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**Mixing it up: an investigation into the impact of a CLIL
approach on the attitudes and attainment
of a low-attaining Year 9 Spanish class.**

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Abstract

The effects of Content and Language Integrated Learning on lower-attaining students have remained relatively unexplored in the literature, with many studies on CLIL admitting to basing results on students who have been selected in some way. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to look at the effects of a CLIL approach on the attitudes and written attainment of a class of demotivated and low-attaining year 9 students of Spanish. A Scheme of work was created, comprising 6 lessons which incorporated aspects of the students' Geography curriculum; concretely the topic of Latin America. The results showed an almost unanimous improvement in written achievement from before the CLIL intervention to after. In terms of attitudes, there was evidence that some students enjoyed the CLIL lessons, however for the majority, the difficulty of this approach hindered their interest and thus their motivation for Spanish remained unchanged.

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Introduction

This action research project took place at an 11-18 Comprehensive School in Cambridgeshire, and involved a Year 9 Spanish class of 13 low-attaining students. These students had been identified in Year 7 as having low literacy levels in English, and consequently had been taken out of their language classes in order to undertake extra lessons in literacy. They re-established their language learning in Year 8, and were undertaking a flexible two-year course in Spanish, different to that of other year 9 Spanish classes. The teaching intervention spanned over seven 50 minute lessons, and included one lesson which allowed for the filling out of questionnaires and the conducting of interviews.

By the end of my first teaching placement, the need for me to work with lower-attaining groups and to develop my skills in behaviour management had been identified, and thus I started to work with this year 9 Spanish class during my second teaching practice. I found that good behaviour was directly linked to student engagement, interest and motivation in class and I was constantly looking for different ways of achieving this. I have always been interested in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and by claims by various researchers (Lasagabaster, 2008; Marsh, 2000) that it can have positive effects on student motivation and attainment in their language learning. However, it was not until I had researched the topic that I decided that it would be a worthwhile one to pursue for this project, and one that could positively influence my teaching practice with future classes of demotivated or lower-attaining students. I noticed that many of the studies that showed the CLIL approach to be successful (Mearns, 2011; Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster, 2010), both in terms of increasing motivation or improving language outcomes, involved students that had either volunteered to undertake the approach, had been selected in some way, or were higher-attaining students. One might argue that many of the potential pitfalls which CLIL may encounter are avoided by selecting for the CLIL programmes students who will be

academically motivated, and able to succeed in the foreign language (FL) (Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster, 2010), and therefore such studies cannot give as conclusive results as they might wish to. As Anthony Bruton (2011, p.530) states: “it is very convenient to select and then demonstrate that the selected perform better than the non-selected with additional language exposure”. The effects of CLIL on those not selected, or on the lower attainers, must be explored. It was for this reason that I chose to investigate the effects of CLIL on a low-attaining, demotivated year 9 Spanish class. This project also fits well with the most recent National Curriculum (NC) Programme of Study (DfE, 2013), which requires children to “develop and use a wide-ranging and deepening vocabulary that goes beyond their immediate needs” for discussion of “wider issues”. One could argue that by teaching language in combination with other subjects, students will naturally come into contact with more varied vocabulary, and might have to discuss issues that go beyond what they would discuss in the traditional modern foreign languages (MFL) classroom. Therefore this project can be justified not only on a more personal level of my own professional development, but also within a wider, national context.

Throughout this research project, I shall firstly examine the literature related to CLIL and its effects on written attainment and student motivation, which will consequently inform my research questions. Then, I shall provide a detailed explanation of my teaching intervention and the methods I used for data collection. Finally, I shall present my findings, and tentative conclusions shall be drawn in response to my main research question: ‘What is the impact of a CLIL approach on the attitudes and attainment of a low-attaining Year 9 Spanish class?’

Literature Review

Definitions of CLIL

In recent years, Education Departments in Europe have been working hard to increase foreign language proficiency of students in schools (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010). CLIL has become an increasingly popular way of doing this, and countries such as Spain and the Netherlands have invested much time and effort into investigating its effects and merits (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). The recent growing interest in CLIL can be understood if we examine the Educational context of the 1990s, when the term ‘CLIL’ was officially coined (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). “The late 1990s meant that educational insight was firmly set on achieving a high degree of language awareness”

(Coyle et al., 2010, p.4). Indeed, after the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, and the Soviet Union two years later, the extent of globalisation that followed highlighted the necessity for “better language and communication outcomes” (ibid.). Thus it became necessary to examine how more appropriate language teaching and learning could be achieved, and CLIL seemed a suitable way of increasing linguistic competence, without taking up too much time in an already “crammed” (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010, p.367) curriculum.

However, there has been some confusion as to what the true definition of CLIL is, and many have erroneously assumed that CLIL and immersion teaching equate to each other (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010). Coyle et al. (2010) describe CLIL as “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p.1), yet Bruton (2011) postulates that “the CLIL defended on paper...is rarely the CLIL in practi[c]e” (p.524) and that there seems to be different “variations” (ibid.) of CLIL teaching. Indeed, these might include immersion teaching (the learning of the content through the foreign language) (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010), the teaching of the FL separately in order to then learn the content through the second language (L2), the teaching of the FL through the content, which has already been learnt in the first language (L1), and the teaching of both the FL and the content together (Bruton, 2011). However, if we take into account Coyle et al.’s (2010) 4C’s framework (detailed later) for the CLIL approach, and if we consider the argument that CLIL is so effective due to it providing students with a naturalistic way of learning languages (Marsh, 2000), it is evident that the final ‘form’ of CLIL mentioned above can be the only true one. Coyle et al. (2010) identify four ‘building blocks’ that are needed for effective CLIL teaching: content (the new knowledge or facts that students acquire), communication (the new language (vocabulary/grammar) that students acquire), cognition (problem solving and thinking skills) and culture. These authors maintain that the connecting of these four concepts “into an integrated whole is fundamental to planning” (p.55) and thus suggest that the giving of language learning objectives as well as content learning objectives is paramount. With this in mind, in this study ‘CLIL’ will be taken to mean the pedagogical approach in which language and content are learnt in combination with separate, yet equally as important, learning objectives.

