

**'Speaking French alive': learner perspectives on their motivation in Content and Language Integrated Learning in England**

BOWER, Kim <<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7259-8118>>

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**'Speaking French alive': learner perspectives on their motivation in  
Content and Language Integrated Learning in England**

Kim Bower

*Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK*

Provide full correspondence details here including e-mail for the corresponding author

Postal address: Dr Kim Bower

Teacher Education Department  
Sheffield Hallam University  
City Campus  
Howard Street  
Sheffield S1 1WB

Email: [k.bower@shu.ac.uk](mailto:k.bower@shu.ac.uk)

Tel: 0114 2254443

Biographical notes:

Kim Bower is Principal Lecturer in Education, teacher educator and former language teacher. Drawing from social constructivist perspectives, her research focusses on Content and Language Integrated Learning and learner motivation.

**Abstract:**

**'Speaking French alive': learner perspectives on their motivation in  
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*Purpose*

This article reports part of an empirical research study undertaken in state secondary schools in England in 2012/3, to investigate the extent to which Content and Integrated Learning (CLIL) promotes pupil motivation in the teaching of modern foreign languages (MFL).

*Design/ methodology/ approach*

Pupil perspectives of the impact of CLIL on their motivation are presented from two schools where different models of CLIL are practised. Firstly, a Partial Immersion Model of more than two subjects, for one Year 8 (Y8) mixed ability group, was taught for over six hours a week by a language teacher. Secondly, a curriculum Subject Strand Model was taught for one lesson per week by a geography specialist in Year 7 (Y7) and Y8 ability sets. Data are presented from student questionnaires and focus groups.

*Findings and Originality*

This article offers a unique contribution to the field by its focus on pupil motivation linked to contrasting CLIL contexts in England. The findings reveal positive perceptions of CLIL methodology and high levels of concentration, effort, enjoyment and progress, especially in the Partial Immersion Model, where the depth of relationship and cooperation and the enhanced levels of linguistic competence both lead to greater pupil engagement and motivation.

Key words: CLIL; learner perceptions; motivation; immersion.

# **'Speaking French alive': learner perspectives on their motivation in Content and Language Integrated Learning in England**

## **1. Introduction**

In 2002, in response to the growing linguistic diversification and plurilingualism of an expanding Europe and in an increasingly globalised society (Commission of the European Communities, 2003), the Barcelona European Council agreed to promote the learning of two foreign languages in schools in addition to the mother tongue (L1). The majority of European countries have acted decisively in response to this agreement and many have developed Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), as part of their secondary curriculum national policy (Eurydice, 2006). CLIL, a term first used in Europe in the 1990s, is defined by Coyle et al. (2010:1) as

a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language.

In England however, established projects are underway in only a small minority of schools, even though CLIL was identified in the Languages Review (Dearing and King, 2007) as one means of addressing the demotivation of learners towards modern foreign languages (MFL) in upper secondary schools (Key Stage 4) and thereby increasing uptake of MFL. In contrast to practice elsewhere in Europe, the lack of coherent political direction in policy development in modern foreign language learning over the last 20 to 30 years has restricted a paradigm shift that would lead to widespread developments in the use of CLIL methodology in secondary schools in England.

Following the British government's decision in 2004 to make languages optional at examination level for learners aged 14-16 (Key Stage 4), numbers studying modern foreign languages both in this Key Stage and within Key Stage 3 (age 11-14) reduced at an accelerated rate. In 2011 a small upturn in General Certificate of Secondary

Education (GCSE) entries occurred due to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) (Tinsley and Board, 2013). However, the EBacc, a performance measure in which languages is one of five subjects studied by learners at examination level age 16, (GCSE), has failed to provide a continuing upward trend of pupils studying a foreign language to the age of 16 (for example, Tinsley and Board, 2015). The underlying reasons for the decline remain: the lack of a coherent national language policy based on a sound philosophical approach (Evans, 2007; Macaro, 2008); curricula with content perceived by learners to be irrelevant, (Bell, 2004; Coyle, 2000); and a subject perceived as difficult and unimportant by many learners (Dearing and King, 2007; Jones and Jones, 2001). Although CLIL should not be regarded as the answer to the lack of learner motivation in the modern language classroom (Coyle, 2011), there is a growing evidence base that it can have a positive impact.

Studies reporting the positive effects of CLIL methodology on student motivation have begun to be published, but these are largely from European contexts, for example Finland (Seikkula-Leino, 2007); France and Germany (Dooly, 2008); Spain (Lasagabaster, 2011; Lorenzo, 2010). Existing studies about the motivation of foreign language learners in secondary schools in England (Chambers, 1999; Jones, 2005; Jones and Jones, 2001; Williams et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2004), are set in the traditional foreign language classroom. However, Coyle's *Italic Study* (2011) reported in Coyle (2013) is the first to consider learner perspectives of CLIL in Scottish and English schools.

This article reports on a study of CLIL models in England at a critical time for language learning in the country; it was undertaken against the background of the complex policy context described above. The study investigated motivation for learning in CLIL in two secondary schools in England where different models of

CLIL are practised. Firstly, a Partial Immersion Model of more than two subjects, for one Year 8 (Y8) mixed ability group, was taught for over six hours a week by a language teacher. Secondly, a Subject Strand Model was taught for one lesson per week by a geography specialist in Year 7 (Y7) and Y8 ability sets. The article begins by defining CLIL more precisely and exploring definitions of learner motivation before outlining the study design. Results from student questionnaires and focus groups are presented and used to contribute towards the description of an effective model for CLIL in England and other similar contexts. The article concludes with an argument for expanding CLIL in England. In particular, it postures that a partial immersion approach may be of importance in developing and expanding CLIL in England and other similar Anglophone contexts.

