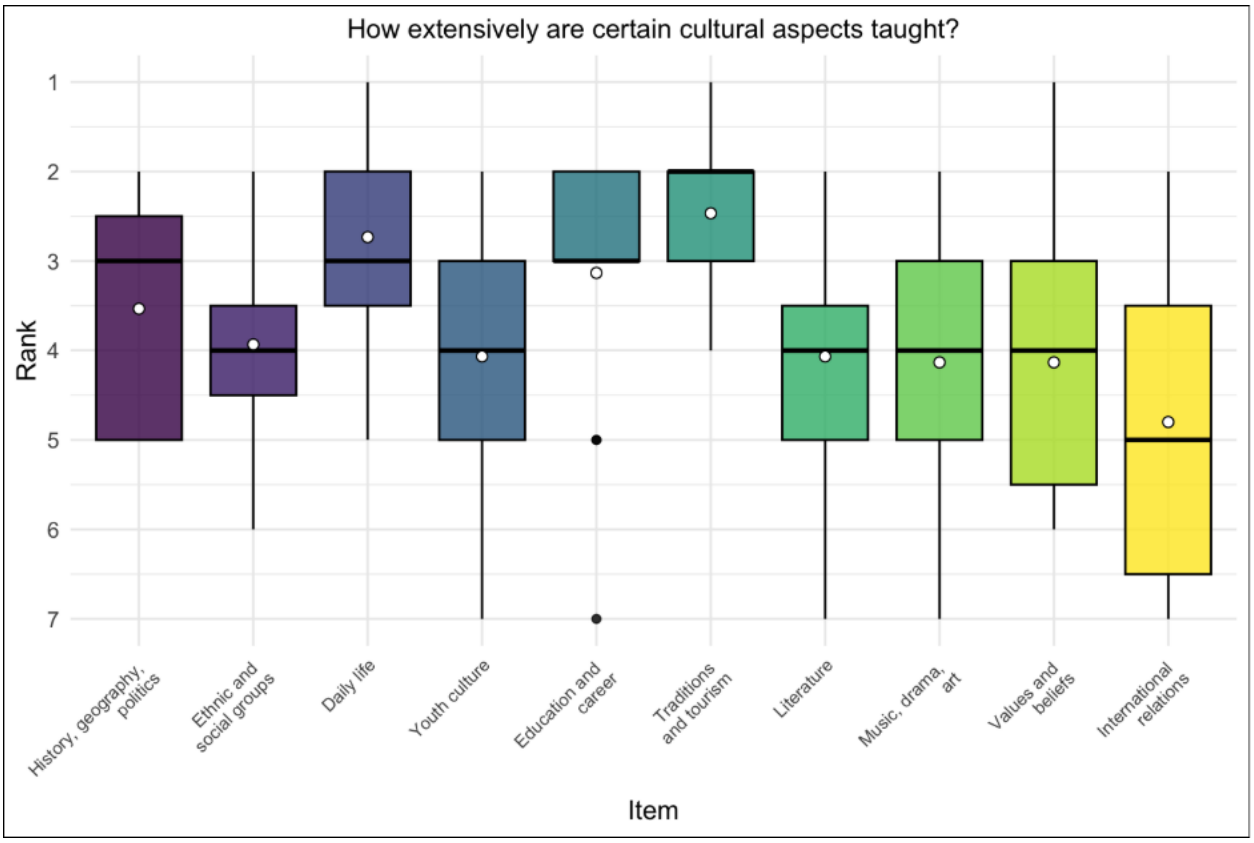
The class teacher responded that he distributes 80% of class time to language teaching, and 20% to culture teaching.

Survey Q15 asked students to rank 10 cultural aspects from 1-7 based on how extensively their teacher deals with them in his teaching, with 1 representing aspects dealt with most extensively and 7 representing those dealt with least extensively. While ranking data is ordinal by nature, ranks in this study were treated as numerical to allow for a broader range of data visualisation and analysis. Table 4 below shows descriptive summary statistics for selection frequencies of each cultural aspect, and Figure 4.2 visualises aspect ranks in box plots. The reported cultural aspect dealt with most extensively was traditions, folklore, and tourist attractions, followed closely by daily life and routines. The least dealt with cultural aspects were reported to be international relations, music, drama, and art, and values and beliefs of the target culture. A Friedman rank sum test investigating differences between item ranks revealed a significant difference across options, $\chi^2(9) = 44.48$, $p < .001$, but further post-hoc tests showed no significant differences.

***Table 4**: Q15 Descriptive summary statistics*

Cultural aspect item	Mean (x̄)	Standard deviation (s)	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
History, geography, and political systems	3.53	1.24	2.84	4.22
Different ethnic and social groups	3.93	1.09	3.32	4.54
Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink, etc.	2.73	1.22	2.05	3.41
Youth culture	4.06	1.33	3.32	4.80
Education, professional life	3.13	1.45	2.32	3.94
Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions	2.46	0.99	1.91	3.01
Literature	4.06	1.43	3.27	4.86
Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)	4.13	1.30	3.41	4.85
Values and beliefs	4.13	1.50	3.29	4.96
International relations (political, economic, and cultural) with students' own country and other countries	4.800000	1.7808505	3.813798	5.786202

***Figure 4.2**: Box plots of Q15 item ranks*



Teacher responses indicate that he generally agrees with average student rankings in how extensively he deals with certain cultural aspects while teaching, and a Spearman's rank-order correlation test indicated such with a significant moderately positive correlation of $\rho=0.63$, $p=0.050$. The most notable difference between average student rankings and teacher rankings is their rankings of Youth culture, with an average student ranking of 4.066667 and a ranking of 2 from their teacher.

Survey Q14 allowed participants to select all culture teaching activities their teacher practices out of nine options. A full table of descriptive statistics for options selected per participant and option selections is available in Appendix 10. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 below depict how many students selected each culture teaching activity and how many activities each student picked:

***Figure 4.3**: Bar chart of Q14 culture teaching practice frequencies*

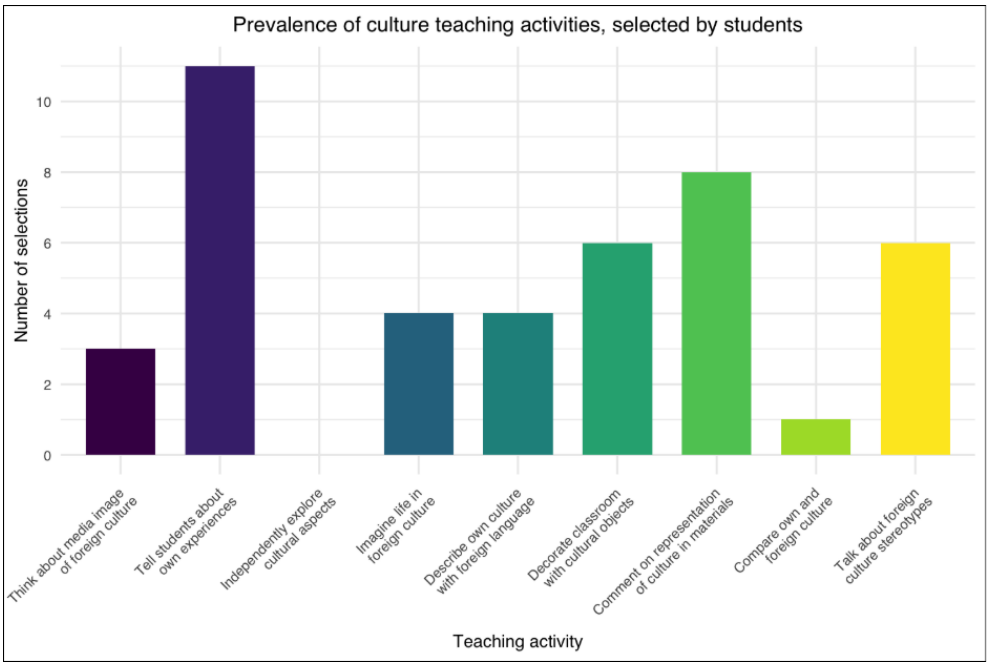
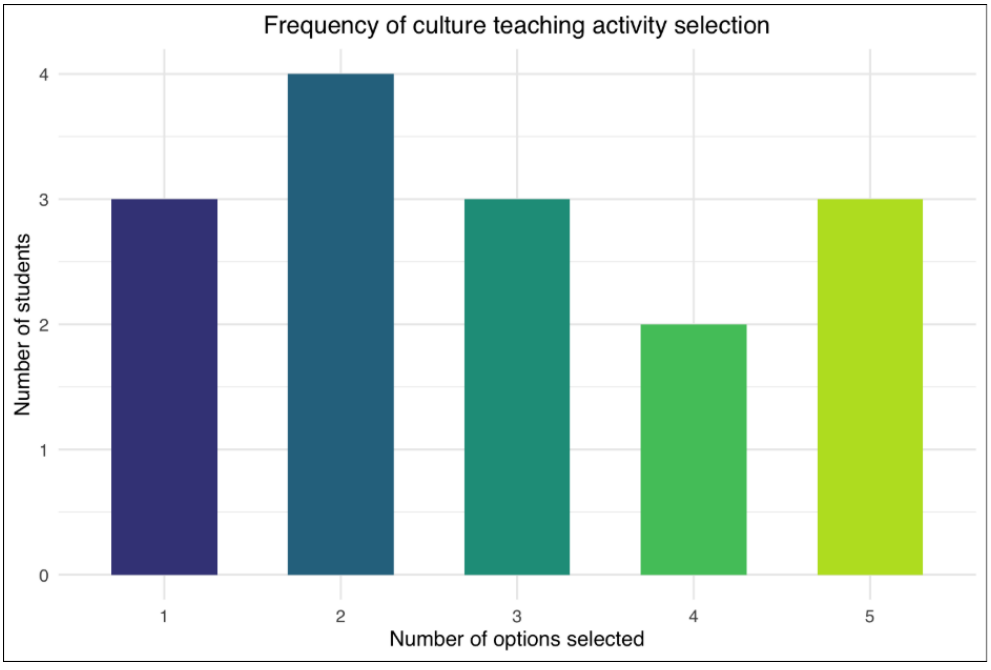


***Figure 4.4**: Bar chart of Q14 student selection frequencies*



Nearly all students reported that their teacher tells them about his experiences with the foreign culture, and over half of all students selected commenting on representations of the foreign

culture in media. Conversely, only one student selected that their teacher compares their own culture and the foreign culture, and no students selected their teacher asking them to independently explore aspects of the foreign culture. The most common number of teaching activities selected by students was 2, with 4 students selecting 2 teaching activities. 3 students each also selected 1, 3, and 5 teaching activities, indicating that students perceive a wide range of culture teaching present in their classroom activities.

Their teacher selected the three most frequently chosen culture teaching activities, but also selected that he asks students to describe their own culture in the foreign language, an option chosen by only 4 students.

4.1.2 Qualitative findings

A trend revealed throughout the group interviews was that the culture teaching taking place in Spanish lessons is not equal in importance or seriousness to language teaching. In response to interview question 6, "Is there any culture teaching that your teacher does that wasn't covered on the survey?", two students discussed that:

> ***Student A:*** *Yeah. It's very, oh when I when I did this, sort of, you should go here, not like, actual teaching.*
>
> ***Student B:*** *I don't know how to explain it. Yeah, but it's just like telling us.*

Students expressed familiarity with their curriculum, relaying that their usual classwork and practice is formulaic. Responding to question 5, "How do you feel about your Spanish lessons, separately from how you feel about your teacher?", one student voiced that:

> ***Student A:*** *... we do like a lot of like, the like - the tenses of the world and not like, part of the culture. Like, it's a lot of like charts of the endings for the verbs and stuff, yeah.*

Conversely, when taught, culture is not practiced or assessed in the same manner. Responding to question 2, "Thinking back to the "class time distribution" question from the survey, do you feel that there is any particular reason your teacher is able to spend more or less time on cultural teaching?", students in one group felt that:

> ***Student A:*** *No, we don't really do like, work of it [culture]. No.*
> ***Student B:*** *We just talk about it, right*

While not asked what specific types of culture teaching take place as it was featured in the survey, students mentioned several facets of culture, indicating their conceptualisations of culture as it has been introduced to them. Again in response to interview question 2, students from three different interview groups shared that:

> ***Student A:*** *We don't really do much culture, we learn about like, dance and things. Only like, once a term.*

> ***Student B:*** *We do culture at the same time as the language, but we do learn Spanish or learning about medieval.*

> ***Student C:*** *He [their teacher] shows us the map, yeah. A lot.*
> ***Student D:*** *Yeah. And then points out areas. And then shows pictures of it.*
> ***Student C:*** *Traditions and stuff, yeah.*

Clarifying his response to the survey question asking if the cultural content of their textbook meets expectations, their teacher shared that the material gives students *"a good flavour of the main differences in the culture and an introduction to festivals and celebrations."*

As these responses were common across several interview groups, it is evident that students perceive a low extent of culture teaching. As such, when culture is taught, it is a static definition of "culture" rather than cultural competence skills regarding understanding or interacting. This is reinforced by responses to survey Q15, to which students responded that traditions, folklore, and tourism are taught considerably more extensively than any other topic. While students across interview groups agreed that their teacher talks about culture quite frequently, it is not delivered in a lecture or "teaching" style, which results in students feeling as if culture is not taught, regardless of its presence in any teaching materials or lessons.

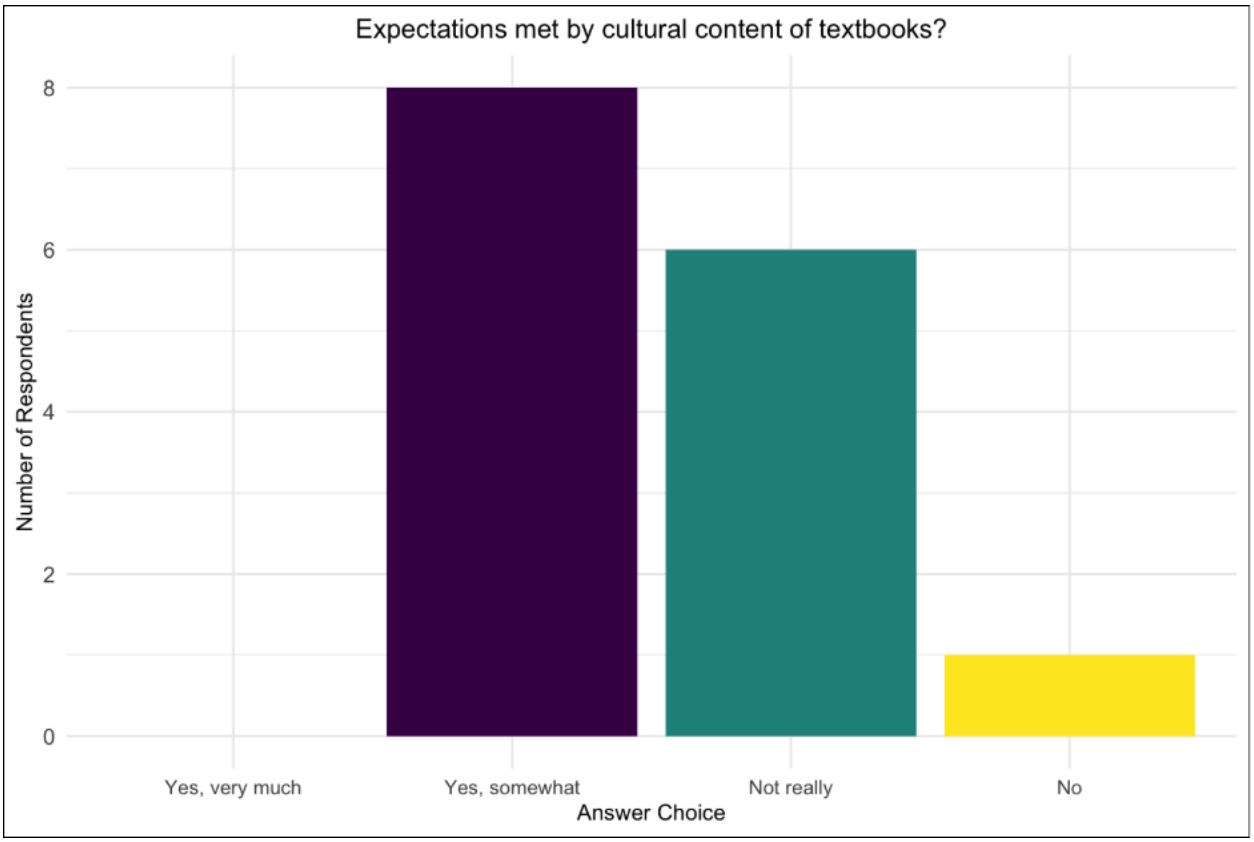
4.2 Perceptions of cultural competence teaching

4.2.1 Quantitative findings

Multiple choice Q16 asks participants if the cultural content of textbooks meets their expectations, in reference to the amount of cultural content they would like to or expect to see. Results from a Chi squared goodness-of-fit test, X^2 (3, N = 15) = 11.93, $p = .007615$, describe that student responses were not distributed uniformly across all multiple choice options. 8 students

responded that their textbooks somewhat meet their expectations, while 7 responded that their textbooks do not, indicating that student opinions are divided regarding the amount of culture in their textbooks. Figure 4.5 below visualises student responses:

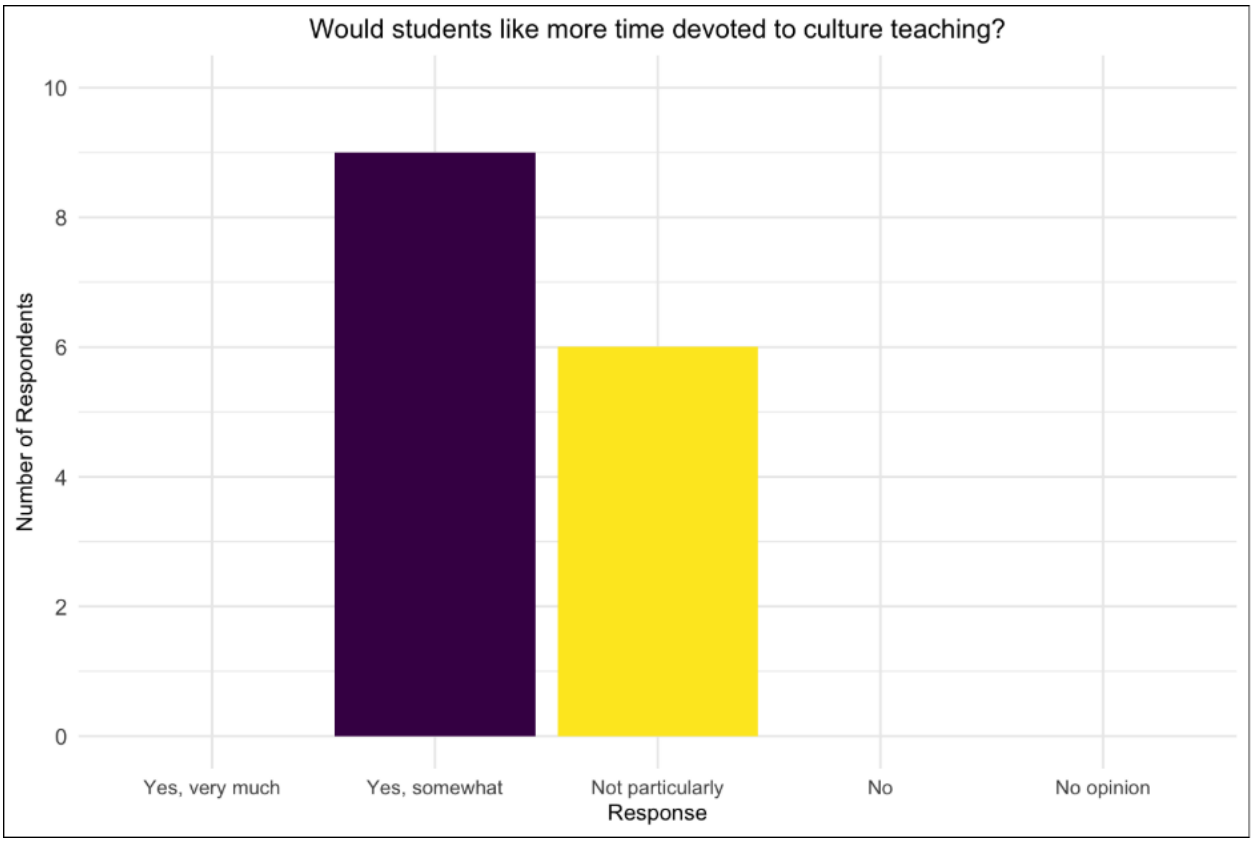
Figure 4.5: *Bar chart of Q9 response frequencies*



Conversely, their teacher chose "Yes, very much", indicating considerably more agreement with the cultural content of textbooks used than his students.

Multiple choice Q10 asked participants if they would like more time devoted to culture teaching. Results from a Chi squared goodness-of-fit test once again indicated student responses deviated considerably from a uniform distribution, X^2 (4, N = 15) = 24, p = *7.987e-05*. Visual inspection of the responses displayed in Figure 4.6 reveals that 9 students would prefer more culture teaching, while 6 students responded that they would not particularly like more culture teaching.

Figure 4.6: *Bar chat of Q10 response frequencies*



In contrast, the teacher selected "Yes, very much so", indicating a stronger desire to include more culture teaching in class lessons than his students.

Q8 asked participants to select from 9 options what objectives they believe to be a part of defining culture teaching. Bar charts in Figures 4.7 and 4.8, depicting how many students selected each culture teaching objective and how many objectives each student selected, are displayed below:

Figure 4.7: *Bar chart of Q8 culture teaching definition objective frequencies*

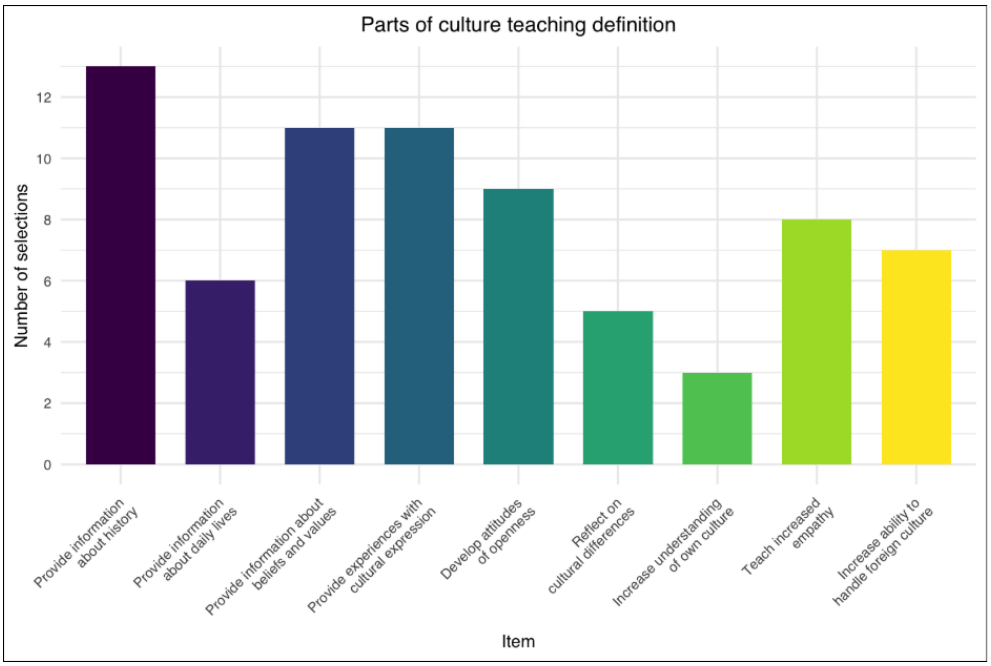
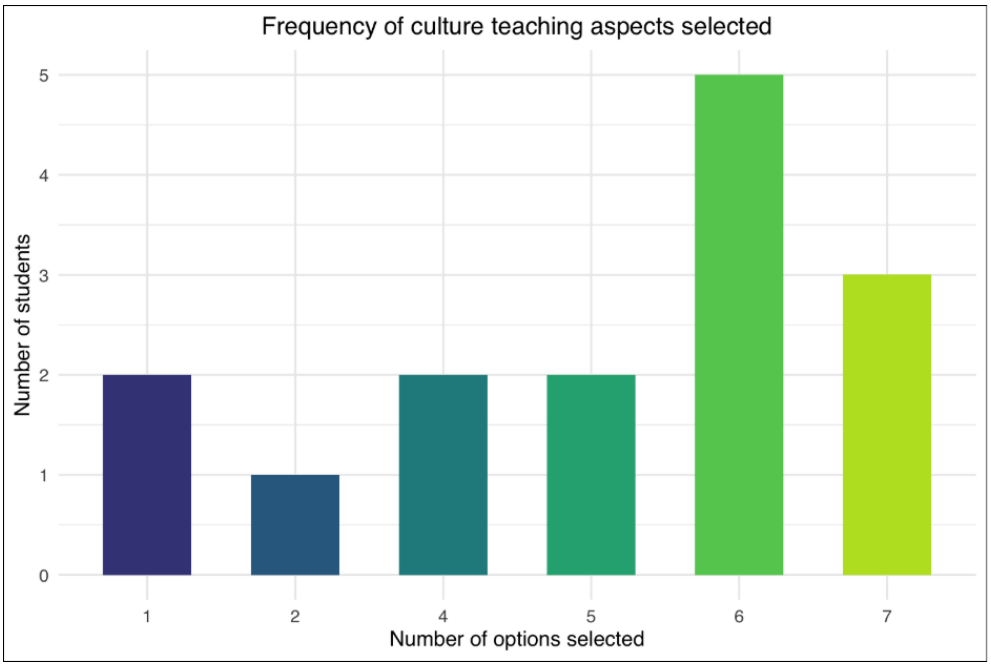


Figure 4.8: *Bar chart of Q8 student selection frequencies*



Students were most likely to select either 6 or 7 options, suggesting that they believe "culture teaching" captures a wide range of practices and objectives. The most commonly selected

aspect of culture teaching was to provide information about the history, geography, and political conditions of the foreign culture(s), selected by 13 students, with providing information about shared beliefs and values and providing experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions both being selected by 11 students. The least popularly selected option, chosen by 3 students, was promoting increased understanding of students' own cultures.

A Shapiro Wilk test indicated non-uniform distribution of teaching aspects selected per student, $W(15) = .8435, p = .014$, which is also seen inspecting the graph above. To investigate frequency of item selection, a Cochran's Q test was conducted, $Cochran's\ Q\ (df = 8) = 24.66, p = .001$, indicating some items were selected significantly more frequently than specific others. A post-hoc Dunn test with Bonferroni corrections was conducted and found two pairs of answer options with significant differences in selection frequency: "Provide information about daily lives and routines" was selected more frequently than both "provide information about shared values and beliefs" ($p = .0.00063$), and "provide information about daily lives and routines, and promote the ability to empathise with people living in other countries" ($p = .0034$). Full tables of Dunn test results, as well as descriptive statistics on item selection frequency, are available in Appendix 10.

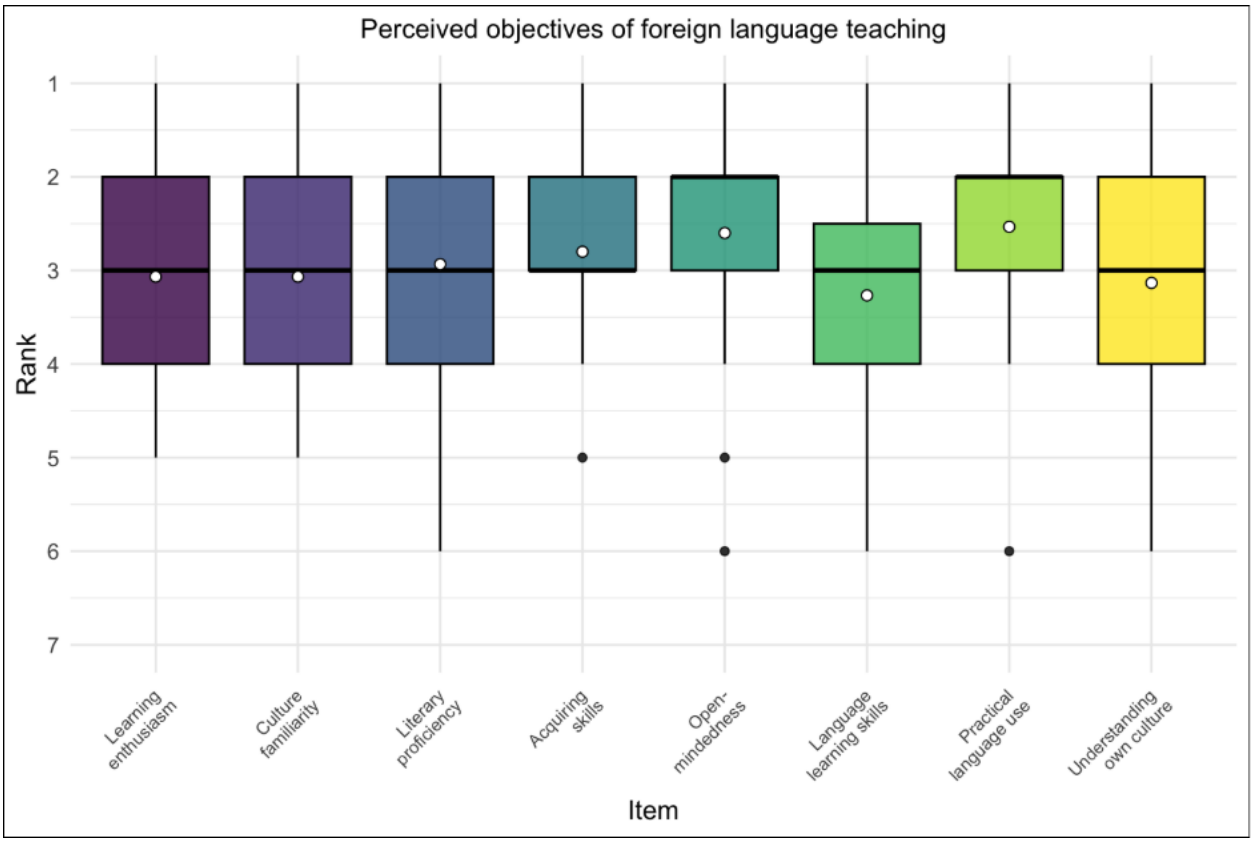
The teacher selected every objective to be a part of culture teaching, suggesting that he has a wider view of culture teaching than his students.

Q7 asked participants to rank the importance of 8 objectives of foreign language teaching from 1-7, with 1 representing the most important objectives and 7 representing the least important. Similar to the analysis used in Q15 (section 4.3.1), ranking data was treated as numerical in order to aid analysis and visualisation despite rankings being naturally ordinal. Descriptive statistics of each objective's rankings and box plots visualising those rankings can be seen in Table 5 and Figure 4.9. While most objectives received very similar ranks, the objectives ranked as most important were promoting the acquisition of proficiency in the foreign language for practical purposes and promoting the acquisition of an open mind and positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures. The objectives ranked as least important were promoting acquisition of learning skills useful for learning other foreign languages, and assistance in developing a better understanding of students' own identities and cultures.

Table 5: *Q7 Descriptive summary statistics*

Foreign language teaching objective	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard deviation (s)	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Enthusiasm for learning foreign languages	3.06	1.09	2.45	3.67
Promoting familiarity with the culture and the civilisation of the countries where the language I am learning is spoken	3.06	1.27	2.35	3.77
Assistance in acquiring a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow me to read literary works in the foreign language	2.93	1.38	2.16	3.70
Assistance in acquiring skills that will be useful in other subject areas and in life (such as memorise, summarise, put into words, formulate accurately, give a presentation, etc.)	2.80	1.01	2.23	3.36
Promoting the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures	2.60	1.45	1.79	3.40
Promoting the acquisition of learning skills that will be useful for learning other foreign languages	3.26	1.38	2.49	4.03
Promoting the acquisition of a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow me to use the foreign language for practical purposes	2.53	1.30	1.81	3.25
Assistance in developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture	3.13	1.45	2.32	3.94

Figure 4.9: *Box plots of Q7 item ranks*



A Friedman rank sum test was used to assess any statistically significant differences in student rankings per objective. Non-significant test results, $X^2\ (7) = 9.38,\ p = .22$, indicate that students did not show a preference towards any objectives compared to others.

A Spearman's rank-order correlation test was run to investigate the relationship between median student and teacher rankings. Yielding $\rho=0,\ p=1$, these results indicate a lack of association between student and teacher rankings. However, this is likely due to the fact that their teacher only gave rankings of either 1 or 2, whereas the average student ranking for all objectives was ~ 3.

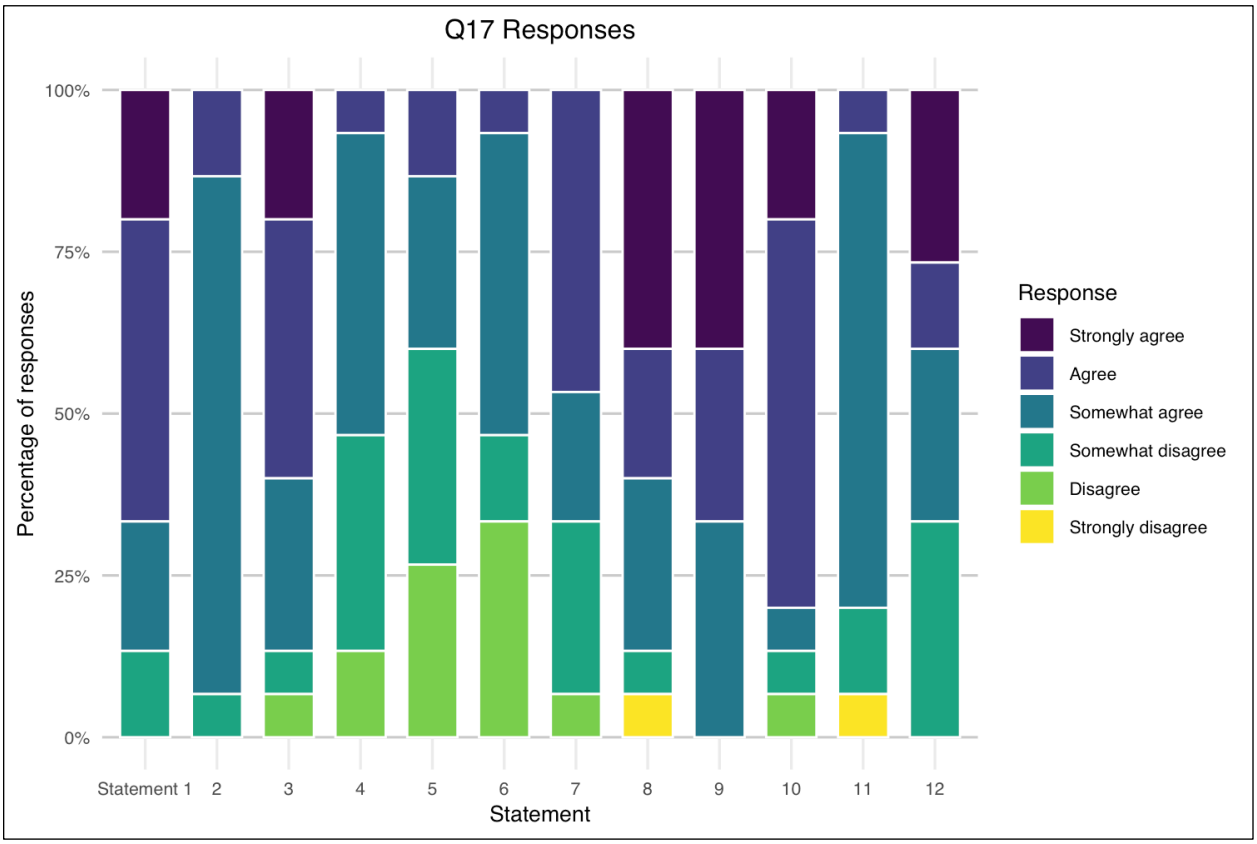
Q17 asked participants to respond to 12 statements regarding cultural competence in the foreign language classroom on a 6-point Likert scale of agreement; options were "Strongly agree", "Agree", "Somewhat agree", and vice versa for disagreement. For ease of visualisation and analysis, Likert scale responses were converted to numerical values from 6 representing "Strongly agree" to 1 representing "Strongly disagree". Table 6 below shows descriptive statistical data for responses to each statement, and Figure 4.10 shows the total percentage of responses to each statement, with segments indicating the proportion of students selecting each response option. Statements 5 ("Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school") and 6 ("It is impossible to teach

the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way") were reverse coded to ensure consistency in directionality of responses.