CLIL and its effects on student attainment

Much of the research which has been undertaken on the effects of CLIL, has been in the area of student attainment (Dalton-Puffer, 2011), and it has been concluded that CLIL seems to be advantageous to student language proficiency (Smit, 2008). Following several studies conducted in Finland and the Netherlands, David Lasagabaster (2008) conducted a research study in the Basque country, where Basque and Castilian Spanish are both official languages. This study involved 198 Secondary Education students across four schools, who had started to learn English as a FL at the age of 8. These students were divided into three groups: the first group was a non-CLIL group made up of 28 15-16 year olds, who had only been taught English as a subject for three hours per week. The second group was made up of 113 15-16 year olds, who as well as the three hours of English per week as a subject, had also participated in a CLIL programme for two years. This group had four hours of CLIL per week and the subjects that they were taught through CLIL included history, computer science, English literature and religion. The final group was also a CLIL group and consisted of 57 14-15 year olds who also studied English for 3 hours per week, and had been enrolled in a CLIL course for one year, which they did for four hours per week. All groups had to do tests in speaking, listening, writing and grammar. The grammar and listening skills were measured using a standard test; for the writing test students had to write a letter to an English family, and for the speaking test, students had to use a given story to describe what was happening in 24 pictures. The results of this study showed that in every language skill, as well as in the overall English competence score, the CLIL students outperformed the non-CLIL students. In terms of speaking, CLIL students demonstrated more competence in pronunciation, range of vocabulary, grammar, fluency and content; whereas in the writing task, the CLIL students demonstrated a higher level of vocabulary, use of language, content, organisation, spelling and punctuation. In addition to this, the CLIL group of younger learners (14-15 year olds) outperformed the non-CLIL group of older learners (15-16 year olds) in each discipline. The results of this study concur with other studies such as that of Dalton-Puffer (2007), who found that CLIL students outperform their non-CLIL peers in some morphosyntactic components, such as sentence complexity, affixial inflection (p.281) and the use of placeholders. In addition to this, studies conducted by Admiraal, Westhoff and de Bot (2006) and Ruiz de Zarobe (2008) have found CLIL students “to be ahead on all dimensions of their respective speaking constructs” (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p.187). Similarly, Tessa Mearns (2011) investigated the effects of a six week CLIL approach on the attainment and motivation of a relatively high ability year 9 German class. PSHE was taught in combination with

German, and when discussing her results, Mearns (2011) noted that in terms of attainment, there was a general improvement in linguistic performance of the pupils, with the average grade in the class rising by one National Curriculum level.

However, one must also look at some of the limitations of such studies before drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of CLIL to improve student linguistic competence. Indeed Mearns (2011) also noted that whilst the highest level in the class rose significantly after the completion of the CLIL programme, the lowest level did not, thus suggesting that little improvement was seen amongst the lower-achieving members of the class. This points to a key argument against the CLIL approach which is that it gives advantage to higher-attaining students, or students who have been selected in some way. In addition to this, it must be noted that in the Lasagabaster study (2008) mentioned above, the two CLIL groups mentioned had more exposure to English than the non-CLIL groups, as they underwent the CLIL lessons in addition to the three hours of subject English classes. Thus one could argue that a higher competence in English should be expected of the CLIL groups, and that had the non-CLIL groups had the same exposure to the English language, their linguistic levels may have been higher. In addition to this, it should be mentioned that there was no testing done on the groups prior to the CLIL programmes, and therefore it is difficult to measure rates of progress of CLIL learners versus non-CLIL learners, and therefore it is difficult to see the whole picture.

Moreover, one must be privy to some of the more negative accounts of the CLIL approach. A study conducted by Seikkula-Leino (2007) in a Finnish comprehensive school investigated the effects of a CLIL approach (the L2 being English) on student learning of content as well as their motivation and self-esteem. Of the 217 students who took part in the study, 116 of them were enrolled in CLIL, although Seikkula-Leino (2007) admits that as most of the students had been chosen for the CLIL classes from entrance examination results, “it was probable that their school performance [was] higher than average” (p.333). All the students were divided into groups according to their perceived IQ (under/average/ high achievers) and all students were tested both in maths and in their Finnish mother tongue. The results showed that there were no significant differences in terms of general learning between the CLIL and the non-CLIL groups. However, it was noted that there were fewer over-achievers in the CLIL group than in the non-CLIL group; that students in the CLIL group were likely to perform in accordance with their intelligence, however students in the non-CLIL group were likely to perform above their potential intelligence. This suggests that in terms of their

mathematical learning, the CLIL group may have been disadvantaged, despite having been preselected according to examination results. The results of this study concur with that of Admiraal et al. (2006) in the Netherlands who concluded that CLIL students' performance in history and geography in their L1 university entrance exams was neither better nor worse than their non-CLIL peers. This points to a question asked by Christiane Dalton-Puffer (2011) of whether it really is possible for learners to produce equally good results "even if they studied the content in an imperfectly known language?" (p.189). One could argue that in order to make the content accessible for students, it would either need to be simplified, or the CLIL approach would need to be undertaken with higher-attaining students, the latter which could have wider reaching consequences relating to social injustice. In the case of the former, it begs the question of how much content can be 'simplified' before hindering students' learning and progress in that subject.