## **2. Definitions**

### ***2.1 CLIL, Immersion and Partial Immersion***

Within this study, the terms 'CLIL', 'immersion' and 'partial immersion' are key concepts. Proponents of CLIL have sought to define the approach precisely (Coyle, 2000; Coyle et al., 2010; Eurydice, 2006; Marsh, 2000) and Pérez-Cañado, (2012). Coyle et al. for example (ibid.:1) clarify the definition cited in section 1 above:

... in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other form at a given time.

In referring to CLIL, this study draws on this definition and reflects a dual focus on both content and language.

In England, CLIL manifests itself in a particular way that differs from CLIL in many other European settings because the languages taught in English CLIL contexts are distinct foreign languages (commonly French, German and Spanish). This is similar in many ways to some world-wide contexts, for example Australia (Cross, 2014;

Cross and Gearon, 2013). Furthermore, in England community languages do not form part of the National Curriculum. These important distinguishing features set England apart from many other European countries and make definitions problematic.

Moreover, in a few secondary schools in England, immersion projects have been established which exhibit the dual focus of CLIL: these Partial Immersion Models aim to enhance linguistic competence as well as to teach subject content. They include only some areas of the curriculum and are therefore more accurately described as 'partial immersion' (Eurydice, 2006; Hawkins, 1987).

[Figure 1 about here]

Figure 1: Range of Content Based Learning settings for MFL Learning in England (adapted from Met, 1998 and Lyster and Ballinger, 2011).

Figure 1 illustrates that settings in which CLIL can be found in England include (1) subject courses, (2) subject courses plus language classes/ units and (3) language settings based on content/thematic teaching, within a partial immersion category. Total immersion and a further partial immersion category of less than 50% of the curriculum are included in Figure 1. While immersion settings occur in parts of the UK, e.g. Welsh schools, they do not occur currently in England. One of the schools in the study reported in this article refers to its CLIL project as 'immersion', but as less than 50% of the curriculum is undertaken in French, it is more accurately described as a 'partial immersion' strand.

However, terminology in this research area is problematic, since definitions vary. Advocates of CLIL, for example Coyle et al. (2010), Marsh (2008), Pérez-Cañado (2012), claim fundamental differences make CLIL distinct from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) educational practices such as bilingual education, immersion and content based language learning, developed in the USA and Canada. Scholars from the field of immersion disagree; Cenoz et al. (2014: 254) conclude claims of

pedagogical uniqueness cannot be substantiated as they define immersion as 'an educational program in which L2 or a foreign language is used for academic instruction'. They therefore refute distinctions between CLIL and immersion on the premise that CLIL is content-driven and that there are differences in the aims of each approach, in student and teacher profiles, target languages and other pedagogical issues, arguing that they share many features. Furthermore, they (Cenoz et al, 2014: 255) postulate CLIL as an umbrella term under which immersion sits as 'immersion programs share characteristics with some, but not all forms of CLIL' and hence immersion is a form of CLIL. Others equate CLIL with Content-based Language Learning (CBL also known as content-based instruction CBI)<sup>1</sup> (Jarvinen, 2007), (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008). What is understood by the term 'partial immersion' also varies from 50% of the teaching e.g. (Holobow et al., 1987) where the teacher uses L1 for half of the day L2 for half the day, to 'the language of instruction for just some subjects' (Eurydice 2006:7).

In England, partial immersion occurs in and through the medium of the foreign language studied by the students in secondary schools. As with other CLIL models, pedagogy for these Partial Immersion Model projects has to be adapted: students need learning gains in both the curriculum area and in linguistic competence in order for the project to succeed. Therefore, Partial Immersion Model projects currently in existence in the context of secondary schools in England not only involve CLIL, but are synonymous with it. Teachers in England often refer to CLIL and partial immersion classes as 'immersion classes'. This article therefore contends that, in the English context, Content Based Learning settings are the umbrella under which both CLIL and Immersion sit, and in part overlap. Immersion cannot sit under CLIL, as Cenoz et al. (2014) suggest, because some forms of total immersion do not have a

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<sup>1</sup>Content-based Language Learning in the Canadian context is used to describe the learning of languages through the medium of another curriculum subject.



dual focus on language and content. This is distinct from some other Anglophone contexts. For example, Cross (2014) suggests that in Australia CLIL differs from immersion, but recognises immersion as part of the CLIL UK context.

## **2.2 Learner motivation**

This study focusses on the *effects* of CLIL methodology *on* learner motivation, rather than on the *nature* of what motivates students (Lasagabaster, 2011; Sugita and Takeuchi, 2010). The multi-faceted nature of motivation prohibits a simple definition. However, Gardner (2007:10) provides characteristics of a motivated individual relevant to this study, suggesting someone who '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).' This study seeks to discover the extent to which pedagogical approaches, learning strategies and task types foster engagement, interest, progress and enjoyment.

In defining motivation this study draws on Dörnyei's development of a theoretical perspective of motivation within the L2 context, which goes beyond Gardner's (1985) original integrative and instrumental motivations from the field of SLA. The well-established process-orientated conception of student motivation, developed initially by Dörnyei and Ottó (1998), forms the basis for the theoretical perspective of this study. Dörnyei (2005:83) recognises the need for such an approach because of the temporal dimensions of motivation:

when motivation is examined in its relationship to specific learner behaviours and classroom processes, there is a need to adopt a *process-orientated approach*/paradigm that can account for the daily ups and downs of motivation to learn, that is the ongoing changes of motivation over time.