Table 6: *Q17 Descriptive summary statistics*

Intercultural foreign language teaching statement	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard deviation (s)	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
1. In a foreign language teaching classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language	4.73	0.96	4.20	5.26
2. Intercultural education is best undertaken cross-curricularly	4.06	0.45	3.81	4.32
3. A foreign language teacher should present a positive imagine of the foreign culture and society	4.60	1.12	3.97	5.22
4. Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students should possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language	3.46	0.83	3.00	3.92
5. Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school	3.26	1.03	2.69	3.83
6. It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way	3.26	1.03	2.69	3.83
7. My teacher tries to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through their teaching	4.06	1.03	3.49	4.63
8. The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant we are	4.73	1.43	3.93	5.52
9. A foreign language teacher should present a realistic image of the foreign culture, and therefore should also touch upon negative sides of the foreign culture and society	5.06	0.88	4.57	5.55
10. Providing additional cultural information makes students more tolerant towards other cultures and peoples	4.80	1.08	4.20	5.39
11. Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences	3.73	0.88	3.24	4.22
12. Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen students' understandings of our own cultures.	4.33	1.23	3.64	5.01

Figure 4.10: *Stacked bar chart of Q17 responses*



The statements with the highest average agreement were 9 ("A foreign language teacher should present a realistic image of the foreign culture...") and 10 ("Providing additional cultural information makes students more tolerant towards other cultures and peoples"). A Friedman test was conducted to examine whether there were differences in student ratings across the 12 statements. The test revealed a statistically significant difference in how students rated the items, χ^2 (11) = 38.36, $p < .001$, indicating that some statements were agreed or disagreed with consistently more than others. However, post-hoc pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni corrections did not reveal any significant pairwise differences.

Compared to average student agreement, their teacher had considerably higher agreement with each statement, responding "Strongly agree" to 6 out of 12 statements. The most notable difference between his responses and student responses was to statement 1 ("In a foreign language teaching classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language"), for which he selected "Somewhat agree" at a value of 4, whereas the average student response was 4.7.

4.2.2 Qualitative findings

Students broadly expressed that linguistic knowledge is the goal of language class. Despite the academic value of linguistic knowledge, interview discussions also indicate that students perceive cultural competence content positively, compared to pure language content. Whereas language and grammar content are delivered systematically, culture is taught with more variety. Responding to interview question 2 asking about class time distribution, students from three interview groups shared that:

> ***Student A:*** *[60% language, 40% culture], I think it's just sort of how the class is. But we usually do more language because this is kind of what we're learning.*

> ***Student B:*** *We learn about like a sequence. Then when we move on, we learn about that same thing each lesson. Like past, present, and future tense.*

> ***Student C:*** *Yeah. No, because [Teacher] talks about how he lived in Spain. Or he talks about really random stuff.*
> ***Student D:*** *Oh yeah, he was quite like oh, oh, you know, you know, when I lived in Spain, I did this*

Based on discussions about their teacher's perception of their target culture, students value in-person and lived experiences as a primary way to gain cultural competence and knowledge. When asked in interview question 3 about their perceptions of their teacher's attitudes towards foreign cultures, three students responded that:

> ***Student A:*** *No, he lived in like, Spain. I think. I think he's quite familiar with the culture.*

> ***Student B:*** *[Teacher] is very positive, I think, because he used to live there.* ***Student C:*** *Yeah, he's passionate about it.*

Students expressed interest in learning more about culture and cultural competence, reporting that they believe their teacher or curriculum could balance teaching both language and culture content:

> ***Student A:*** *Think we should learn more about the language and the culture. Like I think we can do that at the same time.*

In survey responses, their teacher expressed that students in the class have *"very different"* and *"sometimes a bit strange"* perceptions, but *"there does exist a curiosity"* which he tries to address in his teaching. In conversation during the school visit, he voiced agreement with the student perspective above that first-hand experience with a community is the most fruitful way to acquire cultural knowledge and competence. Furthermore, as will be explored in later sections discussing motivation, he also shared that as students did not choose to enroll in Spanish, their interest and engagement with the class is widely varied, which contributes to their perception of language skills as the most important goal of foreign language class despite holding positive opinions towards including culture in teaching.

4.3 Student relationships with perceived cultural competence

This section will present findings on overall student motivation and proficiency, before moving on to analyse relationships between cultural competence perceptions.

4.3.1 Motivation

As introduced in chapter 3, this study operationalised motivation using four constructs assembled from the original surveys (Dörnyei et al., 2006; Taguchi et al., 2009): Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, Cultural Attitudes, and Learning Attitudes. Each construct demonstrated good internal reliability: $\alpha = .87$, $\alpha = .79$, $\alpha = .89$, and $\alpha = .89$, respectively. Student motivation was assessed by calculating mean scores from Likert scale responses to the 47 motivation questions, where 6 = "Strongly agree" and 1 = "Strongly disagree", and questions were reverse coded where necessary.

Table 7 below shows descriptive summary statistics for each construct. Students showed stronger Cultural Attitudes motivation than any other construct, and the lowest motivation in the Ought-to L2 Self construct. It should be noted, however, that Cultural Attitudes also has the highest standard error, suggesting greater variability than other constructs in this study. Further, the Ought-to L2 Self was measured with the most items (19) compared to Cultural Attitudes (8) and Ideal L2 Self and Learning Attitudes (11).

Table 7: *Motivation construct descriptive summary statistics*

Motivation construct	Mean (x̄)	Standard deviation (s)	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Ideal L2 Self	3.42	0.79	2.98	3.86
Ought-to L2 Self	2.92	0.62	2.58	3.27
Cultural Attitudes	4.00	0.90	3.50	4.50
Learning Attitudes	3.78	0.73	3.37	4.19

Figures 4.11, 4.12, 4.13, and 4.14 below, respectively, depict distribution of students' average scores for each motivation construct, and Shapiro Wilk tests of normality for each construct are available in Appendix 10. Upon visual inspection, the Ideal L2 Self and Learning Attitudes have larger variation in average scores than the Ought-to L2 Self and Cultural Attitudes. Alongside the descriptive statistics in Table 7, data suggests that students in this class are more likely to be motivated by cultural attitudes and perceptions or their learning environment and experience than they are by an Ideal or Ought-to L2 self.

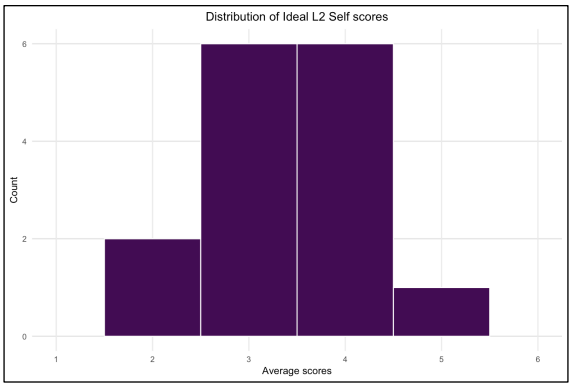


Figure 4.11: *Histogram of Ideal L2 Self scores*

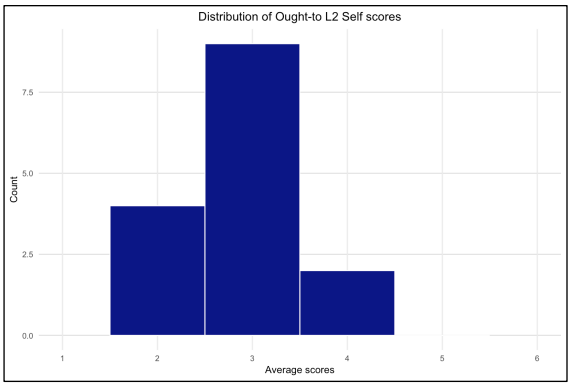


Figure 4.12: *Histogram of Ought-to L2 Self scores*

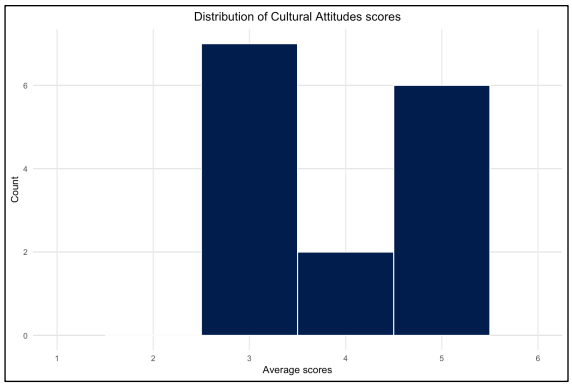


Figure 4.13: *Histogram of Cultural Attitudes scores*

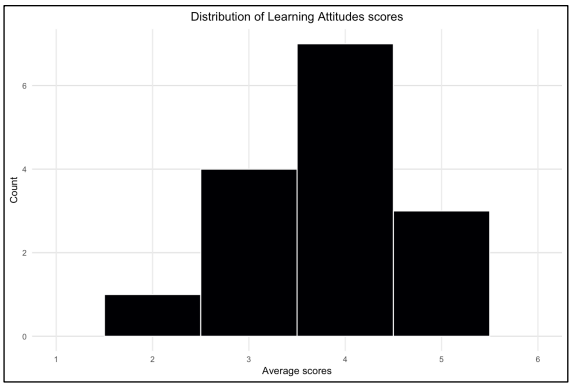
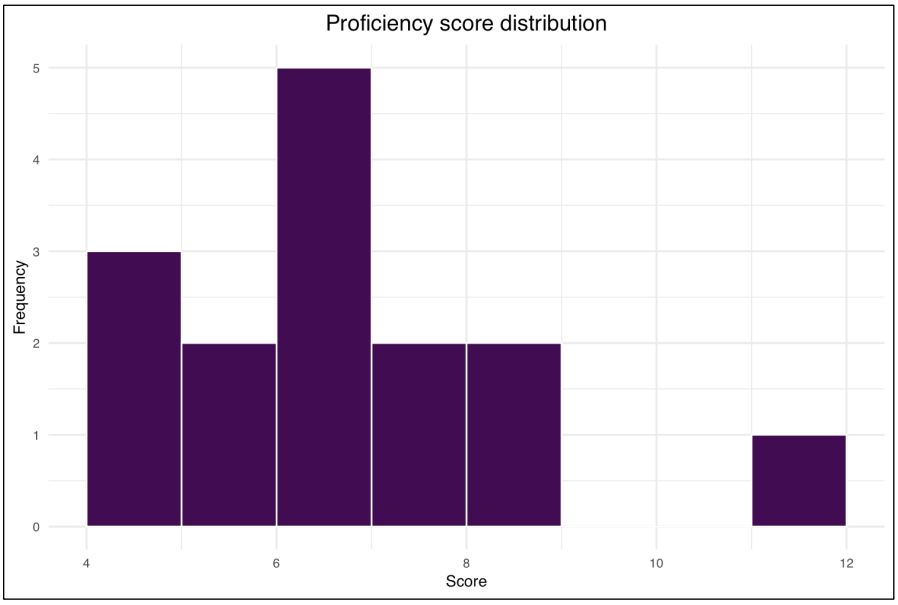


Figure 4.14: *Histogram of Learning Attitudes scores*

4.3.2 Proficiency

Proficiency was tested via a multiple-choice vocabulary test with a possible total score of 12. Students had a mean proficiency score of M = 7.13, SD = 1.95. The standard deviation was 0.50, and the 95% confidence interval ranged from 6.05 to 8.21. Distribution of proficiency scores can be seen in Figure 4.15. Questions with the highest percentage of correct responses were Q65 (100% correct responses), Q70 (81% correct), and Q71 (75% correct), all of which were among the CEFR A1 level questions (a full list of proficiency questions can be found in Appendix 7). Questions with the lowest percentage of correct responses were Q75 (44% correct responses), Q68 (31% correct), and Q69 (19% correct); only Q75 was an A2 level question.

Figure 4.15: *Histogram of proficiency test scores*



4.3.3 Cultural competence perceptions and motivation

Cultural competence perceptions and the extent of cultural competence teaching were assessed by creating mean “familiarity” and “perceptions” scores from survey Q12, “How familiar are you with the country, culture, and people primarily associated with the foreign language you are learning?”, and Q17, “Intercultural foreign language teaching: Your opinions”. These were both Likert scale questions with 10 and 12 statements to respond to, respectively. Likert scale responses were quantified from 6 (“Strongly agree”/”Very familiar”) to 1 (“Strongly disagree”/”Very unfamiliar”).

Q17 was previously analysed in section 4.4.1, and Q12 responses will be analysed below. Figure 4.16 and Table 8 show Q12’s response statistics. Students report that they consider themselves most familiar with traditions, folklore, and tourist attractions, and daily lives and routines. Conversely, they reported lowest familiarity with literature and international relations. While not included in the chart in Figure 4.16, their teacher reported that he is at least somewhat familiar with every cultural aspect.

Figure 4.16: *Stacked bar chart of Q12 responses*

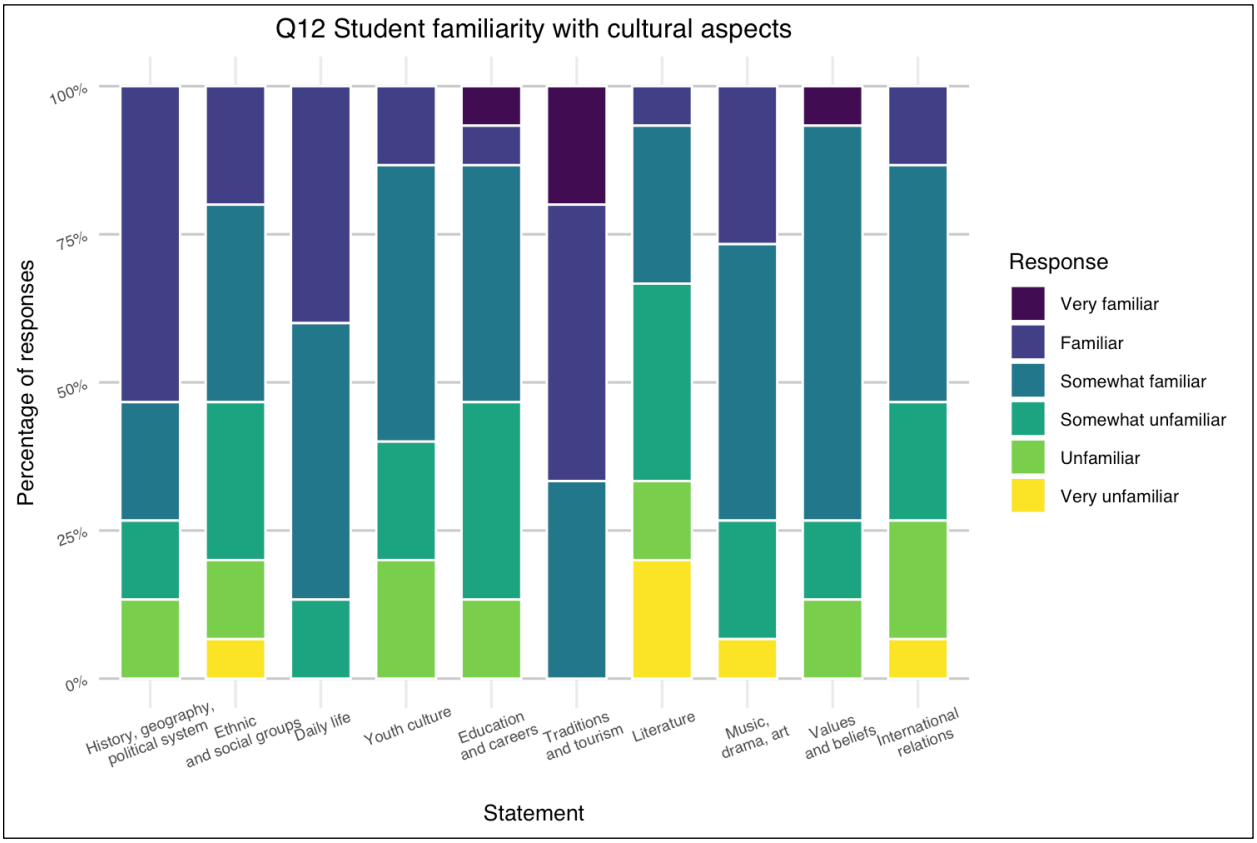


Table 8: *Q12 Descriptive summary statistics*

Cultural familiarity aspect	Mean (x̄)	Standard deviation (s)	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
History, geography, political system	4.13	1.12	3.51	4.75
Different ethnic and social groups	3.46	1.18	2.80	4.12
Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink, etc.	4.26	0.70	3.87	4.65
Youth culture	3.53	0.99	2.98	4.08
Education and professional life	3.60	1.05	3.01	4.18
Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions	4.86	0.74	4.45	5.27
Literature	2.86	1.24	2.17	3.55
Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)	3.86	1.06	3.27	4.45
Values and beliefs	3.73	0.96	3.20	4.26
International relations (political, economic, and cultural) with students' own country and other countries	3.33	1.17	2.68	3.98

As introduced above, the extent of culture teaching and cultural competence perceptions were analysed for comparison with motivation and proficiency by creating mean scores for each student. Figures 4.17 and 4.18 below depict the distributions of students' average cultural familiarity and cultural competence perceptions, calculated from data in Q12 and Q17. Additionally, Table 9 shows descriptive summary statistics of each questions' average scores.