CLIL and student motivation

Motivation is perhaps one of the most important factors in FL learning as it has been said to have an effect on student achievement and attainment levels (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). David Marsh (2000) has postulated that CLIL can "boost a youngster's motivation and hunger towards learning languages" (p.3) due to the naturalistic situation that it provides for linguistic development. Indeed, he suggests that "CLIL can nurture a youngster's feel good attitude" (Marsh, 2000, p.7) as students relish in their success at learning both subject matter and a language in combination. Empirical studies which have been conducted in the area of CLIL and motivation seem to agree with Marsh's theory. In the Basque country, Spain, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2009) investigated the effects of CLIL on students' attitudes towards English as a FL, and also their attitudes towards Basque and Spanish (the two official languages of the region). Their sample consisted of 287 students across two age groups (14-15 year olds and 15-16 year olds) and across four Basque schools. The population was divided into a CLIL group (students enrolled in this) and a group of students who learnt English as a foreign Language (EFL), whose exposure to English took place in the "traditional foreign language classroom" (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009, p. 8). The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire about their attitudes towards each of the languages that they used at school (Basque, Spanish and English). The questionnaire was based on a seven-point semantic differential method, in which students were presented with antonyms (e.g. necessary-unnecessary), and they had to indicate a number between these two antonyms which best reflected their opinion of the subject. It was concluded that the CLIL group scored higher with each given adjective, thus

suggesting that attitudes towards languages were more positive in general in the CLIL group. The authors stated that for three of the adjectives (necessary, useful and important), the CLIL group rated them at or over 6, out of a seven point scale, and this points to the fact that this CLIL group placed much importance on English as a FL. Lasagabaster & Sierra's (2009) results concur with other studies that have been conducted in this sphere. From her study in Finland, Seikkula-Leino (2007) concluded that all in all "pupils in CLIL were somewhat more motivated to study and to use a foreign language than pupils learning in Finnish" (p.338). In addition to this, Tessa Mearns (2011), when discussing her results, stated that "there appeared to be some indication that pupils' enjoyment of German lessons during the CLIL project increased" (p.184).

However, it has been suggested that "the more positive the students' attitudes, the higher their L2 achievement" (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009, p.6) and we might suggest that this is due to a rise in a student's confidence due to higher attainment levels. Yet this does beg the question of what the effect of CLIL will be on lower-achieving learners. For, as Smit (2008) says, the difficulty of learning both content and language simultaneously could dishearten lower-attaining learners, who "might feel overburdened by having to master the educational tasks in a foreign language" (p.296) Indeed, Seikkula-Leino (2007) reported that the CLIL pupils felt much weaker in terms of their understanding, reading, writing, and speaking skills in the foreign language than the non-CLIL group. This is supported by Mearns (2011) who noticed that CLIL students seemed to have a lack of confidence in their abilities and progress, despite their evident improvement in attainment. This therefore suggests that there may be negative consequences of CLIL approaches on student motivation and confidence. Both the studies mentioned above admit comprising of students of higher achievement and motivation to start with, and this, coupled with Smit's (2008) suggestion, might lead us to tentatively assume that lower-attaining students who are already less motivated to learn languages, may feel even more disheartened and low in confidence than these students.

Having undertaken a detailed examination of the available literature regarding CLIL, it is clear that there are still some unanswered questions and, at times, incongruities between different researchers. My own interest lies with the effect CLIL could have on lower-achieving students, in relation to both their attitudes and motivation and their written attainment. With this in mind, I constructed the following research questions:

RQ 1: What is the impact of CLIL on students' attitudes towards Spanish and Spanish lessons?

RQ 2: What is the impact of CLIL on students' engagement during lessons?

RQ 3: What is the impact of CLIL on students' written attainment?

Methodology

This study can be described as action research as I have identified a problem in my teaching, and have designed a “small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world” (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.186), in order to improve my own understanding of this problem and to improve my own teaching practice. McNiff (2002) stated that “action research is always to do with learning (p.15), and this study was no exception; it formed part of a longer quest to make Spanish accessible and enjoyable for these students, whilst at the same time maintaining an appropriate amount of scholarship to reach the required amount of progress from students. In order to inform my results, I used various different methods of data collection (see Table 1). In accordance with the British Educational Research Association (2011), the utmost respect was shown to all those participating in the study: all questionnaires were anonymous, students participating in the interviews were told that none of the personal information would be made public, their permission was sought before any interview was recorded, and all aspects of the intervention took place within the students’ lesson time for Spanish.

Research Question	Methods of Data Collection
What is the impact of CLIL on students' attitudes towards Spanish and Spanish lessons?	Questionnaire before and after the CLIL intervention Interviews with students after the CLIL intervention
What is the impact of CLIL on students' engagement during lessons?	Observation notes by class teacher My lesson evaluations Class participation and behaviour (number or raffle tickets given out/ stickers in homework diaries)
What is the impact of CLIL on students' written attainment?	Written work done by students both before and after the CLIL intervention Questions about students' attitudes towards writing in the questionnaires.

Table 1: Methods of data collection used to investigate each Research question

Pre-intervention questionnaire

Before starting the CLIL Scheme of Work, I designed a pre-intervention questionnaire (Appendix 1), in order to gauge students' opinions towards Spanish and Spanish lessons. This would then be used as a point of comparison for a later questionnaire, which would be given to the students upon completion of the CLIL lessons. The students were invited to answer 12 questions related to their feelings towards Spanish including how useful they think it is to learn Spanish, whether they have enjoyed their Spanish lessons this academic year, and how much effort they make in Spanish. As it has been suggested that it is best to start off with more straightforward questions in a questionnaire (Denscombe, 2010), so as not to deter students from continuing with their answers, my questionnaire started with the simple question of whether the student was going to study Spanish in the next academic year. From then on, I used a Likert scale to construct most of my questions, as I deduced that this was the most appropriate and accessible form of questioning for a group of students with low literacy levels, as it does not discriminate on the basis of how articulate respondents are (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). However, as Cohen et al. suggest, such questions do not allow respondents to express themselves in their own terms and thus I added two open questions, asking students to explain their answers to a previous question. In this way I hoped to strike a balance between accessible and easily quantifiable questions, but also allow the respondents to add personal explanations which did not adhere to pre-set categories or options. The questionnaire was anonymous, however each student picked a letter out of a hat, and this was the letter they were to put at the top of this questionnaire, and at the top of the post-CLIL questionnaire. This would allow for a comparison of their attitudes towards languages before and after the intervention.