The methodological framework of this study is underpinned by more recent proposals that the broad distinctions between motivation, cognition and affect should be 'viewed

as dynamic subsystems that have continuous and complex interaction with each other' within a *socio dynamic period* (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011:91). This period is also characterised by a recognition that the learning of a second, foreign or heritage language differs from learning English as a global language in terms of intercultural values and should not be considered in the same way.

### **3. Study Design**

For the design of this study I focussed on Year 8 (Y8) pupils (aged 12-13) because this group appears to be key in the decreasing trend in motivation in the traditional language classroom (Chambers, 1999; Coleman et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2002) and therefore the most useful focus for a cross sectional study on learner motivation. In light of the Italic study's (2011:13) call for 'a thorough investigation of different CLIL models ... which focuses on acquiring new knowledge and skills through another language', this article focusses specifically on motivation from learner perspectives in two English comprehensive schools with contrasting CLIL models. Some similarities in the data from these two contexts may be apparent. However, because CLIL methodology is adaptable to a wide range of settings, empirical evidence needs to take into account contextual variables and therefore even 'fuzzy generalisations' (Bassey, 1999:51) can only sometimes be drawn between projects. The small sample sizes in this study also prevent generalisability.

#### ***3.1 A process motivation model for investigating CLIL in secondary schools in England***

In order to analyse the multiple facets of pupil motivation, I developed a new model known as a process motivation model for investigating CLIL in secondary schools in England (see figure 2). The model, abbreviated here to PMM, provides a framework with which to systematically explore the impact of CLIL on learner motivation and to identify the main elements of CLIL that enhance motivation. I drew on existing

models within the field of foreign language learning by Dörnyei (1994), Williams and Burden (1997) and Coyle (2011). The three principle aspects of motivation in Coyle's (2011) model, the nature of the learning environment, learner engagement and learner identities formed the structure of the new model, from which principle characteristics of each aspect, together with potential sources of evidence of them and potential investigation instruments were developed (Bower, 2014). I wanted to investigate what impact the learning environment had on learners' attitudes towards their studies and how this in turn affected their mastery of the language and self-concept in a way that could be transferred to similar investigations in other SLA contexts.

[Insert figure 2 about here]

### ***3.2 The contexts***

I selected the two schools from the handful of state schools in England, which have established, successful CLIL projects of over three years duration. The settings are summarized in Table 1.

[Table 1 about here]

The first, Ash School, is an 11-16 local authority maintained state school where many learners come from the inner city. There is a high level of deprivation, the proportion of learners known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average and almost all students are from minority ethnic heritages, having English as an additional language. In Ash School, the case study focussed on a Y8 mixed ability group of 28 learners of whom 12 were boys and 16 girls. In addition to one curriculum subject lesson of information and communications technology (ICT), personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and tutor group are undertaken in French throughout Key Stage 3 (KS3) from the ages of 11 to 14. The tutor is also the group's French teacher. As a result, the same tutor spends over 6.25 hours/week with the group, mainly working in French and the tutor group is almost

always taught together throughout the curriculum. The Partial Immersion Strand model in Ash School is unusual; empirical research focused on this model has not been previously published.

In contrast to this first inner city school with high levels of deprivation, the second, Beech School, is an 11-18 local authority maintained state school situated in a suburb where the vast majority of students are from white British backgrounds; there are very few for whom English is an additional language. In Beech School all learners in Year 7 (Y7) (aged 11-12) and the half of the year group who learn French in Y8, spend one of three modern language lessons each week learning Geography as a curriculum subject through the medium of their first modern language. Additionally in Y7, those studying French are taught PSHE in French. Y8 learners studied PSHE in French in Y7, but staffing issues prevented this from continuing in Y8. Currently Y7 and Y8 learners also study Geography for one lesson per week in English. The principle target group involved in the study was a middle to lower ability Y8 group of 27 learners aged 12-13, of whom 13 were boys and 14 girls and who learned Geography in French for one lesson per week. A focus group of ten learners was drawn equally from this and a parallel higher ability group. A focus group of six learners from Y7 German was included in this case study in addition to the Y8 group to ensure a richer, balanced picture of the range of CLIL provision across KS3 (11-14 age range) in this setting.

Distinctively in Ash School, learners have to opt in to the CLIL group prior to starting in Y7 as a mixed ability form. Hence there is a high level of parental support for this 'immersion group' as parents have been involved in the choice, and the high level of contact hours for the teacher and learners has led to strong relationships, which form the basis of the unusually positive learning environment characterised by what one learner described as 'strong friendships'.

In contrast, in Beech School the CLIL model is compulsory. Whilst there are similar levels of parental support, the Y8 focus group consisted of learners selected from the sets across the ability range. At least half of these Y8 learners, who only had one hour's contact per week with the CLIL teacher, expressed reservations about this type of learning. However, the Y7 learners in Beech School, who were with the same teacher for registration, form period, German and CLIL, were overwhelmingly positive about these aspects of their learning.