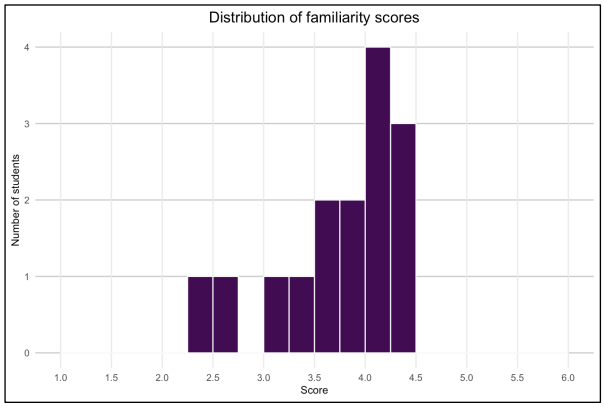


Figure 4.17: *Histogram of cultural familiarity scores*

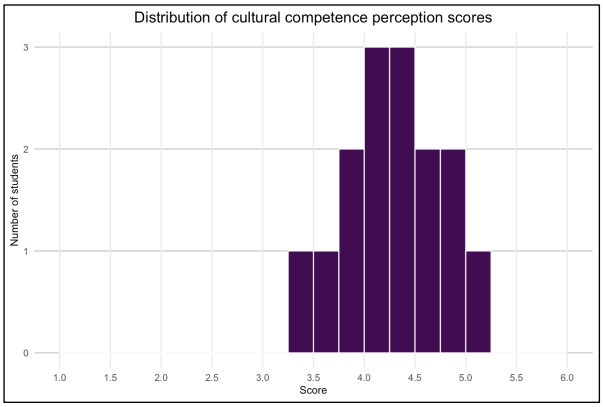


Figure 4.18: *Histogram of cultural competence perceptions scores*

Table 9: *Cultural familiarity and cultural competence perceptions summary statistics*

	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Standard deviation (s)	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Cultural familiarity	3.76	0.64	3.44	4.09
Cultural competence perceptions	4.34	0.48	4.09	4.59

As the focus of this study is investigating cultural competence perceptions and its relationships with motivation and proficiency rather than motivation alone, correlations among motivation constructs are not central to this study's research questions. To investigate the relationships between students' cultural competence perceptions and their motivation, Pearson's *r* correlation analyses were conducted between the four motivation constructs used in this study (Ideal L2 Self, Ought-to L2 Self, Cultural Attitudes, and Learning Attitudes) and the cultural familiarity and cultural competence perceptions explored above. Statistically significant correlations were found between the variables below, with a full table of findings available in Appendix 11:

- Strong positive correlations between Cultural Attitudes and cultural competence perceptions ($r = .75$, $p = .001$)
- Strong positive correlations between Learning Attitudes and cultural competence perceptions ($r = .72$, $p = .002$)
- Moderate positive correlations between Ideal L2 Self and cultural competence perceptions ($r = .49$, $p = .062$)

4.3.4 Cultural competence perceptions and proficiency

Pearson's *r* correlation analyses were also conducted between proficiency scores (displayed in 4.5.2) and the cultural familiarity and cultural competence perceptions discussed above. Proficiency and cultural familiarity showed a moderate positive relationship, but did not achieve statistical significance ($r = .45$, $p = .096$). Further, proficiency only displayed a weakly negative and non-significant relationship with cultural competence opinions ($r = -.25$, $p = .379$). A full table of correlational findings related to proficiency is available in Appendix 11.

4.3.5 Qualitative findings on cultural competence relationships with motivation and proficiency

While not previously addressed due to survey question limitations, students in every interview group described negative feelings towards Spanish class. “Boring” was used by every group several times, with one group expressing that they “hate” the class. However, all but one group clarified that they feel positively about their teacher and his instructional practices despite their lack of enjoyment in the material.

Students did not specifically mention motivation in response to their feelings about Spanish class or learning about culture, but aspects of the Learning Attitudes construct analysed above were discussed by three groups in response to interview question 5 asking how they feel about Spanish lessons separate to how they feel about their teacher:

> ***Student A:*** *It's just draining, yeah. It’s a good environment, but it's just the class.*
> ***Student B:*** *It's on a Friday.*
> ***Student A:*** *Yeah, like a double [lesson].*
>
> ***Student C:*** *And the seating plan? I think it gets boring because of the seating plan*
>
> ***Student A:*** *Spanish is boring. None of us chose it. We like have to do it.*
> ***Student B:*** *Yeah, because we got put.*

In terms of their academic achievement and expanding on the language course requirement described above, students in one group clarified that their placement in Spanish was compulsory as a result of their KS2 marks and results:

> ***Student A:*** *Yeah, because we got put [in the Spanish course]. There's two routes, A and B.*
>
> ***Student B:*** *Yeah, [route B is] no language.*

While completing their surveys, several students expressed confusion towards the proficiency test section questions, despite the test aligning with Year 9’s expected CEFR level (Curcin & Black, 2019) and the class performing well on the proficiency questions overall. Further, they expressed during the interviews that they would be allowed to enroll in another language offered such as French, but were concerned about catching up with the material:

> ***Student A:*** *If we want to take French and we would be marked 2 years behind in work. Like whatever language we start in year seven, we didn't get to change there.*

As shown by their lack of mention in interviews, motivation and proficiency were not relevant to students' perceptions and discussions of cultural competence and culture teaching. This coincides with survey findings showing that students had a weaker Ought-to L2 Self than any other motivation construct – as the majority of survey questions loading onto the Ought-to L2 Self (available in Appendix 7) had to do with academic pressure and future academic plans, students will not be engaged with language class by way of culture or academic achievement if they are not motivated to learn overall.

4.4 Summary of findings

This chapter presented data findings from both the student and teacher surveys used in this study as well as relevant findings from the semi-structured student group interviews, with the goal of addressing this study's research questions.

Investigating the extent of cultural competence teaching, results showed that culture is addressed through several different topics and classroom activities, but cultural competence itself as a skill set is not addressed at all. Additionally, students feel that culture "teaching" is not undertaken in the same instructional manner as language teaching. Their teacher had similar perceptions of the extent of culture teaching he practices. While he believes that the amount of culture he includes in his teaching is enough to address student interest in the foreign language and culture, it does not meet the standards of cultural competence teaching as defined by researchers such as Byram (1997; 2021) or Deardorff (2006; 2011). This schism between culture teaching and cultural competence teaching will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Students had overall positive and ranging perceptions of cultural competence and culture in language class. In survey responses, they reported perceiving several different topics and aspects of culture to be part of the culture teaching definition and experience. In both survey responses and interview discussions, they shared and reiterated that they believe more culture could be included in their lessons and teaching. They specifically valued their teacher's experience living in Spanish-speaking cities and countries as a source of his culture knowledge, and he discussed that a large culture teaching opportunity for him throughout his career was a trip to Valencia, Spain with students. However, he also expressed satisfaction with the amount of culture content in his current teaching materials, indicating that the curriculum change discussed by students is not likely.

Data analysis revealed that students' perceptions about the extent of culture teaching and of cultural competence as a whole have little to do with their motivation or language proficiency. Survey results showed that students in this class have low motivation within the L2MSS model,

and specifically weak Ideal and Ought-to L2 Selves compared to their motivation coming from Cultural and Learning Attitudes. Additionally, no level of proficiency resulting from the short proficiency test in the survey correlated with cultural competence perceptions. As will be discussed in following chapters, this does not indicate a lack of relationship between cultural competence perceptions, motivation, and proficiency in the wider British student population.

Chapter 5 will go on to discuss implications of these findings, as well as centralising them amongst some of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

5. Discussion

This study investigated the state of current cultural competence teaching and cultural competence perceptions in UK foreign language classrooms via a mixed-methods case study approach involving one Year 9 Spanish class and one of their teachers. The extent of cultural competence teaching and perceptions of culture teaching were assessed, as well as relationships between cultural competence perceptions, motivation, and proficiency. Cultural competence is valued and highly regarded as a crucial part of language learning, but has yet to be featured in UK MFL curriculum and teaching with equal importance to language skills (see section 2.2) (Kramsch, 1995). Previous studies have identified various barriers to including cultural competence in foreign language education: teachers' lack of preparation to teach it and personal perceptions of culture in language education (Sercu, 2005), societal value of foreign languages (Rodeiro, 2017), student motivation (Coleman, 2009), and more.

Along with the difficulty in assessing student cultural competence as a part of language curriculum, cultural competence and perceptions of it are studied infrequently, resulting in a body of literature lacking empirical evidence. Therefore, this chapter seeks to expand on the analytical findings presented in the previous chapter and contextualise them within wider literature and research. Each research question will be discussed in turn, and findings relating to each will be assessed in the context of previous research. Potential pedagogical implications are highlighted throughout the chapter, along with a discussion of the limitations of this study and areas for future research. A summary of implications is provided at the end of the chapter. Research questions were investigated using a mixed methods approach of online surveys and semi-structured group interviews.

5.1 Extent of cultural competence teaching

The analyses presented in this study revealed that cultural competence is not taught extensively in any regard. Both student and teacher responses indicate that the majority of their class time is spent on structured and regular language teaching. In comparison, culture teaching is included as spontaneous mentions and discussions, rather than through dedicated lessons. In line with findings from Sercu (2005), the class teacher reported distributing his teaching time 80% to language teaching and 20% to culture teaching. Student responses were divided nearly evenly between 80% to 20% and 60% to 40%; they expressed during interviews that while culture is discussed frequently, it is either not given the same importance as language teaching or is taught alongside a language concept.

Despite perceiving a relative lack of culture teaching compared to language teaching, both students and their teacher selected a wide variety of culture teaching activities practiced and topics dealt with. The fact that the most commonly reported culture teaching practices center around discussion and conversation rather than dedicated activities or tasks mirrors findings from Castro

et al. (2004), in which teachers felt they could only deal with culture infrequently due to the linguistic requirements of their curriculum and assessment standards. Interestingly, the teacher in this study did not report any dissatisfaction with his available teaching materials, responding that the cultural capital conveyed in textbooks is enough to introduce students to "festivals and celebrations" only.

Alongside the most prevalently taught culture topics being daily life and traditions, these findings confirm that the culture teaching taking place is not cultural competence teaching as defined by Byram (1997). Rather, culture is taught as static facts to increase knowledge, reducing opportunities for students to acquire cultural competence skills. While some of the reported teaching activities practiced contribute to Byram's (1997) *savoirs être* and *comprendre*, these alone are not enough to build a full repertoire of cultural competence. Notably missing from this classroom's reported culture teaching are *savoirs apprendre/faire* and *s'engager*, which both involve more engagement with the foreign culture than discovery alone. These findings further confirm Castro et al.'s (2004) conclusions regarding existing culture teaching: even when culture is taught outside of facts and histories, it is for the benefit of relevant foreign interactions rather than cultural competence acquisition. As nearly all students reported low contact with Spanish-speaking cultures outside of tourist visits to Spain in interview discussions, their neutral attitudes towards the importance of cultural competence reflects the lack of engagement with their target foreign culture in teaching and learning.

5.2 Perceptions of cultural competence teaching

5.2.1 Student perceptions

Despite expressing that language skills are a higher priority in Spanish class than cultural competence, students expressed that they view culture teaching and cultural competence positively.

In terms of student expectations of time spent culture teaching, responses were divided between satisfaction with the current time with no desire for more and dissatisfaction with current culture teaching time and wanting more; however, all students except one selected the more neutral "Somewhat" responses for each question, indicating no extreme attitudes towards current culture teaching practices. Interestingly, students who responded that they would like more culture teaching time also comprised the majority of participants who selected four or more parts of what defines "culture teaching".

The most commonly selected parts of a "culture teaching" definition were: providing information about history, beliefs and values, and providing experiences with different cultural expressions such as art and music. Despite both students and their teacher selecting that they handle information about daily lives most extensively in current culture teaching, providing information about daily lives was the least commonly selected part of "culture teaching". This could indicate

a disconnect between cultural competence expectations and taught realities, or that students and teacher in this sample feel culture teaching and cultural competence are defined differently than is presented in teaching and learning materials.

Elaborating on survey responses, qualitative interview data revealed that students believe more culture teaching is possible. One student expressed that culture is often taught alongside linguistic concepts, but it could be taught more frequently due to the formulaic manner language is often delivered. This also appeared to be one of the reasons students had positive perceptions of culture teaching compared to language teaching: culture teaching was reported to be delivered spontaneously and as relevant to class discussions, whereas language concepts are delivered systematically. This presents an interesting opportunity for increasing cultural competence in teaching: students' motivational Learning Attitudes could be improved simultaneously with Cultural Attitudes and overall cultural competence skills with an increased presence of culture teaching alongside language teaching. Intervention studies (see Aski et al., 2023; Hoyt, 2016) have evidenced that cultural competence teaching can improve attitudes and cultural competence skills, and alongside perceptions expressed by students above, fostering more positive perceptions of Spanish class and the language learning experience as a whole would not be an unwelcome benefit.

In terms of perceptions about each of Byram's (1997) cultural competence *savoirs*, responses revealed that students agree as to *savoir* and *comprendre* being the most important and prevalently taught, with *savoir s'engager* being the least agreeably perceived. In each question it was mentioned, regarding culture teaching definitions, practices, or opinions, students consistently selected other options more favourably or simply more frequently than critical cultural awareness options. This provides information as to why overall cultural competence perceptions are neutral and non-extreme, as in more recent iterations of his ICC definition, Byram and Fang (2005) have described that *savoir s'engager* is the final and most critical competence language students acquire. If cultural competence is not being taught fully, students will not be able to reach the critical cultural awareness stage where they are able to compare own and foreign cultures and reflect on values outside of explicit references and facets.

While students' perceptions of cultural competence are positive, it is evident that their definition of cultural competence was based on culture acquired in a static sense, rather than a communicatively competent sense. Therefore, the next section will explore teacher perceptions of cultural competence and their impact on teaching.

5.2.2 Teacher perceptions

The teacher expressed overall agreement with student responses in terms of cultural competence perceptions and inclusion of cultural competence in language teaching. While he views culture teaching and cultural competence positively and regards it as important in language classroom teaching, he simultaneously appeared to reinforce "big C" culture teaching practices

rather than promoting cultural competence skills. According to findings from Sercu (2005), this view of culture teaching is common across languages and countries: foreign language teachers confine teaching of culture to visible aspects dealt with in textbooks, rather than values or deeper insights. While cultural competence is an important goal of language education, it is also a loaded concept likely not accessible to younger language learners, and the level of culture teaching measured in this study supports this (Deardorff, 2011). Barski and Wilkerson-Barker (2019) briefly discuss that students with low levels of cultural competence and awareness need to be met at their own level of culture awareness, and the culture taught in this study's classroom presents a promising starting place for further cultural competence teaching development.

One of the most stark differences between students and teacher perceptions of cultural competence was in response to the importance of language and culture teaching compared to each other – students, on average, agreed more than their teacher that language and culture are equally important. This could be a reflection of changes to MFL curriculum and teaching standards over the past several decades. Communicative language teaching, as defined by Canale and Swain (1980), only rose to popularity at the end of the 20th century, and England's Secondary National Curriculum (Department for Education, 2014) has not been updated since 2014. Cultural competence in a multicultural and socio-educational sense likely has yet to be integrated into language teaching materials, thus, a veteran language teacher might similarly have yet to form positive perceptions of it.

While not specifically investigated in this study, the similarity in student and teacher perceptions of cultural competence and the extent of culture teaching could be explained by a previously researched power of teacher influence on students' learning experience. Aski et al. (2023) implied that students in their study had limited opinions of cultural competence simply because they were not exposed to it in any teaching, and this is reflected by the fact that their successful cultural competence intervention was conducted by a specialised researcher rather than the usual course teacher. Teacher perceptions appear all the more important in the present study, as students in this study reported that their own perception as well as attitudes towards learning Spanish are heavily influenced by perceptions of their teacher and his teaching. If schools or curriculum writers are interested in promoting cultural competence teaching, one of the most important steps must be educating current teachers and fostering positive perceptions of cultural competence for them to then pass on in their teaching.

5.3 Relationships between cultural competence perceptions and student motivation and proficiency

5.3.1 Cultural competence perceptions and motivation

While a selection of students did report high language learning motivation, especially within the Cultural Attitudes and Learning Attitudes constructs, cultural competence perceptions and motivation were not found to have any significantly positive or negative relationships. These findings corroborate a selection of past research results, primarily Peiser and Jones' (2013) conclusions regarding low cultural competence perceptions and motivation as results of a societal lack of importance given to language learning. However, the prevalence of positive Cultural and Learning Attitudes is promising – more frequent or intensive inclusion of cultural competence teaching could further bolster students' motivational attitudes. Dörnyei (2019) admits that the L2 Learning Experience, assessed in this study as Cultural and Learning attitudes, has seldom been studied on its own, but other studies have discussed how the L2 Learning Experience can predict language learning motivation outcomes when measured independently and with attention to as many individual experience variables as possible (Li, 2023).