Intervention

For this project, I collaborated with the Geography department. After some discussion with the Head of Geography, I discovered that year 9 were soon to begin the topic of Latin America, with a focus on Brazil. They were to learn basic information about Latin America such as locational knowledge, and were to discuss why Latin America had become such a tourist 'hotspot' with a particular focus on Brazil and the potential effects of the upcoming Olympic Games. My year 9 Spanish class had just studied 'My school' with an emphasis on descriptive adjectives, and describing what there was in their school. Before this they had studied 'My town/city' and I felt that

both topics were excellent pre-cursors to the topic on Latin America as students would be able to revise and build on the language learnt for these topics when describing different countries in Latin America.

The Head of Geography gave her support for me to undertake this project in conjunction with the year 9 geography scheme of work. However, she stated that she would prefer for me to study a different country to Brazil with the class, so that they would still learn new content in their Geography lessons. Therefore I chose to base my medium term plan (Appendix 2) around the study of Peru, making sure that we covered the same concepts (tourism and its effects) as would be covered in the year 9 geography lessons on Brazil. In accordance with Coyle et al.'s (2010) 4C's framework, each of my six CLIL lessons had Spanish language learning objectives and Geography learning objectives, and allowed for free thinking and development of cultural understanding. In the sixth lesson, students completed a piece of written work which brought together all their learning on Latin America and Peru. They had to imagine that the Government was funding a cultural trip to a country in Latin America for Year 9 Students of Spanish and they had to write a paragraph to their Headmaster (who had the choice of which country the students would go to) advocating Peru as their destination. Finally, in the seventh lesson, students were asked to complete a questionnaire, and six interviews were conducted.

Observation notes and raffle tickets

In order to answer my second RQ, I drew on the observation notes that class teachers made regarding student engagement and focus during lessons. I had liaised with the class teachers in question prior to the lessons, in order to ask them to focus on the former when writing their notes.

In addition to the observation notes, I considered the extent of class participation and the number of raffle tickets given out at the end of the lesson as an indication of how engaged students were during the lessons. I had introduced this raffle ticket system in an attempt to boost confidence and encourage participation. At the start of every lesson, I drew a smiley face and an unhappy face on the board, and every time a student participated voluntarily, they were given one point in the smiley face column. Any incidents of poor behaviour resulted in a point under the unhappy face. For every 5 points that students received for participation, a raffle ticket was given out. There would then be a raffle ticket draw at the end of each half term. I chose to use this system as a research method as, by tentatively assuming that increased interest in the lesson would result in increased student

participation, I felt that this was a reliable way of measuring the effect of the CLIL sequence on student engagement during lessons.

Post-intervention questionnaire and interviews

After the CLIL sequence, students were asked to complete another questionnaire anonymously (Appendix 3), and were asked to put the same letter on the top as they had put on the previous questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to see the effects that the CLIL intervention had had on students' attitudes towards Spanish and Spanish lessons. Students were asked to rank the topics they had studied in Spanish since September from 1 (enjoyed the most) to 8 (enjoyed the least), and were asked other questions such as whether they had enjoyed the lessons on Latin America and how much language and knowledge they felt they had learnt. Just like the pre-intervention questionnaire, this version started with the simple question of whether they were going to study Spanish for GCSE, and then contained a mixture of open and closed questions. Having studied the answers from the pre-intervention questionnaire, in which a Likert scale was used for the most part, I noticed that a few students took to selecting the mid-point of the Likert scale, when the scale had offered an odd number of answers. In addition to this, for question 8, two students had selected the "other" category and had written a different adjective. With this in mind, I decided to use a semantic differential scale in the post-intervention questionnaire rather than a Likert scale, as I reasoned that in this way students could express themselves more accurately. I therefore asked the questions, put an adjective at one end, its opposite at the other, and I put an even number of options (numerical) for students to choose between. I used an even number of options in order to avoid the same situation of students choosing the mid-point, as had happened in the pre-intervention questionnaire. In other words, having a 6-point scale would mean that students had to make a decision about the question asked.

As what I was investigating required an insight into students' feelings and opinions (Denscombe, 2010), I deduced that it would be appropriate to conduct interviews after the intervention, as well as give out questionnaires. The interviews took place during lesson time, and were one-to-one interviews. I chose one-to-one interviews over group interviews as I wanted them to reflect the true opinions of the interviewee, and I did not want the interviewee to be affected in any way by the opinions or presence of other people. Due to time constraints, I could only interview six students out of the 13 there were in the class, and in order to get a "cross-section of opinion" (Denscombe,

2010, p.181) across the group, I decided to interview two students whom I considered to be the most motivated of the class, two students whom I considered the least motivated, and two who were quite motivated. The interviews that were conducted were structured ones, as the questions (Appendix 4) were written in advance, and interviewees were asked the questions in the same order (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). There was, however, some room for leeway, and there were cases when I asked follow-up questions to interviewees for clarification. Finally, all interviews except one were recorded (voice only), permission was sought before doing this, and in the case of the one interview that wasn't recorded, this was because the student in question did not grant this permission.