### ***3.3 Method***

Two research questions were addressed: (1) in what ways does CLIL impact on learner motivation? and (2) what are the main elements of CLIL that enhance motivation? Data collection instruments included a pre-visit questionnaire for the Y8 principal group, followed by a 3- day visit to the school to conduct learner focus groups. The research was undertaken in the following format: after a half day visit to the school to discuss the research, I formulated a questionnaire to reflect the key themes identified through the PMM, which was completed by the Y8 principle group of learners in each school. A 3-day data collection visit followed, during which I conducted focus groups. Questions were again designed to reflect the key themes identified through the PMM. Focus groups were recorded and transcribed verbatim. I also undertook semi-structured interviews with staff to gain teachers' perspectives and these are reported elsewhere (Bower, 2014). Data were subjected to a rigorous, transparent, interpretive analysis in themes drawn from the PMM.

The focus class of learners aged 12-13 (N=28 Ash School; N=27 Beech School) was selected by the school. The school also selected a representative sample of learners, taking ability and gender into account for two learner focus groups (N=8 and 8 Ash School; N=10 and 5 Beech School). In Beech School, the sample provided by the school included learners taken from a parallel high ability group who were taught

similar content by the same teacher, in order to provide a range of ability. Views expressed by pupils from both groups were similar and in line with those from the questionnaire data. The small size of the cohort (two classes) reflects the paucity of practice of CLIL in the secondary sector in England. However, the questionnaire results did raise important questions about student experiences.

Results from three questions relating to learner motivation from the pre-visit questionnaire and responses in the learner focus groups are reported in this article, organised in the three categories of aspects of motivation (Bower 2014; Coyle, 2011): learner environment, learner engagement and learner identities. Data were collected in the academic year 2012/3. Ethical regulations with the requisite safeguarding procedures were followed (British Educational Research Council, 2011). Due to the small numbers in this study, exploration of statistical significance was not possible. In the following section, I begin by summarising findings from the questionnaire in order to contextualise the qualitative data that is central to this study.

#### **4. Results**

Results from learner-motivation related questions are presented in tables: all learners in the group, in Ash School and Beech School. As the schools and learners in Ash School use 'immersion' terminology rather than CLIL, the term 'immersion' is used when reporting data from the Ash School case study. It is worth noting here that, drawing on my definition outlined in Section 2.1, this approach might more usefully be termed 'partial immersion'.

##### ***4.1 Learner engagement: three key questions from the Y8 learner questionnaire***

*Question 1. How enjoyable is learning this language for YOU?*

Table 2  
[Table 2 about here]

In Ash School learners opt for the 'immersion' stream, which may affect perceptions because they have chosen to study in this way, compared to those on the compulsory CLIL curriculum in Beech school. However, other factors such as the teacher, the subject, topic, and the ability of the respondent may increase the level of enthusiasm of these learners.

*Question 2. How would you rate your level of effort in CLIL classes since September?*

Table 3 sets out the responses of all learners in class and at home.

[Table 3 about here]

Table 3

A previous study (Williams et al., 2004) found that effort was the major category of attribution given for both success (31% of the 285 respondents), and for not doing well (24.9%). In contrast, in Ash School learners consider themselves to make more effort at school than at home; and yet 20 of 28 learners from a mixed ability group in a challenging area describe their effort at home as 'good'. In this mixed ability group only one boy and one girl perceive his/her effort to be less than good in class; one learner less than satisfactory at home. The results from Beech School although less favourable than Ash School are also unusual. Learners consider themselves to make less effort at home than at school, nevertheless, 13 of 27 learners from a middle to low ability group describe their effort as 'good' at home, and 25 of 27 as satisfactory or better. In this middle to low ability group only two boys and two girls perceive his/her effort to be less than good in class and one boy and one girl less than satisfactory at home. This suggests a measure of motivation and enthusiasm could be attributable to the nature of the CLIL teaching, which may be carrying on their enthusiasm beyond where it might be expected to reach.

*Question 3. How would you describe your progress in French since September in each of the four main skill areas?*

Tables 4 and 5 set out the responses of all learners for each of the four skills in Ash and Beech Schools.

Table 4

[Table 4 about here]

Table 5

[Table 5 about here]

These findings reflect those from other studies, for example, Lee et al. (1998) found that average ability learners tend to make less satisfactory progress than higher ability learners; and previous research, for example (Jones and Jones, 2001; Stork, 1998), found listening to be the skill learners find most difficult in modern foreign languages in England.

#### ***4.2 Results from the focus groups, Year 8 Ash School and Years 7 and 8 Beech School***

Data from the learner focus groups are presented in three sections, corresponding to the aspects of motivation from the process motivation model: learning environment; learner engagement; and learner identities. In the first section 'learning environment', the discussion includes relevant contextual information.

##### ***4.2.1 Learning environment***

Learners from both schools, when asked what motivated them to work hard, responded with similar ideas, 'merits; other rewards; the games generated by the software programme, 'Task Magic'' (Ash School) and 'prizes, praise, creative things' (Beech School). However, in Beech School, the Y8 responses reflected less on the quality of the relationships than in Y7 and in Ash school:

I: 'What motivates you to work hard?'



Ash School:

L1: 'To sort of do our best and not let her (teacher) down'

L2: 'Getting good GCSEs and to go on and like get further with your life'

L3: 'the silver certificates knowing that all this hard work is going to pay off'

Beech School

Y8 Learners:

L1: 'I suppose for ourselves, really, as well, because you want to do well because you want to get a higher mark so you can go onto other things'.

Y7 Learners:

L1: 'Miss makes it fun'

L2: 'we do, like activities, so we're not just, like, sat listening'

L3: 'We like, get involved'

L4: 'it's something that we've never done before, so it's like a new experience'

L5: 'Miss P, really, because she just makes it really easy and everyone tries to learn more things'.