A notable variable which appeared during interviews was students' lack of choice in enrolment in their Spanish class. Despite expressing that they likely would have wanted to learn Spanish regardless of choice, students generally reported negative feelings towards their having to take the language course and learn the language. This mirrors findings from Parrish and Lanvers (2018), who support MFL enrolment as mandatory in KS3 if students are able to choose which language they study. While it is seldom mentioned in Dörnyei's L2MSS research, student choice is an important variable in Self-Determination Theory, emphasised by Lanvers (2016), who cites that it can further help conceptualise motivation as controlled by each L2 Self. Following findings from Lee and Lo (2017) regarding relationships between the Ideal L2 Self and language choice, if students' attitudes towards their enrolment in Spanish can be addressed, combined with their promising higher orientations in Cultural and Learning Attitudes, a stronger Ideal L2 Self and overall L2 motivation can be fostered.

5.3.2 Cultural competence perceptions and proficiency

Similarly to the relationship between cultural competence and motivation, no significant relationships were found between cultural competence perceptions and proficiency. This could potentially be a result of the sample population being investigated: Year 9 students are not yet motivated by an upcoming GCSE language exam, and at the school in question in this study, language GCSE exams are not mandatory, meaning that Year 9 Spanish students might not have the same desire for academic achievement and success as peers who are actively studying for the exam. Additionally, few students acknowledged proficiency or academic achievement when discussing their perceptions of Spanish class and language learning as a whole, indicating that

aside from its relationship with cultural competence perceptions, students do not prioritise proficiency in their language learning. Peiser and Jones (2013) found that students who had already experienced academic success were more likely to value linguistic skills over culture, but students in this study who achieved proficiency scores above the median perceived cultural competence only marginally and non-significantly more positively than their peers who scored below the median.

This lack of relationship between cultural competence perceptions and proficiency is not surprising given the previous lack of relationship between cultural competence perceptions and motivation, but interesting in that students did express viewing linguistic skills and language learning as a priority equal to cultural skills, if not more important than them. During distribution and completion of surveys, the students' teacher shared that he believes his students to be very motivated, but that they do not engage with the material and language enthusiastically. As previous research on relationships between cultural competence and proficiency has focused on adult students learning English as an L2, further specific inspection of this topic is necessary in order to reveal any variables or information missing from this study.

5.4 Limitations and Areas for Future Research

This section will outline a number of limitations to the current study, which may have impacted findings and the applicability of results to a wider population.

5.4.1 Sample size and recruitment

The first and largest limitation on the conclusions drawn from this study were recruitment issues, and the subsequently small sample size. As discussed in Chapter 3, initial recruitment for this study was undertaken at a large scale, and a lack of positive response led the researcher to choose a case study approach with one school rather than continue with large-scale recruitment. These struggles delayed undertaking of the study significantly, and resulted in a shorter than desired period of communication with the participating school.

Additionally, the case study approach adopted after initial failed recruitment resulted in a significantly smaller sample size than intended. While case studies are still incredibly important in exploratory research (Duff, 2014), a larger sample would have allowed for more generalisable results as well as more robust analytical procedures and investigation of more variables, such as gender (see Kissau et al., 2010), which have been demonstrated to be pivotal in student-based education research.

5.4.2 Materials and instrument design

A significant barrier in cultural competence research, whether assessing actual cultural competence or perceptions, is availability of previous empirical research and validity of instruments. While the question items used for surveys in this study did display reliable internal consistency, findings and discussions were limited to the scope of the questions. Future research investigating any variables mentioned in this dissertation could benefit from original and unique questions specifically measuring cultural competence perceptions and cultural competence teaching related to motivation and proficiency, rather than drawing conclusions from question items designed to investigate each variable on its own.

Additionally, as they were originally designed for a larger sample and therefore a wider range of classroom environments, the survey and interview questions were not specifically tailored to the participating school's learning context. In order to present the most accurate picture of cultural competence perceptions and current teaching, future case study investigations should take care to cater to the specific case being studied. Methods such as classroom observation and individual interviews could provide more thorough investigation into the L2 Learning Experience, a variable relevant to this study that requires further research both independently and in relation to cultural competence.

5.4.3 Data collection procedures

As a result of the recruitment and instrument design limitations above, some issues arose during the school visit for data collection. The first issue was student fatigue with survey length, which caused several students to respond to survey items without properly engaging with them, likely in order to complete the survey quicker. The student survey was within Dörnyei and Taguchi's (2009) recommended questionnaire length, but future research should take into account student engagement with the questions regardless of survey length, so as to ensure proper completion.

The second issue with data collection was the semi-structured group interview process. A short class period only allowed for 90 minutes to both distribute surveys and conduct group interviews, which resulted in shorter group discussions than originally planned; this could ideally be solved with more rigorous planning and scheduling of data collection on site.

5.5 Implications for teaching and pedagogy

Several implications for teacher pedagogy and practice have been discussed throughout this chapter, as well as recommendations for classroom and curriculum changes related to cultural competence which could benefit students' motivation, proficiency, and intercultural communication skills.

The extent of cultural competence teaching does not fully rely on the presence of culture in teaching materials, or in a teacher's experience with the foreign culture alone. As seen in the classroom in this study, students are aware of culture teaching and engage positively with it despite it not being taught as seriously as language content, largely because they saw their teacher as knowledgeable about and favourably dispositioned towards Spanish culture. If language teachers are interested in teaching cultural competence more extensively, they should first ensure they are confident in discussing foreign culture and addressing potential cultural misunderstandings or differences in order to allow students a realistic view of the culture and cultural competence skills being taught.

This study found few statistically significant relationships between cultural competence perceptions, motivation, and proficiency, but that does not imply that no relationships exist. The power of students' Cultural Attitudes in this study along with their strong opinions towards their language class show potential to improve their perceptions of language learning as a whole through inclusion of more culture teaching, which could also lead to increased motivation in other areas such as the Ideal L2 Self or in their academic achievement. While cultural competence has been emphasised as important in theoretical literature, evidence from this study as well as others mentioned throughout the above chapter confirm that it holds value for students and their foreign language education and should be taught more prevalently than it is now.

6. Conclusion

This dissertation was motivated by the researcher's own foreign language education experience, and specifically by a positive Spanish L2 learning experience. The purpose of this study was to explore cultural competence perceptions in language teaching, with a view to improve language teaching pedagogy and practice, in order to deliver more students an equally positive, fulfilling, and inspiring foreign language classroom experience. Specific measures undertaken to investigate this purpose have been detailed throughout previous chapters.

The literature review in Chapter 2 established the importance of cultural competence in foreign language education. While inclusion of culture teaching has been shown to improve students' attitudes towards both the foreign language and culture as well as the overall learning experience, it is seldom given equal attention to language teaching (Lo Bianco et al., 1999). This neglect of cultural competence in foreign language education is particularly glaring in the context of England and the UK, where classroom language education is less successful than a significant number of other European nations (Coleman, 2009). Researchers voice that England is in a language learning "crisis" as enrolment in language courses and exams drop each year and describe that student motivation is one of the largest obstacles in the way of a more multilingual society (Lanvers & Coleman, 2013).

Various individual and classroom factors combine to contribute to the lack of cultural competence in foreign language education both globally and nationally in the UK. Low motivation and perceived difficulty of exams has led to students unable to commit to language learning past the required KS3 enrolment (Coleman et al., 2007). Language teachers have also regularly voice struggles with integrating culture teaching into their practice due to a language-focused curriculum and lack of time and experience (Castro et al, 2004).

This study, described in Chapter 3, employed a mixed methods approach of online surveys and semi-structured group interviews to investigate cultural competence currently taught in one Year 9 Spanish class at a state secondary school in England.

Findings revealed that, largely, both students and teacher value cultural competence but struggle to prioritise it compared to language teaching aims. Students expressed positive perceptions of culture teaching and were aware of the distinct differences in language and culture teaching time distribution in their class. They also recognised that they feel more familiar with "big C" culture topics than with cultural competence skills. Analysis found no significant relationships between cultural competence teaching and motivation or proficiency averages, but students' motivation responses indicated positive cultural attitudes which could lead to increased motivation if engaged.

The class teachers' perceptions were similar to those of students: survey responses indicated that while he recognises value in culture teaching and cultural competence, language teaching and promoting linguistic skills while providing brief introductions to static culture is his

practiced norm. Despite reporting that his students are not strongly motivated and find learning Spanish slightly difficult, he still aims to address culture in a format accessible to their interest and proficiency. Most interestingly, students perceived more culture teaching than their teacher reported practicing, while simultaneously expressing less positive attitudes towards it.

The exploratory nature of this project and scope of variables addressed in this study require considerable further investigation. Research on cultural competence, both perceptions of it and actual student abilities, can help shape curriculum and assessments which more accurately reflect culture teaching and learning which takes place. While research on language learning motivation is already plentiful, current L2MSS research has yet to highlight cultural attitudes and the L2 Learning Experience, two areas which students in this study were most aware of their perceptions on. As encouraged by Sercu (2005; 2010) and others, teacher training needs to include assistance in addressing foreign culture and cultural differences.

An ideal MFL curriculum in England would inform students on cultural differences and open their minds to engagement with and understanding of the culture embedded in the languages they are learning. Furthermore, this curriculum would acknowledge the privileged position English L1 language students hold in a global language learning context, and prepare them for potential future interactions with foreign cultures and more advanced language learning. This study hopefully represents one of many to come highlighting the importance and necessity of cultural competence teaching in UK MFL classrooms.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: CUREC Approval

Education (Educ) DREC
15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY

Applicant: Abigail Nussbaum
Principal Investigator: Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh
Department: Education

Study title: Exploring the Relationship Between Cultural Competence, Proficiency, and Motivation in UK Spanish Language Classrooms
(Version: 2.0)

Ethics reference: Education (Educ) DREC - 1305120

Dear Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh,

On behalf of the Committee, I confirm that the above research study described in the application and other supporting documentation submitted to the committee has been carefully considered by the Education (Educ) DREC in accordance with the University's regulations and policy for ethics approval of research involving human participants, human tissue and/or personal data. The opinion is as follows:

Opinion of Research Ethics Committee: Favourable Opinion

Subject to the following conditions:

Decision Date: 9 Jun 2025, 15:40

Opinion End Date: 20 Sep 2026

If favourable, insurance-provided indemnity arrangements will be in place between the decision date and opinion end date and you may now commence your study activities. Should you plan to continue the research beyond the end date above, it is your responsibility to ensure that you request, and receive, an extension (via amendment) from the committee for indemnity to remain in place. You may be required to provide a justification.

Please note the following:

Amendments: Should there be any subsequent changes to the reviewed study, applications for amendments can be made via the Oxford Ethics Application System (Worktribe Ethics).

Reports: Studies considered by OxTREC are expected to submit an *annual progress report* on each anniversary of study approval, until the study is completed. An end of study report is also required.

Audit: This study may be selected for audit at the discretion of the Research Governance, Ethics and Assurance Team.

Data safety: It is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that all data collected during the course of the study is stored and transferred safely and securely in accordance with University requirements. Further guidance and advice are available from the Research Data Team. Additional information is available at https://researchsupport.web.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics

Yours Sincerely

Education Ethics Officer

Appendix 2: School outreach email

[Teacher],

Hello! I hope this message finds you well. My name is Abbi Nussbaum and I'm currently a student at the University of Oxford, studying for an MSc in the Department of Education. I'm reaching out to enquire about [Participating school]'s participation in my dissertation research project regarding culture and motivation in Year 9 Spanish classes, and was referred to contact you by my friend [], who currently works at [] as a student teacher in the [] department.

Participation in this study would require no more than 30 minutes of class time in one class session, with both students and teachers completing short surveys and some students participating in a small group interview. These activities will allow me to investigate perceptions and practices surrounding cultural competence in the language classroom, and how cultural competence is affected by students' motivation and proficiency in the language. The attached letter contains more details about the project as well as about data protection during participation. If your school is able to participate, I would love to coordinate sending further information and materials as soon as possible!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at this email address, or at the phone number listed below. This study has received ethical approval from the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) at the University of Oxford, and I have a valid DBS check and police check from my home country that can both be provided if needed.

Thank you so much for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you!

Best wishes,
Abbi Nussbaum *(she/her)*
MSc student in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition
Department of Education, University of Oxford
Email: abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Letter to head teacher

[Head Teacher name]

[School name and address]

[Date]

Exploring the relationships between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish classrooms

Ethics Approval Reference: EDUC_1305120

Dear [Head teacher name],

I am writing to enquire about conducting some research in your school in the current academic year. I am a Masters student at the University of Oxford, supervised by Dr. Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh. In my research study, "Exploring the relationships between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish", I will explore how prevalently cultural competence is taught or not by Spanish teachers, as well as students' perceptions of cultural competence and any interactions cultural competence has with proficiency in Spanish and language learning motivation.

I am looking for any Year 9 Spanish teachers and classes willing to participate. I am not aiming to change what or how the teacher chooses to teach, and will not be making any judgements about teaching. My research focus is on cultural competence in Spanish classes, and its interaction with students' motivation and proficiency in the subject.

By participating in the research, your school would be contributing to research that will fill a gap in student-focused research in intercultural competence studies, as well as add to the small but growing pool of research in the UK focused on learning Spanish in secondary school.

The commitment from the school would be to allow me into one Year 9 Spanish lessons over the course of this spring term, any time from April-June. I would distribute one survey to teachers, and one survey and a short proficiency test to students. I would also potentially be interviewing a small group of students at the most accessible date following distribution of the research materials. Audio recording from this interview will contain as little identifying information as possible, and any incidental identifying information will not be shared with anybody else or used for research without further explicit permission.

The University of Oxford has strict ethics procedures on conducting research with teachers and students, consistent with current British Educational Research Association guidelines. Before beginning the research, I would inform parents/guardians about the research and offer the students and parents/guardians the opportunity to refuse to participate. Throughout the research, students and parents/guardians will be able to refuse to participate at any time.

All participants, including students, teachers and the school, would be anonymised in all research reports. The data collected would be kept strictly confidential, available only to my supervisor and myself and not used other than specified without the further consent of all involved being obtained. All recordings would be destroyed at the end of the research period, and kept in locked conditions until then. I have enclosed copies of the information for parents/guardians and students with this letter.

If your school would like to take part in the study, or you need more information about what is involved, please contact me. Whether or not you feel it would be appropriate for your school to participate, I would be grateful if you would contact me via email with your decision.

Thank you for your time and attention. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

Abbi Nussbaum
abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Parent/guardian documents

Appendix 4a: Parent survey information sheet

Exploring the relationships between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish language classrooms

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_1305120

In partnership with researchers at the University of Oxford, [Name of school] has agreed to take part in a research project. We would like to invite your child, along with the rest of their Spanish class, to be involved in this research, which is focussed on the class teacher and class situation. We very much hope you would like your child to be involved, but before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what is will involve.

Why is this research being conducted?

This research aims to investigate the current state of cultural competence in Year 9 Spanish classes, as well as its relationship with two variables that impact second language learning: language proficiency and learning motivation. "Cultural competence" in this study refers to how much teachers incorporate information about Spanish-speaking communities into their teaching, as well as how knowledgeable students are about those communities. Language and culture in second language learning are highly interconnected, and this research seeks to explore that relationship by providing evidence in this under-researched area.

More information about the research can be obtained by contacting the researcher at abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Why has my child been invited to be involved in this research?

We are inviting your child because they are in year 9, studying Spanish. All pupils in their class are invited to be involved in this research.

Does my child have to be involved?

No. You can ask questions about the research before deciding whether to allow your child to be involved. If you do agree to their involvement, you may withdraw your child at any time, without giving a reason and without any effect on their education, by advising the school or researchers of this decision. As all data in this study will be fully anonymous, if you decide to withdraw your child's information, it cannot be deleted from the dataset. Yours and their consent forms will be deleted/destroyed, but their data cannot

be withdrawn as their name and any identifying information will not be attached to their survey responses. While completing the survey in this study, your child can choose to withdraw their participation before completing it by exiting out of the online platform. This is the only point at which their responses and data will not be saved. If they complete the survey and submit it, it will not be possible to withdraw their responses.

If your child is not involved in the research, they will receive alternative provision of equivalent educational value, or be placed where they cannot be observed or recorded.

What will my child be asked to do?

- Firstly, you would complete a consent form distributed by your child's teacher or school, giving your permission for your child to participate and for the research team to access the data your child provides collected during the study
- During the Spring term of this year (May or June 2025), your child will be asked to complete a questionnaire in class, answering questions about their experiences learning Spanish and their motivation to learn. They will also take a short, separate vocabulary test designed for their current Spanish level. These surveys should take no longer than 20-30 minutes to complete and will be administered in class by your child's usual teacher.
- Your child will be asked to give their assent to participating in all of the above research activities and would be reassured that they do not have to participate if they would rather not do so.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

We do not envision any possible disadvantages or risk to your child from taking part in this study.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits to your child in participating, it is hoped that this research would be able to lead to curriculum or teaching practice changes that boost students' cultural competence related to Spanish-speaking communities. These changes would also hopefully help improve students' Spanish proficiency and motivation to learn. We also hope that the class will find these research tasks interesting and enjoyable. An accessible report of the findings from this research will be written up in conjunction with the researcher's dissertation write-up, and this report will be shared with teachers and classes who participated in the study.

What information will be collected and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research objectives?