Student work

To answer RQ3, I looked at the written work produced by the students at the end of the CLIL sequence and compared this to work that they had completed on their school just before the intervention. In this way I would be able to see if students could use the new vocabulary and linguistic structures that had been learnt over the course of the sequence. Both pieces of work were levelled according to the NC level descriptors (DfE, 2011). For both pieces of work, the tasks were similar in that students had the same amount of time to complete them (20 minutes) and were given a checklist of possible things to include, as well as possible sentence starters.

It is important to note, however, that whilst written work is a very useful way of assessing student progress in the skill of writing, in that it provides quantifiable and measurable data, one must approach it with caution. This is because any improvements in attainment could be the result of natural linguistic progression, as opposed to just the CLIL approach.

Findings

RQ1: What is the impact of CLIL on students' attitudes towards Spanish and Spanish lessons?

The data used to answer this RQ were gathered from the pre and post intervention questionnaires that I gave out as well as the six interviews that were conducted with students. A summary of students' responses to the closed questions of both questionnaires can be seen in Appendix 5, and a summary of the interview responses given can be seen in Appendix 6.

11 students answered the preliminary questionnaire, and of these students, 7 were going to take Spanish for GCSE (NVQ). One might think that this is quite a high proportion of pupils continuing with Spanish, considering that they are a low-attaining and demotivated set, but it is worth mentioning here that at this particular school, it is compulsory for all students to take a language to GCSE, unless they have a good reason not to (i.e. they have to undertake extra literacy lessons). When asked how much they had enjoyed Spanish this year, 5 out of 11 students thought Spanish was “boring” or “really boring”, 3/11 thought it was ‘Ok’, and 3/11 thought it was interesting. In response to the question of what they thought of Spanish in comparison to their other subjects, 5 out of 11 students stated that it was ‘OK’, 5/11 students said that it was either ‘not very good’ or ‘rubbish’, and only one student said that they found it ‘interesting’. Of the 11 students who took part in the questionnaire, 7 stated that ‘games’ were the best part of Spanish lessons. However, despite the fact that 5 out of 11 students admitted to finding Spanish boring or really boring, most students recognised the usefulness of the subject: 9 out of 11 students said that Spanish was either ‘really useful’ or ‘quite useful’, and only 2 students said that it was ‘not very useful’. Nobody said that Spanish was a ‘waste of time’.

Let us now compare these results with those obtained from the post-intervention questionnaire, in which only 8 students participated. When asked how much they had enjoyed the lessons on Latin America and Peru, and were asked to choose a number between 1 and 6 (1 meaning that they enjoyed the lessons very much), 1 student chose ‘1’, 1 student chose ‘2’, 2 students chose “3”, 1 student chose “4”, 1 student chose “5” and 2 students chose “6”. When asked their reasons for their choices, the students who had put “4”, “5” or “6” gave reasons such as “it was very boring”, “it was quite hard”, and “it was confusing”. However, it must be mentioned here that some students’ numerical responses to this question seemed to be incompatible with their written reason. For example, one student put a “3” for this question, however for his reason said: “because it is really fun learning about a different country or countries”. Upon reading this comment, one might tentatively have assumed that his numerical response would have been higher. Indeed, when ranking the subjects that we had done in Spanish this year, this particular student put the topic as Latin America as number 2 (with 1 being the one they enjoyed it the most), after sports. Similarly, another student who put a “3” as his numerical response, justified this by saying that “it was kinda difficult”; a response which one might assume would merit a lower numerical response.

Despite whether they enjoyed the CLIL approach or not, all students recognised that learning had taken place. When asked how much vocabulary they felt they had learnt, 5 out of 8 students opted for either “1” or “2”, and nobody opted for “4” or “5”. Students were less convinced as to how much knowledge of Latin America they had acquired and 2 students opted for each of the following: “2”, “3”, “4” and “5”.

Bearing in mind what was written in the questionnaires, I found what some students said in the interviews rather contradictory. Six students were chosen to be interviewed, all whom I considered to have different attitudes towards learning Spanish. Despite this, all students gave quite positive responses to the question of whether they had enjoyed the topic on Latin America, with the least positive response being from a student who said it was enjoyable “er...sometimes”. Having said that, some students said that they had enjoyed the lessons on Peru, however when pressed for a reason, were unable to say why. This incongruity between the questionnaires and the interviews could be due to several factors, one of them being the students not wanting to admit that they had not enjoyed the lessons that I had delivered. In addition to this, one must bear in mind the low literacy levels of the students and how this might affect their reaction to the questionnaires (to be discussed in the next section).

When asked whether they had found the content of the lessons interesting, 4 out of the 6 students gave positive answers, with one student saying that she found it really interesting as she “hadn’t done this [topic] before in Spanish”. In addition to this, one student said that he found the lessons interesting “cos [they] got to find out what was in Peru,” and one student acknowledged that he had learnt “more exotic stuff”. These comments support the idea that CLIL can act as a novelty factor, and can interest students by providing them with lesson content that they may not have seen in their regular language lessons. Indeed, one student, when asked whether he had enjoyed this topic more, less than or the same as others, said he had enjoyed it more as it wasn’t just learning words (i.e. sports) “where we didn’t get to learn where they came from.” This thus suggests that students enjoyed the CLIL approach as it gave them a context for the vocabulary that they had learnt.

When asked whether the CLIL approach had made them more motivated to learn Spanish, four students said that it had. Two students out of these four couldn’t say why this was, however one student said it was because the lessons had given him more vocabulary to use, and another student said that she was going on holiday to Spain next year and that “it’s nice to know some Spanish”.