#### *4.2.2 Learner engagement*

Learners demonstrated a deep intercultural understanding, a key feature of CLIL methodology, absent in many traditional language lessons. Coyle (2011)

acknowledges the development of intercultural understanding as fundamental to CLIL, although, in the Italic study she did not find this aspect to be a key finding.

However in this study, views about content and intercultural awareness, such as:

'learning French is like stepping into a whole other world' and 'because you

understand people better', reflect a consensus from learners, and is perceived by them

as a motivating factor as the following data demonstrate. Quotations are categorised

by the themes that emerged.

##### *4.2.2:1 Development of intercultural awareness*

In Ash School Y8 learners suggested:

L1: ... in our form room there are a couple of quotes and stuff, ... one quote ... said "for every language you learn, you learn a new life or something." And I can sort of relate to that because French is really different from English and learning French is like stepping into a whole other world.

L2: I think we have achieved a better understanding of the language and the country

and stuff.

Similarly, in Beech School Y8 learners commenting on the importance of learning a language explained:

L1: ...because you understand people better

L2: ...Yeah, it means you're (.) talking to people around the world which makes it more interesting, and you can, there's different things going on all around the world, so you can learn all about different places.

#### *4.2.2:2 Relevant Content*

In contrast to negative perceptions of the content of traditional language lessons, learners in both schools demonstrated positive attitudes towards the content of CLIL lessons, including PSHE. One learner from Ash School explained: 'You don't just learn the language, you get to learn about France itself...'

Similarly, in Beech School when Y8 learners were asked to identify the most interesting thing undertaken in French Geography, almost all agreed that the EU debate had interested them the most, as one boy exemplified:

I think it was the debate that we did the other day about the EU, whether we should be staying in the EU or not. ... because I thought it was kind of like interesting to find out the different reasons why you can want to stay in the EU and why you wouldn't.

Y7 learners highlighted the significance of relevant content by making direct comparisons with traditional language lessons:

L1: because in this one (CLIL) we've been doing like Rain Forests and that kind of stuff, but in normal German it's just kind of colours and pets and things like that.

L2: And you're learning double the things in the amount of time.

L3: You're learning German and Geography.

#### *4.2.2:3 Use of the Target Language for real purposes*

In concurrence with Italic findings (Coyle 2011), learners all appreciated the use of the Target Language for real purposes: when asked what he liked most about using

French in registration, a learner in Ash School replied, 'Speaking French alive'. A Y8 girl in Beech School, referring to using the TL to learn curriculum content suggested:

I think it's more helpful because I don't necessarily want to learn about what's in people's pencil cases, but I like learning about world things that you can actually say and would be useful to you in French.

Learners in Ash School appreciated their increased fluency and comprehension:

you understand more words when she's (the teacher) speaking to you. You kind of pick up the language when she's speaking to you. At the start it's quite tricky, but like now I can understand more what she's saying...

Referring to an introduction I made to the group in French, one immersion learner noted:

I'm proud that I can understand what people are saying, like the first day when you (the researcher) came in, which was yesterday, you talked about how you were going to record us, and don't panic. I never understood the whole thing that you said, but a few words, I put them together and I was able to understand what you were saying.

The status of the group in terms of accelerated learning and as a 'special group' is also acknowledged by an immersion learner: 'I think immersion gives you a better deal of respect in the school'. A minority of learners regarded being perceived as different to other learners as a disadvantage, one of whom suggested with hindsight she would have preferred to 'be like everyone else, not in French immersion ... I just want to be the same as other forms'.

#### *4.2.2:4 Cognitive Challenge*

The distinctive feature of cognitive challenge in CLIL lessons was recognised by learners in both schools, as table 6 illustrates. Challenge in lessons in Ash School was optimal and perceived to be positive by learners, however in Beech School where challenge was at times for some too great, it was perceived to be demotivating.

Comments are presented in a table below in order to highlight the differences in

learners' responses in the two schools.

Table 6

[Table 6 here]

This inability to understand has a negative impact on some learners' perceptions of their progress and CLIL in Beech School:

Y8 L1: I don't really see the point, because you're not going to (.) with the debates, that's the only bit that I really understand, because we're all discussing it, and then Miss explains what they've said. But in the actual lessons, she says the French bit and then everyone's like 'What?' and then she just carries on with the next part of the lesson.

L2: I think we work hard until we find it really hard and then, like, some of us give up...

In contrast, learners in Ash School were able to explore aspects of challenge, for example the challenge of working out meaning:

Miss doesn't always just tell us what it means, she gets us to try and get it, and if we get it right other people learn from it.

A further learner suggested:

Because we try to find out what the translation of it is in English. ... if we don't know what the English word means, then you have to try and work out that ...

#### *4.2.2:5 Perceptions of progress*

A large majority of learners perceived rapid progress in language competence, particularly in listening and concentration skills and writing skills. Whilst the Italic study found comprehension gains, it reported learner concerns about the difficulty of writing in the target language, albeit indicating writing competence to be three years ahead in terms of modern language levels. In the low-middle ability group in Beech School, 17 of 27 respondents and a higher proportion of 24 of 28 in the mixed ability group in Ash School perceive their progress to be good or better in writing. Learners' perceptions of progress were supported by their school's own statistical analysis, which demonstrated higher attainment across the range of subjects than for similar

learners who were not engaged in CLIL. This is in stark contrast to the low levels of progress and attainment perceived by many learners engaged in traditional language lessons (Jones and Jones, 2001; Lee et al., 1998).