The questionnaire will ask students to state any other languages that they speak at home or have learned prior to this school year. It will then ask them about their language learning motivation, and their perceptions of cultural competence and Spanish culture being taught to them. Some example items from the questionnaire can be seen below:

- I can imagine myself living abroad and using Spanish effectively for communicating with the locals
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Slightly agree
    - Slightly disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree
- How familiar are you with the literature primarily associated with the foreign language you are learning?
    - Very familiar
    - Familiar
    - Slightly familiar
    - Slightly unfamiliar
    - Unfamiliar
    - Very unfamiliar

The researcher and supervisor will have access to the research data.

To help us understand individual factors that may influence students' responses, we would also like permission to access special category data held by the school regarding your child. This data relates to prior attainment, gender, age, and special educational needs or disabilities. All identifiable data (including consent forms) will be stored on the university's Nexus 365 OneDrive for Business site. Only the University of Oxford researchers will have access to the data. Collected research data will already be anonymous, and students' names will not be identifiable from the output. Once data has been collected, it will be shared with the research team. Opt-out forms will be retained by the school for the duration of the research if requested, and for as long as the school determines appropriate after research activities have concluded at the school. The researchers will retain Consent forms for 3 years after publication of the work of the research.

The research team will destroy or shred physical consent forms once they have been scanned and digitised, and delete the digital scans upon completion of the project. De-identified research data will be stored for 10 years after publication or public release of the work of the research. A summary of our findings will be given to the school and will be available to interested families. No school, teacher or student will be identified in any reports of the research.

Will the research be published? Could my child be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up in an accessible report made available to all participants in the study. They will also be published in the form of an academic dissertation. It will not be possible for individual participants to be identifiable in any outputs from this research.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your child's personal data, and as such will determine how your child's personal data is used in the research.

The University will process your child's personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest.

Further information about your rights with respect to your child's personal data is available from https://compliance.web.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

Who has reviewed this research?

This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: EDUC_1305120).

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is supported and organised by the University of Oxford's Department of Education. Abbi Nussbaum is the Principal Investigator and Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh is the Supervisor.

Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research, or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, please contact Abbi Nussbaum at abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk *or* Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh at anna-maria.ramezanzadeh@education.ox.ac.uk, and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the University of Oxford Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance (RGEA) team at rgea.complaints@admin.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 616480. Or, contact the Chair of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible: Chair, Department of Education Research Ethics Committee; Email: staff.curec@education.ox.ac.uk; Address: 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY.

What should I do next?

Please fill in the enclosed form and return it to your child's class teacher if you would/would not like your child to take part in this research. Please remember that you may withdraw your child at any time, without affecting their education and without giving a reason, by notifying the researcher.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

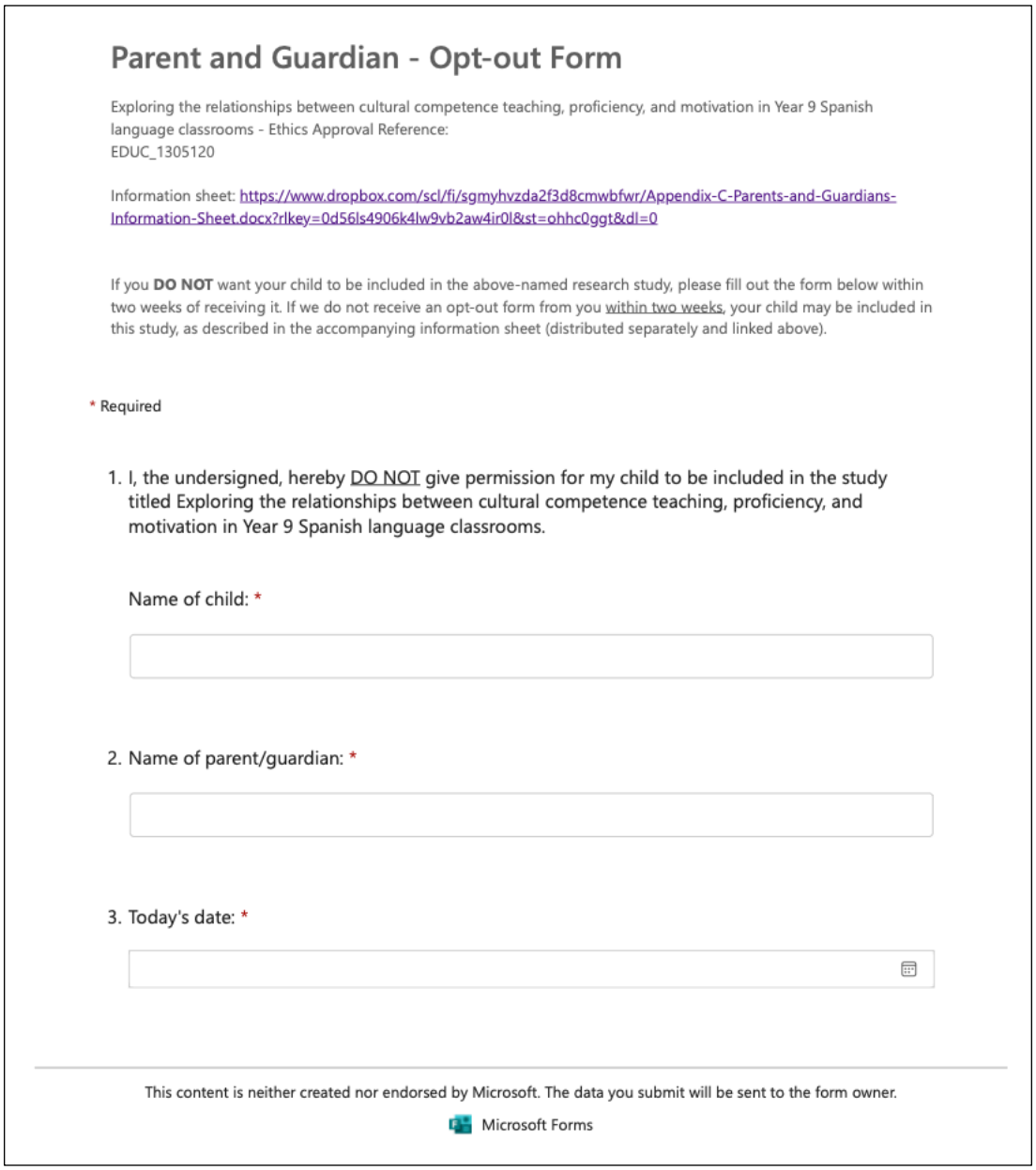
Abbi Nussbaum

Department of Education

abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Thank you for reading.

Appendix 4b: Parent survey opt-out form



Parent and Guardian - Opt-out Form

Exploring the relationships between cultural competence teaching, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish language classrooms - Ethics Approval Reference:
EDUC_1305120

Information sheet: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/sgmyhvzda2f3d8cmwbfwr/Appendix-C-Parents-and-Guardians-Information-Sheet.docx?rlkey=0d56ls4906k4lw9vb2aw4ir0l&st=ohhc0ggt&dl=0

If you **DO NOT** want your child to be included in the above-named research study, please fill out the form below within two weeks of receiving it. If we do not receive an opt-out form from you within two weeks, your child may be included in this study, as described in the accompanying information sheet (distributed separately and linked above).

* Required

1. I, the undersigned, hereby DO NOT give permission for my child to be included in the study titled Exploring the relationships between cultural competence teaching, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish language classrooms.

Name of child: *

2. Name of parent/guardian: *

3. Today's date: *

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.

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Appendix 4c: Parent interview information sheet

Exploring the relationship between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish classrooms

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_1305120

In partnership with researchers at the University of Oxford, [Name of school] has agreed to take part in a research project. We would like to invite your child, along with the rest of their Spanish class, to be involved in this research, which is focussed on the class teacher and class situation. We very much hope you would like your child to be involved, but before you decide, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what is will involve.

Why is this research being conducted?

This research aims to investigate the current state of cultural competence in Year 9 Spanish classes, as well as its relationship with two variables that impact second language learning: language proficiency and learning motivation. "Cultural competence" in this study refers to how much teachers incorporate information about Spanish-speaking communities into their teaching, as well as how knowledgeable students are about those communities. Language and culture in second language learning are highly interconnected, and this research seeks to explore that relationship by providing evidence in this under-researched area.

More information about the research can be obtained by contacting the researcher at abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Why has my child been invited to be involved in this research?

We are inviting your child because they are in year 9, studying Spanish. All pupils in their class are invited to be involved in this research.

Does my child have to be involved?

No. You can ask questions about the research before deciding whether to allow your child to be involved. If you do agree to their involvement, you may withdraw your child at any time, without giving a reason and without any effect on their education, by advising the school or

researchers of this decision. As all data in this study will be fully anonymous, if you decide to withdraw your child's information, it cannot be deleted from the dataset.

During the interview, if your child wishes to stop participating, they can let the researcher know and leave the room without any consequences and return to their class or other activities. However, their responses up until that point will not be able to be withdrawn as the interviews will be anonymous and fully audio recorded. Any of your child's responses will remain in the audio recording and transcript up until the point that they left, but will be completely anonymous/pseudonymised and they will not be identifiable from either their survey responses or interview responses.

If your child is not involved in the research, they will receive alternative provision of equivalent educational value, or be placed where they cannot be observed or recorded.

What will my child be asked to do?

- Firstly, you would complete a consent form distributed by your child's teacher or school and return it to them, giving your permission for your child to participate and for the research team to access the data your child provides collected during the study
- During the Spring term of this year (May or June 2025), your child will be asked to complete a questionnaire in class, answering questions about their experiences learning Spanish and their motivation to learn. They will also take a short, separate vocabulary test designed for their current Spanish level. These surveys should take no longer than 20-30 minutes to complete and will be administered in class by your child's usual teacher.
- Your child will also be invited to participate in a follow-up small group discussion with the researcher and 2-3 other students from their class. This discussion would take place at school either during a language lesson or any free period available, and would last no longer than 30 minutes. The researcher will take notes during this discussion and the entire interview will be audio recorded.
- Your child will be asked to give their assent to participating in all of the above research activities and would be reassured that they do not have to participate if they would rather not do so.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

We do not envision any possible disadvantages or risk to your child from taking part in this study.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits to your child in participating, it is hoped that this research would be able to lead to curriculum or teaching practice changes that boost students' cultural competence related to Spanish-speaking communities. These changes would also hopefully help improve students' Spanish proficiency and motivation to learn. We also hope that the class will find these research tasks interesting and enjoyable. An accessible report of the findings from this research will be written up in conjunction with the researcher's dissertation write-up, and this report will be shared with teachers and classes who participated in the study.

What information will be collected and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research objectives?

The questionnaire will ask students to state any other languages that they speak at home or have learned prior to this school year. It will then ask them about their language learning motivation, and their perceptions of cultural competence and Spanish culture being taught to them. Some example items from the questionnaire can be seen below:

- I can imagine myself living abroad and using Spanish effectively for communicating with the locals
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Slightly agree
    - Slightly disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree
- How familiar are you with the literature primarily associated with the foreign language you are learning?
    - Very familiar
    - Familiar
    - Slightly familiar
    - Slightly unfamiliar
    - Unfamiliar
    - Very unfamiliar

The researcher and supervisor will have access to the research data.

To help us understand individual factors that may influence students' responses, we would also like permission to access special category data held by the school regarding your child. This data relates to prior attainment, gender, age, and special educational needs or disabilities. All identifiable data (including consent forms) will be stored on the university's Nexus 365 OneDrive for Business site. Only the University of Oxford researchers will have access to the data. As soon as possible once the research data has been collected, it will be de-identified and students' names will be replaced with unique participant ID numbers. Once it has been anonymised, research data will be shared with researchers. Opt-out forms will be retained by the school for the duration of the research, and for as long as the school determines appropriate after research activities have concluded at the school.

The research team will destroy or shred physical consent forms once they have been scanned and digitised, and delete the digital scans upon completion of the project. De-identified research data will be stored for 10 years after publication or public release of the work of the research. A summary of our findings will be given to the school and will be available to interested families. No school, teacher or student will be identified in any reports of the research.

Will the research be published? Could my child be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up in an accessible report made available to all participants in the study. They will also be published in the form of an academic dissertation. It will not be possible for individual participants to be identifiable in any outputs from this research – quotations used from interviews will be carefully pseudonymised and any identifying elements removed.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your child's personal data, and as such will determine how your child's personal data is used in the research.

The University will process your child's personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest.

Further information about your rights with respect to your child's personal data is available from https://compliance.web.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

Who has reviewed this research?

This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: EDUC_1305120).

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is supported and organised by the University of Oxford's Department of Education. Abbi Nussbaum is the Principal Investigator and Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh is the Supervisor.

Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research, or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, please contact Abbi Nussbaum at abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk *or* Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh at anna-maria.ramezanzadeh@education.ox.ac.uk, and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the University of Oxford Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance (RGEA) team at rgea.complaints@admin.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 616480. Or, contact the Chair of the Departmental Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter as soon as possible:

Chair, Department of Education Research Ethics Committee;

Email: staff.curec@education.ox.ac.uk;

Address: 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PY.

What should I do next?

Please fill in the enclosed form and return it to your child's class teacher if you would/would not like your child to take part in this research. Please remember that you may withdraw your child at any time, without affecting their education and without giving a reason, by notifying the researcher.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Abbi Nussbaum

Department of Education

abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Thank you for reading.

Appendix 4d: Parent interview consent form

Parent and Guardian - Interview Consent form

Exploring the relationships between cultural competence teaching, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish language classrooms

Ethics Approval Reference: EDUC_1305120
Researcher: Abigail Nussbaum

Information sheet: https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/3682l8w0b64tyewxd1vv5/Appendix-L-Parents-and-Guardians-Interview-Information-Sheet.docx?rlkey=toqg1lb8mz8akz3f0502zirsj&st=bhw4g92y&dl=0

Dear parent/carer,

- Your child's school has agreed to take part in a study run by the University of Oxford. The research explores the degree to which cultural competence is taught in Year 9 Spanish language classes, as well as any interactions the teaching of cultural competence has with student proficiency and motivation.
- If your child takes part, their teacher would give them a questionnaire to complete, with questions about their experiences of language learning and their motivation. A researcher would also come and visit the language lessons at school, and your child might be asked if they would like to join a small group discussion with the researcher about their language learning.
- To find out more about the study, please read the attached information sheet. You can e-mail us at abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk or anna-maria.ramezanzadeh@education.ox.ac.uk if you have any questions.
- **If you are happy for your child to take part, please fill in the form below as soon as possible.**

1. Name of child: *

I have read and understood the details of the above study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the study with others. I have received satisfactory answers to my questions. I understand that the project has received ethics clearance through the University of Oxford's ethical approval process for research involving human participants, and I understand who will have access to the data, how it will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the study. I understand that participation is voluntary and that my child and I are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my child's education being affected in any way. I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

2. I agree for my child to be audio recorded in an interview *

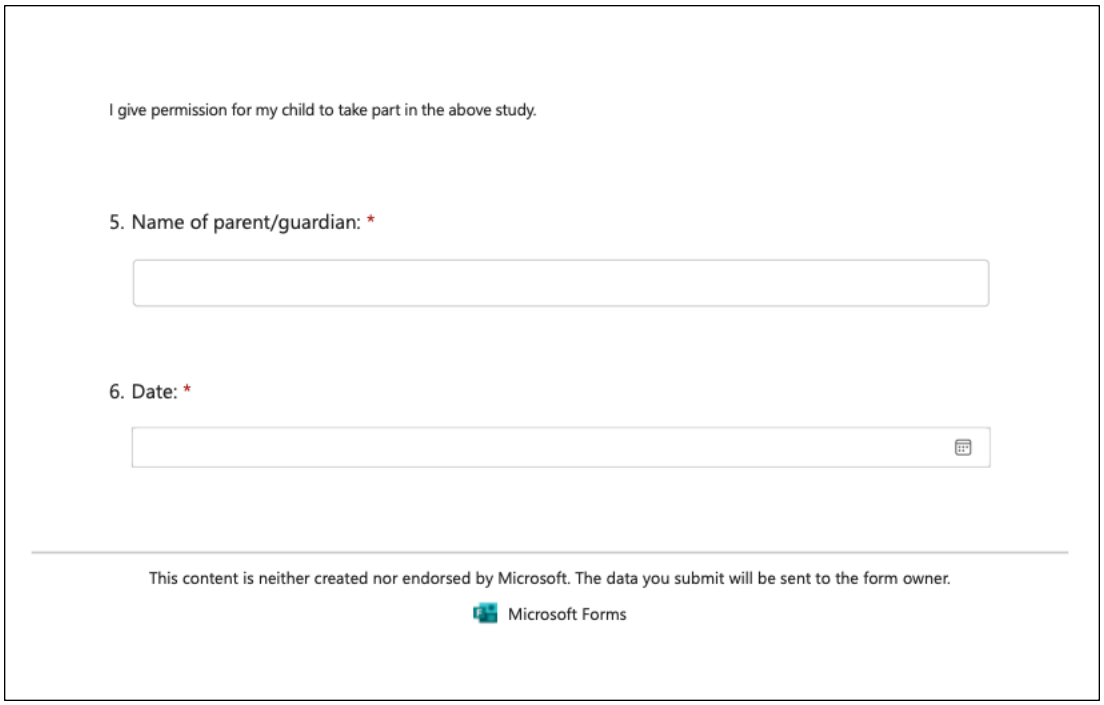
- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. I understand how audio recordings will be used in research outputs *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

4. I agree that personal data held by the school about my child can be securely shared with the researchers *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No



I give permission for my child to take part in the above study.

5. Name of parent/guardian: *

6. Date: *

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.