One student admitted that the CLIL approach hadn't made him more motivated to learn Spanish, but that this was because he didn't like Spanish as being an EAL student, he had to "translate into a different language already". This tentatively suggests that those students who find languages difficult, will naturally be less motivated to learn them.

Finally, it should be noted that in the interviews, those students who I deemed the most motivated, gave the most positive responses about the CLIL approach. Similarly, in the questionnaires, of the students who expressed that they found Spanish lessons "interesting" in the pre-intervention questionnaire, two of them gave the most positive feedback on the lessons on Latin America. The third student did not participate in the second questionnaire.

RQ2: What is the impact of CLIL on students' engagement during lessons?

For this RQ, I considered the observation notes written by the class teachers, my own observations, and the number of raffle tickets I gave out at the end of each lesson.

LESSON AND DATE	NUMBER OF RAFFLE TICKETS GIVEN OUT
1 – 10/3/15	5
2 – 11/3/15	3
3 – 12/ 3/15	3
4 – 13/3/15	4
5 – 17/3/15	3
6 – 18/3/15	2
Total	20

Table 2: Number of raffle tickets given out during each lesson of the intervention

The table above outlines the number of raffle tickets that were given out over the course of the CLIL lessons: 20 tickets were given out in total, which averages at 3.33 raffle tickets per lesson. From my records, from 25th February to 25th March 2015, 50 raffle tickets were given out in total, which averages as 3.125 raffle tickets per lesson. Although slight, this small difference could be attributed to increased student participation during the intervention lessons, which in turn could indicate a greater level of student engagement during those lessons. This suggestion is in-keeping

with my own observations of the class, particularly throughout the first four lessons of the CLIL intervention. I noticed an undoubtable interest in the content of the lessons from students, and an increased willingness to participate. The class teachers as well commented on how many students had their hands up, and how “the CLIL resources [were] working well” with the group. Indeed, in the fourth CLIL lesson, the class teacher commented that the students were “responding very positively to [me]” and that I was “evidently beginning to build a positive relationship with them”. This was the most positive feedback I had had with regard to this class, with whom I had found it difficult to build a good relationship. Although one could argue that I had reached this stage with them due to natural progression and perseverance, one could also suggest that the CLIL resources had captured their interest and also had had an influence on their behaviour. This would in turn suggest that the CLIL approach had had a positive effect on the students’ engagement in lessons.

However, whilst the CLIL approach seemed to have a positive effect on students’ engagement during the first week, in the final two CLIL lessons there were more incidents of poor behaviour. Indeed in the fifth lesson I noted a distinct lack of focus on the part of the students, and this was confirmed by the class teacher who noted that although the lesson was interesting, “the class [were] not responding.” This thus appears to negate afore-mentioned positive effects of the CLIL approach on student engagement, however one must remember that low-level disruption could be the result of a number of factors, including the context of the lesson students had been to before and tiredness. In the sixth and final lesson of the intervention, behaviour seemed more settled and students were all on task as they completed their written piece.

RQ3: What is the impact of CLIL on students’ written attainment?

In order to answer this RQ, I drew on students’ written work, before and after the CLIL approach, as well as students’ answers to questions in both the questionnaires and interviews. Students produced two pieces of written work, one before the CLIL intervention on the topic of school, and one after the intervention, on the topic of Peru. I marked these according to the NC level descriptors, and the results for both pieces of work, for each student, can be seen in the table below:

Student	Level given for piece of work pre-CLIL – Mi instituto	Level given for piece of work post-CLIL – Perú
1	3c	3a
2	3c	2b
3	2a	4c
4	[absent]	3a
5	1a	3c
6	3b	[absent]
7	3b	4c
8	3a	4b
9	3c	4c
10	2c	[absent]
11	2a	3b
12	3c	[absent]

Table 3: National Curriculum levels given for student written work pre and post CLIL intervention

The table clearly shows that all students, except student 2, scored higher in the writing post-CLIL than in the pre-CLIL writing task. In some cases, students’ writing improved by more than one NC level and in the case of student 2, it must be noted that she was absent for 4 out of the 6 CLIL lessons. This could suggest that learning vocabulary and grammar within a context helps students to remember them and apply such structures to other contexts. However, one must also treat such results with caution, for improvement in written attainment levels could be a result of natural linguistic progression, and one cannot be certain whether they have reached a higher level than what they would have reached had they not undertaken the CLIL intervention.

In the interviews that I conducted, the students were asked what they thought about the piece of writing they did post-intervention and how it compared with the task they did on school. Out of the 6 pupils, 3 admitted that they found the piece of writing difficult and therefore their responses were not completely positive, 3 students said they enjoyed the piece of writing on Latin America more than the one on school, 2 students said they enjoyed the pieces of writing the same amount, and one student said he preferred the piece of writing on school. Of the students who said they preferred the piece of writing on Latin America, one of them said that this was because she “knew more...to

write something more like... detailed.” The results gleaned from the interviews seem to support those from the post-intervention questionnaire, in which when asked how confident they felt about writing the piece on Peru 3 students put “2”, 2 students put “3”, 1 student put “4”, and 2 students put “6”.