In Ash School, there is a paradox between choice to do immersion because of the potential higher levels and early GCSE and feeling under pressure because of high expectations and early entry:

L1: I find it a bit daunting, like, having to take a GCSE two years earlier than the rest of like the school. Because we're in French immersion, like it's also expected of us that we do better in the other subjects as well...

L2: There's no backing out; it's not optional now, so we still have to work hard, because we're like stuck in the middle. Now is our only chance to get our heads straight, because in Y7 it was the beginning; we were still getting used to how the school works in general, not just immersion. Now in Y8, we know the school and we're just one year away from Y9, the actual GCSE, so yeah, we have to work hard.

They value the resulting increased challenge:

L3: ... it makes you work harder, knowing that you've got something coming earlier than the rest of the people, so I think that we are putting more effort towards learning French, it means concentrating a bit more.

L4: I think we probably do more work when we're in French and ICT and PSHE'.

When asked why this might be, one learner reflected:

L5: Because, I'm not really sure ... We're with our form teacher, so we are on the best of our behaviour and everything already ... And we have to concentrate to understand everything.

In Beech School, Y7 learners also perceive swift progress and perceive CLIL as enjoyable:

L1 when we were in Primary School, like all the way through Primary School, we did no German, and, like, a few weeks ago we produced a whole brochure about Boston<sup>2</sup> in German

L2 We learned in the first month here more German than we ever learned French. (4 years of French in primary school)

and later:

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<sup>2</sup> The name of the town has been changed

L3: Normal German's fun though.  
L4: Normal German's fun, but this is better.

When asked what they were proud of one Y8 boy, for whom the challenge was not too demanding replied:

I think I'm probably very proudest (*sic*) of the (EU) debate, because we wrote it by ourselves, and me and my friend we just had to keep going and keep thinking, like, we can't ask the teacher, we've got to do it by ourselves. So I'm probably proudest of that because it was really independent.

In common with the Italic study Coyle (2011), learners linked their progress to enhanced listening and concentration skills, which transferred across the curriculum. For example, in Ash School one girl suggested, 'it's (in) all subjects I would listen better. It improves our concentration.'

In Beech School, Y8 learners suggested that they were motivated to concentrate, but disruption by a small minority inhibited concentration in one class:

There's another thing that I would add to the lesson: if we got put in groups for our ability and our concentration, then the people who want to disrupt each other could disrupt each other and then it would just affect them and not other people who want to learn.

It was not possible to determine the impact of any distracting behaviour on learners' views on CLIL. Their teacher however was aware of this behaviour; at least two of these learners had behavioural special educational needs.

### ***4.3 Learner Identities***

#### *4.3.1 Impact on learners' self-concept*

In both schools, learners had a realistic awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses in the skills needed for CLIL for this stage in their development as learners. In Beech School, for example, Y7 learners and almost all Y8 learners considered themselves to be developing skills of communication, working in groups, concentration, learning to improvise, using dictionaries, cooperating and

presentation skills. In Ash School, nine learners in the focus groups noted the following examples of progress and achievement:

being able to speak and have good pronunciation; how much we are learning throughout this past year; ... now I can go on in sentences; higher listening skills; and writing French; cooperating; communicating; learning to cope with other cultures; confidence.

They were aware that they were making progress, one boy suggested: 'Yes, French actually comes naturally to you the longer you're in French immersion'.

#### *4.3.2 Self-worth*

Learners in both schools articulated a pride in their progress to date. A number of learners commented on their increasing ability to understand and communicate in French. In Ash School, when asked what they were proud of one learner responded:

...being able to understand what Miss D is saying, because I, sometimes she speaks really fast, and you can pick up a few things as the years are going on, you can pick up more and more and then you're able to have better conversations.

A further learner suggested they enjoy the progress they are making in fluency:

Well, I'm kind of proud that I can talk about different matters and argue about different things that don't really have much to do with French, but that I can argue lots of things in French and talk about different matters.

In Beech School for Y7 and Y8 learners where the teaching was effective, found CLIL to develop self-confidence. One Y7 learner suggested:

It's definitely like one of the best subjects that you can have to build self-confidence, because you're learning a completely new thing, so you've kind of got a level playing field, because if everybody started from fresh, then you're all building up together.

Feelings of competence were demonstrated by all learners in Ash School and in Beech School by all with the exception of a small minority in Y8. A learner in Ash School was sufficiently competent to maintain cyber chat with a French-speaking friend met via online games:

Yeah, online I've got this friend who doesn't speak English at all, and I can't speak French that much, and I've tried to talk to him in French, and he tries to talk to me in English, because he learns English at school.

Learners from all CLIL groups in Beech School recognise the development of linguistic skills as this exchange between Y8 learners illustrates:

L1: I like learning it (Geography) in French, because it's a way of helping you learn more French, and learning the language quicker, so that's why I like doing it.

L2 You learn why they do it in French, because it helps you to become more fluent in French, more recognisable to French. I like the idea, I think it's an ingenious idea. It's just, XXX it can be a bit complicated sometimes.

## **5. Discussion**

Despite the small sample size, this study raises questions that are worth investigating further. Results from both the Partial Immersion Model and the Subject Strand Model reflect findings from previous studies about the advantages of CLIL methodology and the issues CLIL raises. For example, in this research, learners' perspectives also highlight the importance of optimal cognitive challenge and intercultural awareness in motivating learners. In contrast to 'moribund' traditional language learning in England (Coyle, 2002:37), the majority of students in both models are motivated learners (Gardner, 2007:10); they enjoy languages and perceive themselves to be making good or better effort and progress. In concurrence with Italic findings, learners all appreciated the use of the Target Language for real purposes, 'speaking French alive' and relevant content - beyond the boring diet of the contents of 'pencil cases', single word vocabulary items of 'pets' and 'colours'.