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Appendix 5: Student documents

Appendix 5a: Student survey information sheet

Exploring the relationships between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish classes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PUPILS

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_1305120

Hello! My name is Abbi Nussbaum. I work at the University of Oxford as a Masters student. I am doing some research in your school and would like you to join in.
Research is a way we try to find out the answers to questions. We want to understand more about what you are learning about Spanish culture, and what motivates you to be a better Spanish learner. We are interested in understanding the relationship that learning about culture in Spanish class has with motivation and your Spanish proficiency (how good you are at the language). You can talk to your family, friends, or the researchers if you want to before you agree to join in.

Why have I been invited to take part?

We are asking you if you would like to take part because you are a student in Year 9 who is learning Spanish at school. Your parent/guardian has said it is OK for you to join in.

Do I have to join in?

No you don't have to if you don't want to! You can ask questions before choosing whether you want to join in. You can change your mind at any time by telling the researcher or your parent/guardian. You don't have to say why. If you decide to stop, no one will be upset with you.

What will happen?

Your teacher will ask you to write down some answers to questions about how you feel and what you enjoy about learning Spanish. You will also answer some questions about how you feel about specifically learning Spanish culture. This will happen in your normal language lesson and will take about 15-20 minutes. These questions will be on a website, and you can respond to them on any device.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

The study will not help you right now, but it might help other children in the future. We hope that understanding more about what you enjoy in your language lessons will help us to make language lessons even better in the future.

What information will be collected and what happens to the results of the research?

The people in our research team and in your language lessons will know you are taking part. No one else will know that you have helped us with this research - unless, of course, you tell them yourself! When we collect information from you, we will keep it in a safe place and only the people doing the research, or helping with the research, can look at it. We will write a summary of the research findings and publish this so that anyone who is interested can read about the study. We won't include the names of any children, teachers or schools in our summary.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from https://compliance.web.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

What if I don't want to take part in the research anymore?

Just tell your parent/guardian and the people carrying out the research that you don't want to take part. You don't have to give a reason and no one will be annoyed with you. It is YOUR choice.

While answering the questions in the survey, you can choose to stop taking part at any time by just exiting out and not submitting your answers. If you leave the website before finishing all the questions, your answers will not be saved and we won't have any of your data. But, if you do finish the questions and submit your answers at the end, it won't be possible to take any of your answers back or remove your answers from our data bank. All of the questions will be anonymous, so the research team won't be able to go back and remove answers from just one student.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The University of Oxford's Department of Education is organising and funding this research.

Who has reviewed the research?

Before any research involving people happens it has to be checked by a group of people known as a Research Ethics Committee to make sure that it is fair. This study has been checked by the Ethics

Committee at the University of Oxford. This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: EDUC_1305120).

What do I do now?

Please tell your parents, guardians and/or teacher whether you are happy to take part.

What if there is a problem or something goes wrong?

Please tell us if you are worried about any part of this research, by contacting the researcher abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk. You may also talk to your teacher/parent/guardian who will let the researcher know. If you are still unhappy or wish to make a complaint, either you or your teacher/parent/guardian can contact the University of Oxford Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance (RGEA) team at rgea.complaints@admin.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 616480.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Abbi Nussbaum
Department of Education
OX2 6PY
University email: abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Thank you for reading – please ask me any questions.

Appendix 5b: Student interview information sheet

Exploring the relationships between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish classes

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PUPILS

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_1305120

Hello! My name is Abbi Nussbaum. I work at the University of Oxford as a Masters student. I am doing some research in your school and would like you to join in.

Research is a way we try to find out the answers to questions. We want to understand more about what you are learning about Spanish culture, and what motivates you to be a better Spanish learner. We are interested in understanding the relationship that learning about culture in Spanish class has with motivation and your Spanish proficiency (how good you are at the language). You can talk to your family, friends, or the researchers if you want to before you agree to join in.

Why have I been invited to take part?

We are asking you if you would like to take part in this portion of the project because you are a student in Year 9 who is learning Spanish at school, and completed the survey portion of this project already. Your parent/guardian has said it is OK for you to join in.

Do I have to join in?

No you don't have to if you don't want to! You can ask questions before choosing whether you want to join in. You can change your mind at any time by telling the researcher or your parent/guardian. You don't have to say why. If you decide to stop, no one will be upset with you. If you do change your mind about joining at any point (which is completely okay!), it won't be possible to take back your responses up until that point – the interviews in this portion of the project are completely anonymous, so we can't go back and find out which student said what.

What will happen?

Now that you have finished the survey from the first part of this project, a researcher called Abbi (from the introduction of this information sheet!) will potentially visit your school and invite you to join a small discussion with her (with 2 or 3 other pupils from your class). You will discuss your experiences of learning a language. Abbi will be recording audio and taking notes during this discussion so that the researchers can analyse later.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

The study will not help you right now, but it might help other children in the future. We hope that understanding more about what you enjoy in your language lessons will help us to make language lessons even better in the future.

What information will be collected and what happens to the results of the research?

The people in our research team and in your language lessons will know you are taking part. No one else will know that you have helped us with this research - unless, of course, you tell them yourself! When we collect information from you, we will keep it in a safe place and only the people doing the research, or helping with the research, can look at it. We will write a summary of the research findings and publish this so that anyone who is interested can read about the study. We won't include the names of any children, teachers or schools in our summary.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from https://compliance.web.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

What if I don't want to take part in the research anymore?

Just tell your parent/guardian and the people carrying out the research that you don't want to take part. You don't have to give a reason and no one will be annoyed with you. It is YOUR choice.

During the interview, if you want to stop taking part, you can let the researcher know and leave the room at absolutely any point! If you do leave during the interview, because it will be audio recorded, it won't be possible for you to take your answers up until that point back. However, only your responses talking about Spanish class and language learning will be used – any personal information (like names and places) won't be saved by the research team.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The University of Oxford's Department of Education is organising and funding this research.

Who has reviewed the research?

Before any research involving people happens it has to be checked by a group of people known as a Research Ethics Committee to make sure that it is fair. This study has been checked by the Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford. This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: EDUC_1305120).

What do I do now?

Please tell your parents, guardians and/or teacher whether you are happy to take part.

What if there is a problem or something goes wrong?

Please tell us if you are worried about any part of this research, by contacting the researcher abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk. You may also talk to your teacher/parent/guardian who will let the researcher know. If you are still unhappy or wish to make a complaint, either you or your teacher/parent/guardian can contact the University of Oxford Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance (RGEA) team at rgea.complaints@admin.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 616480.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Abbi Nussbaum

Department of Education

OX2 6PY

University email: abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Thank you for reading – please ask me any questions.

Appendix 5c: Student interview assent questions

ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN UNDER 16

Exploring the relationships between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish classes

Before we get started, I am going to ask you a few questions and I would like you to circle "yes" or "no". If any answers are "no" or you don't want to take part, that's OK! No one will be cross with you.

- Has somebody else explained this project to you? Yes/No
- Do you understand what this project is about? Yes/No
- Have you asked all the questions you want? Yes/No
- Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand? Yes/No
- Do you understand it's OK to stop taking part at any time? Yes/No
- Are you happy to take part? Yes/No

Appendix 6: Teacher information sheet

Exploring the relationship between cultural competence, proficiency, and motivation in Year 9 Spanish classrooms

INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS

Central University Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference: EDUC_1305120

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you wish to take part.

Why is this research being conducted?

Currently, there is a large body of research on how to incorporate and assess education on cultural competence into foreign language learning. Language and culture are highly interconnected, but it is difficult to define how to teach and discuss culture in language learning settings, especially when teaching languages with a large global community such as Spanish. The goal of this study is to fill a gap in this research by presenting both teacher and student perceptions on the inclusion of cultural competence in Spanish language education, and to investigate how it interacts with student proficiency and motivation (two common and important variables in language learning studies) as well.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part in this research for a variety of reasons. This study is focusing on teachers and students in Year 9 Spanish classes, so only schools that teach Spanish in Year 9 were contacted. Additionally, as this study is based out of the University of Oxford, only secondary schools in England were contacted.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. You can withdraw yourself from the research, without giving a reason, and without negative consequences, by advising me of this decision. All data in this study is fully anonymous, so if you decide to withdraw, your data cannot be deleted from the data set. However, if at all possible, we will refrain from specifically referencing any of your submitted data and survey responses in our analysis. All identifying information (such as consent forms) will be deleted or physically shredded as well.

What will happen to me if I take part in the research?

This study will be conducted both online and in-person at your school. Your participation in facilitating this research is crucial and will be very much appreciated! Research will take place over no more than two weeks, or two or three class sessions. Consent forms will be shared virtually, to be sent out to students and parents in whatever form is easiest for yourself and your class. These will be returned to the researcher prior to survey data collection taking place, within two weeks of the forms being distributed to your students. Your own consent form will also be due at this time.

With your consent, you will fill out a virtual survey asking your thoughts and perceptions about teaching intercultural content as part of your Spanish lessons, and about some of your teaching habits during Spanish lessons. You will be able to complete this survey whenever is most convenient for you, and it will be sent to you alongside the student-directed surveys. Completing this survey will take no longer than 20-30 minutes.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part?

One of the only possible risks or disadvantages in taking part in this study is the time taken out of your usual allotted lesson time. We do understand that especially towards the end of the school year, this might not be ideal, but completion of the surveys and interviews in class is the easiest way to ensure as many students participate as possible. Yourself and your students will not be identifiable from the outputs of this research at all, and all data protection guidelines from the University of Oxford will be followed while handling data.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

While there are no immediate benefits to you in participating in the research, it is hoped that this research will lead to further developments in MFL educational research that will enhance teaching strategies and help students in becoming more culturally competent and motivated towards learning both the language and about communities that use the language.

What information will be collected and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research objectives?

The questionnaire will ask you to state any other languages that you speak or have learned prior to this school year. It will then ask about your perceptions of teaching cultural competence-based content, as well as your teaching practices surrounding it. An example item from the questionnaire can be seen below:

8. *What do you understand by "culture teaching" in a foreign language teaching context?*
    a. *Provide information about the history, geography, and political conditions of the foreign culture(s)*
    b. *Provide information about daily lives and routines*
    c. *Provide information about shared values and beliefs*
    d. *Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.)*
    e. *Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures*
    f. *Promote reflection on cultural differences*
    g. *Promote increased understanding of students' own cultures*
    h. *Promote the ability to empathise with people living in other cultures*
    i. *Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations*

The researcher and supervisor will have access to the research data.

To help us understand individual factors that may influence your response, we would also like permission to access special category data. This data relates to prior attainment, gender, age, and special educational needs or disabilities. All identifiable data (including consent forms) will be stored on the university's Nexus 365 OneDrive for Business site. Only the University of Oxford researchers will have access to the data. Following completion of this project, all data will be deleted immediately by the student researcher, and deleted by the research team 3 years following completion of the project according to University of Oxford data storage guidelines.

Data collected will be fully anonymous, and you will not be identifiable from the output of this project. If you choose to share any personal or potentially identifying information in the long response questions in

the survey, they will be pseudonymised and you will not be identifiable in these responses. Once data has been collected, it will be shared with research team.

Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

The findings from the research will be written up in an accessible report made available to all participants in the study. They will also be published in the form of an academic dissertation. It will not be possible for individual participants to be identifiable in any outputs from this research – quotations used from interviews will be carefully pseudonymised and any identifying elements removed.

Data Protection

The University of Oxford is the data controller with respect to your personal data, and as such will determine how your personal data is used in the research. The University will process your personal data for the purpose of the research outlined above. Research is a task that is performed in the public interest. Further information about your rights with respect to your personal data is available from the University's Information Compliance website at https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/individual-rights.

Who has reviewed this research?

This research has received ethics approval from a subcommittee of the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee. (Ethics reference: EDUC_1305120**)**.

Who do I contact if I have a concern about the research or I wish to complain?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, please contact Abbi Nussbaum at abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk or Anna-Maria Ramezanzadeh at anna-maria.ramezanzadeh@education.ox.ac.uk, and we will do our best to answer your query. We will acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how it will be dealt with. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the University of Oxford Research Governance, Ethics & Assurance (RGEA) team at rgea.complaints@admin.ox.ac.uk or on 01865 616480.

Further Information and Contact Details

If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact:

Abbi Nussbaum
Department of Education
University of Oxford

15 Norham Gardens

Oxford OX2 6PY

University email: abigail.nussbaum@education.ox.ac.uk

Appendix 7: Student survey items

Background (long response unless indicated otherwise)

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
   - Man
   - Woman
   - Non-binary
   - Other (not listed)
   - Prefer not to say
3. What is the name of your current school?
4. For how many years have you taken Spanish classes in school?
5. Are you currently learning any other languages in school?
6. How many languages do you speak?

Cultural competence perceptions

7. How do you perceive the objectives of foreign language teaching? Select a number that represents your perception, with "1" being the most important and "7" being the least important.
   a. Enthusiasm for learning foreign languages
   b. Promoting familiarity with the culture and the civilisation of the countries where the language which they are learning is spoken
   c. Assistance in acquiring a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow them to read literary works in the foreign language
   d. Assistance in acquiring skills that will be useful in other subject areas and in live (such as memorise, summarise, put into words, formulate accurately, give a presentation, etc.)
   e. Promoting the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures
   f. Promoting the acquisition of learning skills that will be useful for learning other foreign languages
   g. Promoting the acquisition of a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow the learners to use the foreign language for practical purposes
   h. Assistance in developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5
   - 6
   - 7
8. What do you understand by "culture teaching" in a foreign language teaching context? Please select all options which you believe to be a part of "culture teaching"

- Provide information about the history, geography, and political conditions of the foreign culture(s)
- Provide information about daily lives and routines
- Provide information about shared values and beliefs
- Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.)
- Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures
- Promote reflection on cultural differences
- Promote increased understanding of our own cultures
- Promote the ability to empathise with people living in other cultures
- Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations
- None of the above

9. How is your class time distributed over “language teaching” and “culture teaching”?
   - 100% language teaching – 0% culture teaching
   - 80% language teaching – 20% culture teaching
   - 60% language teaching – 40% culture teaching
   - 40% language teaching – 60% culture teaching
   - 20% language teaching – 80% culture teaching
   - 100% integration of language-and-culture teaching
10. Do you have the feeling that you would like more time devoted to "culture teaching" during your foreign language teaching classes, but that your class somehow never gets round to it?
    - Yes, very much so
    - Yes, up to a certain extent
    - No, not particularly
    - No, not at all
    - No opinion
11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
    a. I am very motivated to learn the foreign language I take
    b. I think learning the foreign language I take is very difficult
    c. I am very knowledgeable about the culture of the foreign language I learn
    d. I have a very positive attitude towards the people associated with the foreign language I learn
    - Strongly agree
    - Agree
    - Slightly agree
    - Slightly disagree
    - Disagree
    - Strongly disagree
12. How familiar are you with the country, culture, and people primarily associated with the foreign language you are learning?
    a. History, geography, political system
    b. Different ethnic and social groups
    c. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink, etc.

d. Youth culture
e. Education and professional life
f. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions
g. Literature
h. Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)
i. Values and beliefs
j. International relations (political, economic, and cultural), with your own country and other countries

- Very familiar
- Familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Somewhat unfamiliar
- Unfamiliar
- Very unfamiliar

13. How frequently do you travel to the foreign country/countries primarily associated with the foreign language you are learning?
    a. Tourist stays (lasting longer than two days)
    b. Visits to relatives or friends
    c. Participation in a study abroad programme or a language course

- Often
- Once in a while
- Never

14. What kind(s) of culture teaching activities does your teacher practice during classroom teaching time? Please select all that apply.