Discussion

The above findings show that the CLIL intervention had some very positive effects, however, they have also brought many questions to the fore. The aim of this study was to investigate the effects of CLIL on low-attaining learners’ attitudes towards Spanish and their written attainment. From observation notes, my own reflections, and the number of raffle tickets that were given out during the CLIL lessons, there was evidence of student enjoyment and interest in the CLIL lessons. There was also evidence to suggest that the approach had made some students more motivated to learn Spanish. However, it is important to note that those students who I deemed more motivated and interested in Spanish before the intervention, responded the most positively to the lessons, as did those students who in the pre-intervention questionnaire said that they found Spanish interesting in general. This seems in-keeping with studies from Lasagabaster and Sierra (2009) and Seikkula-Leino (2007), who found that attitudes towards languages were more positive in a CLIL group than in a non-CLIL group, however that these students had chosen to participate in the CLIL programme, and thus were likely to be more motivated to learn languages in the first instance. On the other hand, I found that those students who said that they didn’t enjoy the CLIL approach or the piece of writing that they did post-intervention, named difficulty as their main reason. This is extremely significant as it echoes Smit’s (2008) comments about the possibility of a CLIL approach having negative effects on lower-attaining learners. Indeed, in the questionnaire responses, two students admitted to being “not very confident” about writing the letter to the Headmaster, and no student said that they felt “very confident” with this writing. This concurs with studies by Seikkula-Leino (2007) and Mearns (2011) who noticed that CLIL students felt less confident of their linguistic abilities than non-CLIL students. Again, this could be due to the complexity of the CLIL approach, and the difficult nature of students learning both concepts and language in combination. Therefore, the results from this study suggest that CLIL had a positive effect on the higher-attaining and more motivated students of the class, however the effects were less positive on the lower-attaining students, who found the approach challenging. Where such students did express

enjoyment of the intervention, they said it was “cos we did some games”, and therefore one cannot be sure whether it was the actual content of the lessons that interested them.

In terms of written attainment, there was evidence that the majority of students improved linguistically throughout the period of the CLIL lessons, and this was reflected in the increase in National Curriculum levels in students’ work. The fact that the majority of students achieved a higher level in the second piece of writing than in the first, including the lower-achieving members of the group, contradicts what has been found in the literature. Indeed, Mearns (2011) found that whilst the achievement levels of the higher-attaining students rose, those of the lower-attaining students did not. However, it is important to consider possible reasons for this difference in findings between myself and other researchers. Throughout my CLIL lessons, I had taught students more complex phrases such as “me gustaría” (I would like) and “se puede + infinitive” (One can...) which were in-keeping with the content, however which would not necessarily have been taught to the students had they continued with their usual scheme of work. The inclusion of these structures will have contributed to a higher achievement level. In addition, it is important to note that for both pieces of writing, students were allowed to use their resources, and were given possible sentence starters to help them. Therefore one could argue that the writing pieces did not really assess student learning, but the students’ ability to manipulate sentences with words taken from their books and other resources. Having said this, looking at the writing assessments, I could tell that students understood what it was that they were writing, and were making well-judged decisions about how to structure their sentences.

The contradictions seen when comparing the responses to the post-intervention questionnaire and the interviews are worthy of mention, as are the discrepancies between numerical marks and comments given in the post-intervention questionnaire. It is possible that these contradictions are due to students not wanting to reveal their true feelings in an interview with the same teacher who delivered the lessons that they have to speak about. However, we must also consider the low literacy levels of these students. It could be suggested that these students might find it easier to express themselves verbally than in writing, as in this way they wouldn’t have the literacy barrier to overcome. Indeed, not only did I notice spelling mistakes in the questionnaires, but there were also examples of when students had not followed the instructions given, and had not completed the questions correctly. For example, in the second question for the post-intervention questionnaire, several students did not compare and rank the topics from 1 to 8, but they put a number between 1

and 8 according to how much they enjoyed them. This begs the question of whether students understood what they had to do in the questionnaires, and with this in mind, one could tentatively suggest that the answers given in the interviews were perhaps more accurate than those given in the questionnaires, as students could communicate what they wanted to say without the constraints of having to spell words correctly. Additionally, it is possible that the questions asked face to face were more accessible to them, as if they were not able to assimilate or understand a particular word, they were more likely to be able to interpret meaning from facial expressions or re-phrasing from the interviewer. If I were to do this study again with this group, I would perhaps interview all the students, but ask a different member of staff to conduct the interviews so as not to face the problem of students feeling they had to give dishonest answers. In addition to this, I would read through the questionnaires with the students before they answered them, in order to ensure clarity of instructions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is very difficult to draw concrete conclusions from this action research project due to it taking place over a short period of time, and due to it being conducted on such a small sample of students. However, the results suggest that the CLIL approach had positive effects on the attitudes of higher-attaining and more motivated students towards Spanish and Spanish lessons. For the lower-attaining students on the other hand, their attitudes remained the same or only changed slightly, and in most cases, this was due to them finding it difficult to learn language and content simultaneously. My results showed that in almost all cases, written attainment was higher after the CLIL approach than it had been before, however despite this, students still seemed under-confident of their abilities in the skill of writing.

This project has been extremely important to my development as a teacher and has given me much insight into how lower-attaining students view languages. The fact that some students suggested that they had found the CLIL approach interesting yet at the same time said it had been difficult has wide-reaching consequences for my own future practice. However, this insight is also important in a more global sense. Indeed, if we as teachers wish to raise the motivation of lower-attaining learners, and to encourage them in their language learning, the results of this study might suggest that the challenging nature of a CLIL approach may not be the most effective way of doing this, as it might bring about the feeling of being ‘overburdened’ that Smit (2008) alludes to.

It is worth considering the fact that although all students acknowledged that learning had taken place in terms of new Spanish language and vocabulary, the results of the post-intervention questionnaire suggest that students were unconvinced as to how much geographical knowledge they had gained. This could be due to the fact that the students did not have a high enough level of the language to successfully assimilate the geographical concepts. However, it could also be due to the nature of the secondary curriculum, and the tendency for subjects to be compartmentalised. Students become so used to Spanish lessons being only about learning Spanish and Geography lessons only about learning Geography that it is difficult for them to envisage learning the content of one of these subjects within the lesson time of the other. Thus, one might tentatively suggest that if a CLIL approach became the norm for students of MFL, students would learn to value the learning of both language and content, and would understand the impact the approach might have on their attainment.