Findings from Beech School resonate with those from the UK based Italic Study (Coyle 2011) where positive attitudes towards CLIL experiences were reported by approximately two thirds of learners, and 84% preferred CLIL lessons to modern language lessons. Characteristics of teaching and learning that learners found motivating also reflect those from the Italic study. These include the lessons being



more 'fun', appreciation of optimal cognitive challenge, group and pair work, engagement in the learning process, playing content-related games, cooperation and extended project work. For the minority of learners who expressed concerns, predominantly in the Y8 group at Beech school, these reflected 16% who rejected CLIL on similar grounds (ibid.): work that was too difficult, incomprehensible and as a result, boring.

With the exception of competitiveness, findings from Ash School immersion group and Beech School Y7 German CLIL group corroborate those from De Courcy's 1991 study of an Australian immersion programme; findings from Beech School Y8 group demonstrated many of these aspects, from most, but not all, learners:

students found the program positive in terms of group cohesion, mixed gender socialisation, close bonds with teachers, collaborative learning, improved concentration, learning to think in more than one way, learning to study, and the challenge – the program was not boring. The negative aspects were the competitiveness of some fellow students and being marked as different from other students

(De Courcy, 2002:16)

However, findings from the Partial Immersion Model, currently rare in England, demonstrate significantly higher learner enjoyment and motivation than the Subject Strand Model and concur with an unpublished study (Bower, 2006). Furthermore, the model has a lower impact on the wider curriculum than in Beech School and is in this respect more easily adopted by other schools. It is interesting that in Beech School, motivation was higher in the Y7 German group, where the tutor, a linguist, took the group for registration, German and CLIL Geography. Consequently, provision had much more in common with the immersion model. Interestingly, the study revealed no distinct differences in terms of gender.

## **6. Implications**

These positive findings suggest that this Partial Immersion Model, in which pupils undertake tutor group and PSHE in addition to a curriculum subject (in this case ICT)

in the CLIL language, may be successful in engaging learners and developing enjoyment and motivation in other contexts. Although further research is needed, this kind of Partial Immersion Model may offer a next step in developing CLIL in the English context and in similar contexts where the foreign language is a language other than English. The government funded Content and Language Integrated Project (CLIP) 2002-5 aimed to develop a range of CLIL approaches. However, none of the eight secondary projects were immersion-based (Eurydice at NFER, 2005; Wiesemes, 2005). It seems that there has been confusion about whether CLIL is pedagogically distinct from immersion and it may well be that this confusion has inhibited the development of partial immersion in England and in other countries where the foreign language studied is not English.

For this to be achieved at least in part via CLIL, firstly there is a pressing need amongst educators for the boundaries of what constitutes CLIL pedagogy in England and beyond to be clarified, and where necessary, unequivocally extended to include Partial Immersion Models. Secondly, a change in governmental policy is required so that, with appropriate Continuing Professional Development (CPD), teachers can be empowered to develop these innovative methods in their classrooms (Coyle, 2011) and in particular, in classrooms in England

This is only the second reported study that has focussed on learner motivation in CLIL in England. Given the questions it raises, it would seem that, despite a paucity of opportunities in England, further research is warranted in this area. In particular, research needs to investigate the impact of time spent with the same language teacher, the same group of learners, and the percentage of the curriculum undertaken in and through the foreign language in this type of Partial Immersion Model. Findings also suggest the need for further longitudinal study of CLIL groups as they progress through their period of study in KS3 and at the end of subsequent Key Stages and

beyond, in order to investigate the long-term impact of learning languages in this way.

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Table 1 Summary of Learners in this study

School	Questionnaire respondents	Focus groups
Ash School 11-16	ICT, PSHE, Tutor group for three years Y8 mixed ability group (28 pupils: 12 boys,16 girls)	2 groups: 8 x Y8 pupils drawn from questionnaire respondents in each group
Beech School 11-18	Subject strand of Geography in French Y8 mid-lower ability group (27 pupils: 13 boys, 14 girls)	1 group: 10 x Y8 pupils: 5 from questionnaire respondents; 5 from parallel high ability group  1 group: 6 x Y7 pupils (Geography in German)

Table 2

	Very enjoyable	Mostly enjoyable	Sometimes enjoyable	Not enjoyable
Ash School (n=28)	9	15	4	-
Beech School (n=27)	5	10	11	1



Table 3

<b>School</b>	<b>Maximum effort</b>	<b>Good effort</b>	<b>Satisfactory effort</b>	<b>Poor effort</b>
<b>Ash</b> In class (n=28)	8	19	1	1
<b>Ash</b> At home (n=28)	-	20	7	1
<b>Beech</b> In class (n=27)	1	22	4	-
<b>Beech</b> At home (n=27)	-	13	12	2

Table 4

<b>Ash School</b>				
<b>Listening</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=28)	9	18	1	-
<b>Speaking</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=28)	8	16	4	-
<b>Reading</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=28)	12	14	2	-
<b>Writing</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=28)	2	22	4	-

Table 5

<b>Beech School</b>				
<b>Listening</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=27)	4	18	4	1
<b>Speaking</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=27)	3	15	8	1
<b>Reading</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=27)	4	16	6	1
<b>Writing</b>	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
(n=27)	6	11	9	1