- Asking to think about the image in which the media promotes the foreign country or culture
- Telling what they have heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture
- Asking to independently explore an aspect of the foreign country or culture
- Asking to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture
- Asking to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language
- Decorating the classroom with materials illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture
- Commenting on the way in which the foreign culture is represented in the foreign language materials I am using in a particular class
- Asking to compare an aspect of our own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture
- Talking about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular cultures and countries
- None of the above

15. How extensively does your teacher deal with particular cultural aspects in their teaching? Select a number to represent how extensively they deal with each aspect, with "1" being the most extensively dealt with and "7" being the least.
    a. History, geography, political system
    b. Different ethnic and social groups
    c. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink, etc.
    d. Youth culture

e. Education, professional life
f. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions
g. Literature
h. Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)
i. Values and beliefs
j. International relations (political, economic, and cultural) with students' own country and other countries

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7

16. Do the cultural contents of the textbook(s) you use meet your expectations?

- Yes, very much so
- Yes, up to a certain extent
- No, not really
- No, not at all

17. Intercultural foreign language teaching: Your opinions

a. In a foreign language teaching classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language
b. Intercultural education is best undertaken cross-curricularly
c. A foreign language teacher should present a positive imagine of the foreign culture and society
d. Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, students have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language
e. Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school
f. It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way
g. I would like my teacher to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through their teaching
h. The more students know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are
i. A foreign language teacher should present a realistic image of the foreign culture, and therefore should also touch upon negative sides of the foreign culture and society
j. Providing additional cultural information makes pupils more tolerant towards other cultures and peoples
k. Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences
l. Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen pupils' understandings of their own cultures.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Motivation

18. I can imagine myself living abroad and using Spanish effectively for communicating with the locals
19. I can imagine a situation where I am speaking Spanish with foreigners, international friends, or colleagues
20. I can imagine myself speaking Spanish as if I were a native speaker
21. The things I want to do in the future require me to use Spanish
22. I can imagine myself studying in a university where all my courses are taught in Spanish
23. I study Spanish because close friends of mine think it is important
24. I have to study Spanish because, if I do not study it, I think my parents will be disappointed with me
25. Learning Spanish is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to do so
26. I consider learning Spanish important because the people I respect think that I should do it
27. Studying Spanish is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family/boss
28. It will have a negative impact on my life if I don't learn Spanish
29. Studying Spanish is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak Spanish
30. Studying Spanish can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job and/or making money
31. Studying Spanish can be important for me because I think I'll need it for further studies
32. Studying Spanish is important to me because it offers a new challenge in my life
33. Studying Spanish is important to me in order to attain a higher social respect
34. I study Spanish in order to keep updated and informed of recent news of the world
35. I have to learn Spanish because without passing the Spanish course, I cannot graduate
36. I have to study Spanish because I don't want to get bad marks in the course
37. I have to study Spanish; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career
38. Studying Spanish is necessary for me because I don't want to get a poor score or a fail mark in Spanish proficiency tests
39. Studying Spanish is important to me because, if I don't have knowledge of Spanish, I'll be considered a weak student
40. Studying Spanish is important to me because I don't like to be a poorly educated person
41. I like the atmosphere of my Spanish classes
42. I find learning Spanish really interesting
43. I always look forward to Spanish classes
44. I would like to have more Spanish lessons at school
45. I think time passes faster while studying Spanish
46. I like the music of Spanish-speaking countries
47. I like Spanish films

48. I like Spanish magazines, newspapers, or books
49. I like TV programmes made in Spanish-speaking countries
50. I like to travel to Spanish-speaking countries
51. I like the people who live in Spanish-speaking countries
52. I like the people who live in Spanish-speaking countries
53. I like meeting people from Spanish-speaking countries
54. I would like to know more about people from Spanish-speaking countries
55. I think learning Spanish is important in order to learn more about the culture and art of its speakers
56. I would like to become similar to the people who speak Spanish
57. I am sure I will be able to learn a foreign language well
58. I think I am the type who would feel anxious and ill at ease if I had to speak to someone in a foreign language
59. People around me tend to think that it is a good thing to know foreign languages
60. I don't think that foreign languages are important school subjects
61. I often watch live TV programmes
62. My parents do not consider foreign languages important school subjects
63. Learning foreign languages makes me fear that I will feel less English because of it
64. Learning a foreign language is a difficult task

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

<u>Proficiency quiz</u>

65. ¿A qué hora sales de casa para ir a trabajar? Normalmente _____ a las 7:30.
    a. salió
    b. salgo
    c. salto
66. ¿Qué hora es?
    d. Son la una y media
    e. Es una media
    f. Es la una y media
67. ¿Qué van a tomar? _____ gazpacho.
    g. Para primero
    h. Por primero
    i. De primero
68. A mis amigas _____ las compras.
    j. les gusta
    k. les gustan

l. gusta
m. gustan

69. No me gusta nada la ópera.
n. A mí tampoco
o. A mí también
p. yo tampoco
q. yo también

70. Los hijos de mi tío son mis _____.
r. primos
s. nietos
t. hermanos

71. ¿ _____ significa *sobrina*?
u. Cuál
v. Quién
w. Qué

72. ¿ _____ una farmacia por aquí cerca?
x. Hay
y. Está
z. Es

73. Voy a cerrar la ventana porque tengo _____.
aa. frío
bb. calor
cc. sed

74. Ayer _____ a la playa con mis compañeros de clase
dd. fue
ee. fuí
ff. fuyo

75. ¿Es esta la ciudad de María y Ana? - Sí, esta es _____ ciudad.
gg. suya
hh. su
ii. sus

76. ¿Le has devuelto el bolígrafo a Manuel? - Sí, _____ he devuelto
jj. se lo
kk. le lo
ll. lo le

Appendix 8: Student interview protocol

1. Does anyone have any questions they would like to address regarding the survey before I begin with my questions?
2. Thinking back to the "class time distribution" question from the survey, do you feel that there is any particular reason your teacher is able to spend more or less time on cultural teaching?
3. How would you describe your teacher's perceptions and ideas regarding Spanish-speaking countries and cultures? How familiar do you feel they are with Spanish cultures?
4. Do you guys have any contact with people from Spanish-speaking countries or cultures outside of this class?
5. How do you feel about your Spanish lessons, separately from how you feel about your teacher?
6. Is there any culture teaching that your teacher does that wasn't covered on the survey?
7. Do you have any more questions for me before we end for today?

Appendix 9: Teacher consent form and survey items

Consent

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or penalty.
3. I understand that research data collected during the study may be looked at by authorised people outside the research team. I give permission for these individuals to access my data.
4. I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored, and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.
5. I understand how this research may be written up and published.
6. I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.
7. I give permission to be quoted directly in research outputs, but only fully anonymously OR
8. I do not wish to be directly quoted
9. I agree to take part in the study

- Yes
- No

Background (long response unless otherwise indicated)

10. What is your age?
11. How many languages do you speak?
12. For how many years have you taught foreign languages?
13. Do you currently teach any languages other than Spanish? If so, please list them below.

Cultural competence perceptions

14. What do you try to do as a teacher? Please select all that apply

- I want to be on good terms with my pupils
- I want to fulfil the curricular requirements for my subject
- I try to impart to my pupils the skills, knowledge, and attitudes which they will need in life
- I try to enthuse my pupils for my subject
- I try to coach my pupils on their way to adulthood
- I want to pass on my expert knowledge regarding my subject to my pupils
- I want to support my pupils when they have personal problems
- None of the above

- I try to impart to my pupils the skills, knowledge, and attitudes they will need to

15. How do you perceive the objectives of foreign language teaching? Select a number that represents your perception, with "1" being the most important and "7" being the least important.
    a. Enthuse my pupils for learning foreign languages
    b. Promote my pupils' familiarity with the culture and the civilisation of the countries where the language which they are learning is spoken
    c. Assist my pupils to acquire a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow them to read literary works in the foreign language
    d. Assist my pupils to acquire skills that will be useful in other subject areas and in life (such as memorise, summarise, put into words, formulate accurately, give a presentation, etc.)
    e. Promote the acquisition of an open mind and a positive disposition towards unfamiliar cultures
    f. Promote the acquisition of learning skills that will be useful for learning other foreign languages
    g. Promote the acquisition of a level of proficiency in the foreign language that will allow the learners to use the foreign language for practical purposes
    h. Assist my pupils in developing a better understanding of their own identity and culture

- 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7

16. What do you understand by "culture teaching" in a foreign language teaching context? Please select all options which you believe to be a part of "culture teaching"
    a. Provide information about the history, geography, and political conditions of the foreign culture(s)
    b. Provide information about daily lives and routines
    c. Provide information about shared values and beliefs
    d. Provide experiences with a rich variety of cultural expressions (literature, music, theatre, film, etc.)
    e. Develop attitudes of openness and tolerance towards other peoples and cultures
    f. Promote reflection on cultural differences
    g. Promote increased understanding of students' own cultures
    h. Promote the ability to empathise with people living in other countries
    i. Promote the ability to handle intercultural contact situations
    j. None of the above
17. How is your teaching time distributed over "language teaching" and "culture teaching"?

- 100% language teaching – 0% culture teaching
- 80% language teaching – 20% culture teaching
- 60% language teaching – 40% culture teaching
- 40% language teaching – 60% culture teaching
- 20% language teaching – 80% culture teaching
- 100% integration of language-and-culture teaching

18. Do you have the feeling that you would like to devote more time to "culture teaching" during your foreign language teaching classes, but that you somehow never get round to it?

- Yes, very much so
- Yes, up to a certain extent
- No, not particularly
- No, not at all
- No opinion

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
    a. My pupils are very motivated to learn the foreign language I teach
    b. My pupils think learning the foreign language I teach is very difficult
    c. My pupils are very knowledgeable about the culture of the foreign language I teach
    d. My pupils have a very positive attitude towards the people associated with the foreign language I teach

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
Strongly disagree

20. How would you describe your pupils' perceptions of and ideas regarding the country/countries and people(s) usually associated with the foreign language you teach?
21. How familiar are you with the country, culture, and people primarily associated with the foreign language you teach?
    a. History, geography, political system
    b. Different ethnic and social groups
    c. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink, etc.
    d. Youth culture
    e. Education and professional life
    f. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions
    g. Literature
    h. Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)
    i. Values and beliefs
    j. International relations (political, economic, and cultural), with your own country and other countries

- Very familiar
- Familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Somewhat unfamiliar
- Unfamiliar
Very unfamiliar

22. How frequently do you travel to the foreign country/countries primarily associated with the foreign language you teach?
    a. Tourist stays (lasting longer than two days)
    b. Visits to relatives or family
    c. Participation in a teacher training programme or language course

- Often
- Once in a while
- Never

23. What kind(s) of culture teaching activities do you practice during classroom teaching time? Please select all that apply

- Asking to think about the image in which the media promotes the foreign country or culture
- Telling what they have heard (or read) about the foreign country or culture
- Asking to independently explore an aspect of the foreign country or culture
- Asking to think about what it would be like to live in the foreign culture
- Asking to describe an aspect of their own culture in the foreign language
- Decorating the classroom with materials illustrating particular aspects of the foreign culture
- Commenting on the way in which the foreign culture is represented in the foreign language materials I am using in a particular class
- Asking to compare an aspect of our own culture with that aspect in the foreign culture
- Talking about stereotypes regarding particular cultures and countries or regarding the inhabitants of particular cultures and countries
- None of the above

24. Please specify any other activities you practice below.
25. How extensively do you deal with particular cultural aspects in your teaching? Select a number to represent how extensively you deal with each aspect, with "1" being the most extensively dealt with and "7" being the least.
    a. History, geography, political system
    b. Different ethnic and social groups
    c. Daily life and routines, living conditions, food and drink, etc.
    d. Youth culture
    e. Education and professional life
    f. Traditions, folklore, tourist attractions
    g. Literature
    h. Other cultural expressions (music, drama, art)
    i. Values and beliefs
    j. International relations (political, economic, and cultural), with your own country and other countries

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7

26. Do the cultural contents of the textbook(s) you use meet your expectations?

- Yes, very much so
- Yes, up to a certain extent
- No, not really
- No, not at all

27. Please explain your response to the question above
28. Intercultural foreign language teaching: Your opinions
    a. In a foreign language teaching classroom, teaching culture is as important as teaching the foreign language
    b. Intercultural education is best undertaken cross-curricularly
    c. A foreign language teacher should present a positive imagine of the foreign culture and society
    d. Before you can teach culture or do anything about the intercultural dimension of foreign language teaching, pupils have to possess a sufficiently high level of proficiency in the foreign language
    e. Intercultural skills cannot be acquired at school
    f. It is impossible to teach the foreign language and the foreign culture in an integrated way
    g. I would like to promote the acquisition of intercultural skills through my teaching
    h. The more pupils know about the foreign culture, the more tolerant they are
    i. A foreign language teacher should present a realistic image of the foreign culture, and therefore should also touch upon negative sides of the foreign culture and society
    j. Providing additional cultural information makes pupils more tolerant towards other cultures and peoples
    k. Language problems lie at the heart of misunderstandings in international contacts, not cultural differences
    l. Foreign language teaching should not only touch upon foreign cultures. It should also deepen pupils' understandings of their own

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Appendix 10: Descriptive survey statistics

4.1.1 Q14 Descriptive summary statistics

	$\bar{x}$	s	σ	95% CI LL	95% CI UL
Culture teaching practice item frequencies	2.866667	1.45733	0.3762809	2.129156	3.604177
Student selection frequencies	4.777778	3.419714	0.8829664	3.047164	6.508392

4.2.1 Q8 Dunn test with Bonferroni corrections

Comparison	n_1	n_2	Z-value	p (raw)	p (adj)	Significance
Option 1 vs 2	15	15	3.12	0.00179	0.0644	ns
1 vs 3	15	15	-1.17	0.241	1.000	ns
1 vs 4	15	15	0.39	0.696	1.000	ns
1 vs 5	15	15	0.39	0.696	1.000	ns
1 vs 6	15	15	1.17	0.241	1.000	ns
1 vs 7	15	15	1.95	0.0509	1.000	ns
1 vs 8	15	15	-0.78	0.435	1.000	ns
1 vs 9	15	15	1.17	0.241	1.000	ns
2 vs 3	15	15	-4.29	0.00002	0.0006	***
2 vs 4	15	15	-2.73	0.00628	0.226	ns
2 vs 5	15	15	-2.73	0.00628	0.226	ns
2 vs 6	15	15	-1.95	0.0509	1.000	ns
2 vs 7	15	15	-1.17	0.241	1.000	ns
2 vs 8	15	15	-3.90	0.00009	0.0034	**
2 vs 9	15	15	-1.95	0.0509	1.000	ns
3 vs 4	15	15	1.56	0.118	1.000	ns
3 vs 5	15	15	1.56	0.118	1.000	ns
3 vs 6	15	15	2.34	0.0192	0.690	ns
3 vs 7	15	15	3.12	0.00179	0.0644	ns
3 vs 8	15	15	0.39	0.696	1.000	ns
3 vs 9	15	15	2.34	0.0192	0.690	ns
4 vs 5	15	15	0.00	1.000	1.000	ns
4 vs 6	15	15	0.78	0.435	1.000	ns
4 vs 7	15	15	1.56	0.118	1.000	ns
4 vs 8	15	15	-1.17	0.241	1.000	ns

Comparison	n_1	n_2	Z-value	p (raw)	p (adj)	Significance
4 vs 9	15	15	0.78	0.435	1.000	ns
5 vs 6	15	15	0.78	0.435	1.000	ns
5 vs 7	15	15	1.56	0.118	1.000	ns
5 vs 8	15	15	-1.17	0.241	1.000	ns
5 vs 9	15	15	0.78	0.435	1.000	ns
6 vs 7	15	15	0.78	0.435	1.000	ns
6 vs 8	15	15	-1.95	0.0509	1.000	ns
6 vs 9	15	15	0.00	1.000	1.000	ns
7 vs 8	15	15	-2.73	0.00628	0.226	ns
7 vs 9	15	15	-0.78	0.435	1.000	ns
8 vs 9	15	15	1.95	0.0509	1.000	ns

Note. Bonferroni-adjusted *p*-values are reported in the "p (adj)" column.
Significance levels: $p < .05$ = *, $p < .01$ = **, $p < .001$ = ***

4.3.1 Shapiro Wilk tests

Construct	W	p
Ideal L2 Self	0.93	0.28
Ought-to L2 Self	0.92	0.22
Cultural Attitudes	0.88	0.06
Learning Attitudes	0.95	0.64

Appendix 11: Further survey calculations

4.5.3 Correlations:

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Ideal L2 Self	—					
2. Ought-to L2 Self	.67**	—				
3. Cultural Attitudes	.77**	.36	—			
4. Learning Attitudes	.82**	.41	.84**	—		
5. Cultural familiarity	.16	.10	.15	.16	—	
6. Cultural competence perceptions	.49	.04	.75**	.72**	–.10	—

- $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Cultural familiarity and cultural competence opinions were used as measures of cultural competence.

4.5.4 Correlations:

Variable	1	2	3
1. Proficiency	—		
2. Cultural familiarity	0.45	—	
3. Cultural competence perceptions	-0.25	-0.10	—

- $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Cultural familiarity and cultural competence opinions were used as measures of cultural competence.

Appendix 12: Interview codebook

Name	Category	Description	Examples
Extent of culture teaching	Index	Observations or reports on how frequently culture or cultural competence are taught	"We don't really do much culture, we learn about like dance and things Only like, once a term. You do that a little"
Perceptions of cultural competence teaching	Index	Opinions, feelings, or attitudes towards culture or cultural competence teaching	"I think it's quite interesting. .... Probably learning about Spanish culture?"
Language learning motivation	Index	Any mentions of language learning motivation, not specific to the L2MSS or any motivation models	"Spanish is boring. .... None of us chose it. Yeah, like none of you, you think? No, we have to do it."
Language/linguistic proficiency	Index	Any mentions of language or linguistic proficiency and academic abilities related to language learning	"Yeah, he was a Spanish. He called _____ Alturo. Yeah, he was, He was well, he probably knew Spanish better than the other teachers"
Relationships between culture and language teaching	Analytic	Conceptualisations of any relationships between culture teaching and language teaching, or between language and culture themselves	"Think we should learn more about the language and the culture. Like I think we can do that at the same time."
Conceptualisations of "teaching"	Analytic	Descriptions of what students consider to be "teaching", compared to other classroom discussions	"And he always tells us about places we have to see if we ever go to Spain. Yeah. Go to this place, or go visit this certain.

Name	Category	Description	Examples
			Yeah. It's very, OH when I when I did this, sort, you should go here, not like, Actual teaching"
Teacher's cultural perceptions	Analytic	Discussions or mentions of the class teachers' perceptions of the target foreign culture(s)	"Very positive, I think, because he used to live there. Yeah, he's passionate about it."
Conceptualisations of "culture teaching"	Analytic	Descriptions of what students consider to be a part of "culture teaching", compared to teaching of other topics	"Talks about his own experiences, yes. He talks about like. Festivals. He talks about on his way to work like, he used to work there."
Ideal L2 Self motivation	Analytic	Statements which reflect motivation under the Ideal L2 Self	"Feel like Spanish has more countries that speak, that language. And then French, French, French they only speak it in France. Canada and Canada. To speak Spanish, you can speak in a lot of Spanish countries..."
Ought-to L2 Self motivation	Analytic	Statements which reflect motivation under the Ought-to L2 Self	"If we want to take French and we would be marked 2 years behind in work. So our whole class took Spanish. .... Like whatever language we start in year seven, we have to go through like that for the whole [course]"
Cultural attitudes	Analytic	Mentions of attitudes or ideas about and towards the target foreign culture(s)	"We talk about like, South America as well. And Mexico.

Name	Category	Description	Examples
			All of like, the Spanish speaking countries, we learn about the culture and stuff"
Learning attitudes	Analytic	Mentions of attitudes towards the language learning experience, classroom environment, or school	"It's just draining, yeah. .... It's a good environment But it's just the class. It's on a Friday. Yeah, like double."