Table 6

Ash School	Beech School
<p>Y8 Learners</p> <p>L1: It's always like a challenge, and you have to always work hard to understand it, and once you understand, you remember it, because you work hard. <i>Another learner agreed:</i></p> <p>L2: Yeah, like she said, it improves our concentration, because we're concentrating more on French, and because we've got the right concentration for French, we know what we have to be targeting in all the other subjects as well as French.</p> <p><i>I: And what other sort of learning strategies are you using?</i></p> <p>L3: You're using like your memory and stuff, cos you have to like remember the phrases and words, and plus you're using your brain more, because if there's some words in French they're sort of similar to some words in English, like you can just find it out from that. Plus, you're using like a dictionary more, a French to English dictionary, so like your finding skills are better.</p>	<p>Y8 Learners</p> <p>L1: What we enjoy most (.) probably (.) challenge, it's a challenge for us to work something out, do it different, do it in a different way. <i>I: So how is it challenging? What sort of things do you find challenging?</i></p> <p>L1: Well, it's challenging to do our work, also to understand the French.</p> <p><i>I: So, to get the Geography but it's in French. How do the others feel?</i></p> <p>L2: Well, I quite like the, I sometimes get a bit stuck on the French and then don't learn the Geography, but we're usually, like, given dictionaries and stuff, so I quite like working out what sentences say and that.</p> <p>L3: Well, it's hard and some people like a challenge, so it's good for people who like a challenge, but then if people don't really understand it's not really good for them. <i>Some in this low to middle set found the EU module too demanding:</i></p> <p>L4: I don't think I could have handled it in English, but in French it was impossible. I couldn't understand anything about it, really.</p>



Figure 2: **Process motivation model for investigating CLIL in the classroom in England**

Aspects of motivation	Principal Characteristics	Exemplification of potential sources of evidence for principal characteristics: what to look for	Potential investigation methods/instruments
<b>Learning environment</b>			
Teacher specific	The nature of interaction within the classroom: environment promotes purposeful, stimulating learning within a supportive ethos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affiliative motive (to please the teacher)</li> <li>• authority type (controlling vs. autonomy-supporting)</li> <li>• appropriate challenge</li> <li>• modelling/task presentation</li> <li>• appropriate enthusiasm</li> <li>• nature of learning experiences</li> <li>• learner independence</li> <li>• nature, timing and amount of feedback</li> <li>• nature and amount of appropriate praise</li> <li>• rewards/sanctions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teacher interview</li> <li>• school documentation</li> <li>• focus group</li> <li>• pupil questionnaire/ interview</li> <li>• observation</li> </ul>
	Environment fosters positive emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confidence</li> <li>• fear/anxiety</li> <li>• enjoyment/pleasure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupil questionnaire</li> <li>• focus group</li> <li>• observation</li> </ul>
Course specific	Interest/relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stimulating course content</li> <li>• relevance to pupils' needs</li> <li>• resources</li> <li>• time of day, week, year</li> <li>• expectancy of success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review resources and school documentation</li> <li>• pupil questionnaire/interview</li> <li>• focus group</li> <li>• observation</li> </ul>
Group specific	The nature of interaction with in the group: promoting co-operative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• size of class and school</li> <li>• class and school ethos</li> <li>• group cohesiveness</li> <li>• prevailing goal structure (cooperative, competitive or individualistic group work)</li> <li>• engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupil questionnaire/ interview</li> <li>• teacher interview</li> <li>• observation</li> </ul>
<b>Learner engagement</b>			
	Perceived value of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal relevance</li> <li>• anticipated value of outcomes</li> <li>• intrinsic value attributed to the activity</li> <li>• identified regulation (helped by teachers/others to identify how the learning is important to them)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupil questionnaire/interview</li> <li>• focus group</li> <li>• teacher interview</li> <li>• observation</li> </ul>
	Pupil attitudes towards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language learning in general</li> <li>• the TL</li> <li>• the TL community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pupil questionnaire</li> <li>• focus group</li> <li>• teacher interview</li> <li>• observation</li> </ul>

	Pupil perceptions of their learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupil perceptions of:</li> <li>their effort</li> <li>their progress</li> <li>the level of difficulty/challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupil questionnaire</li> <li>focus group</li> <li>observation</li> </ul>
	Engagement in learning tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>willingness to engage</li> <li>response to tasks</li> <li>use of learner strategies</li> <li>WTC willingness to communicate</li> <li>pupil use of the TL</li> <li>progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupil questionnaire</li> <li>focus group</li> <li>teacher interview</li> <li>observation</li> <li>work scrutiny</li> </ul>
<b>Learner Identities/self</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
	Self concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>realistic awareness of personal strengths/weaknesses in skills required</li> <li>personal definitions and judgements of success and failure</li> <li>self worth/concern</li> <li>learners understand how they are motivated</li> <li>exploration of values relating to learning and languages</li> <li>learned helplessness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupil questionnaire</li> <li>focus group</li> <li>teacher interview</li> <li>observation</li> <li>work scrutiny</li> </ul>
	Mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>feelings of competence</li> <li>awareness of development of skills</li> <li>self efficacy</li> <li>ability to set appropriate goals</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupil questionnaire</li> <li>focus group</li> <li>teacher interview</li> <li>observation</li> <li>work scrutiny</li> </ul>

Figure 2: Process motivation model for investigating CLIL in England, Bower, 2014  
(adapted from Williams and Burden 1997; Dörnyei, 1994a and Coyle, 2011)