To this end, I would recommend that a CLIL approach be investigated with younger learners, perhaps from primary school age, in order to get students used to the approach and so that they might understand from a younger age the educational benefits it provides. In terms of lower-attaining learners already in secondary school, I would not suggest that this approach be avoided completely, however I would recommend that we be more selective over the content we choose to teach these learners. For, in order to avoid demotivating or overburdening students, we need to make sure that all content be accessible to them.

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APPENDIX 1: Pre-intervention Questionnaire

I'd really like to know what you think of Spanish and Spanish lessons. Please answer the questions as honestly as you can – all answers are anonymous!

1. Are you taking Spanish next year? (Please circle)

Yes No

2. What have you thought of Spanish lessons this year? (Please select a letter from a to e)

(a) really interesting (b) interesting (c) OK (d) boring (e) really boring

3. Please explain your answer to number 2.

4. What do you think of Spanish in comparison to your other subjects? (Please select a letter from a to e)

(a) great (b) good (c) OK (d) not very good (e) rubbish

5. How useful is it to learn Spanish? (Please select a letter from a to d)

(a) really useful (b) quite useful (c) not very useful (d) a waste of time

6. Please explain your answer to number 5.

7. How much effort do you make in Spanish lessons? (Please select a letter from a to e)

(a) I participate regularly (b) I sometimes participate (c) I participate when I feel like it/when I'm interested in the topic (d) I rarely participate (e) I never participate

8. How do you feel before coming to Spanish lessons? (Please select a letter from a to f)

(a) happy (b) don't care (c) scared (d) sad (e) angry (f) other (please say what)

9. What is the best thing about Spanish lessons? (Please select a letter from a to f)

- (a) writing activities (b) reading activities (c) speaking activities (d) listening activities
(e) games (f) other (please say what)

10. What is the worst thing about Spanish lessons? (Please select a letter from a to e)

- (a) writing activities (b) reading activities (c) speaking activities (d) listening activities (e) games
(f) other (please say what)

11. How confident do you feel about writing in Spanish? (Please select a letter from a to e)

- (a) very confident (b) quite confident (c) OK (d) not very confident (e) not confident at all

12. How do you feel about learning grammar in Spanish? (Please select a letter from a to e)

- (a) great (b) quite good (c) OK (d) not very good (e) rubbish

APPENDIX 2: Medium-term plan

CLIL lesson (Date and title)	Learning objectives	Main content/vocabulary covered
<p>Tues 10th March</p> <p>CLIL 1 – Introduction to Latin America.</p>	<p>Geography: (All) to learn the global location of countries in Latin America</p> <p>(Most)to know how many people live in these countries</p> <p>(Some) to know what language they speak in different countries in Latin America</p> <p>Spanish: (All) To be able to say where countries are in Latin America</p> <p>(most) to be able to say how many people live in different countries in Latin America</p> <p>(Some) to be able to use the present tense to say what language is spoken in each country</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Está en... • el norte/ el sur/ el este/ el oeste/ el noreste/ el noroeste/ el sureste/ el suroeste • Hay... • Once millones/ treinta millones/ cuarenta millones/ cincuenta millones/ ciento veinte millones/ doscientos millones...de personas • Hablan español/ portugués
<p>Wed 11th March</p> <p>CLIL 2 - ¿Qué hay en Latinoamérica?</p>	<p>Geography: (All) To gain knowledge of the different things to see in Latin America</p> <p>(most) to understand the reasons why people go to Latin America</p> <p>Spanish: (All) to be able to say what there is in different countries in Latin America</p> <p>(most) to be able to say what certain countries in Latin America do not have</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hay/ no hay... • sitios arqueológicos/ playas/ bosques tropicales/ plantas/ animales/ campo/ cultura/ ciudades grandes/ pueblos/ turismo • me gustaría visitar...porque...

<p>Thurs 12th March</p> <p>CLIL 3 – Peru : ¿Cómo es?</p>	<p>Geography:(All) to understand population distribution in Peru</p> <p>(most) to understand population distribution in Peru and to be able to suggest reasons for it.</p> <p>Spanish:(All) to be able to describe different parts of Peru using adjectives.</p> <p>(most) to understand a text saying where different people live, and to understand why this is the case</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • es... • bonito/ feo/ grande/ pequeño/ moderno/ antiguo • Hay turismo/ hay cultura
<p>Friday 13th March</p> <p>CLIL 4: Comparando países en Latinoamérica</p>	<p>Geography: (All) to be able to compare Peru to other countries in Latin America</p> <p>(Some) to be able to compare Peru to other countries in Latin America and the UK</p> <p>Spanish: (All) to be able to make comparisons between 2 countries in Spanish using “más...que/ menos...que”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • más....que/ menos...que • bonito/ grande/ pequeño/ rico/ pobre/ desarrollado/ feo/ moderno/ antiguo • Hay más/menos turismo
<p>Tues 17th March</p> <p>CLIL 5 – ¿Qué se puede hacer en Peru?</p>	<p>Geography:(All) to understand why Peru is such a tourist attraction</p> <p>Spanish: (All) To be able to say what one can do in Peru</p> <p>(Some) to be able to create negative phrases saying what one cannot do in Peru</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Se puede + infinitive structure • Visitar Machu Picchu/ ver los animales/ ir al bosque tropical/ ir al desierto/ ir a la playa/ visitar museos/ admirar el lago Titicaca/ caminar por el Cañon del Colca

<p>Wed 18th March</p> <p>CLIL 6 - Perú</p>	<p>All of the above.</p> <p>Students to write a paragraph to the headmaster of their school. They have to imagine that the Government is funding a cultural trip to Latin America for students of Year 9 Spanish, and that their headmaster has the job of deciding where they will go. Students want to go to Peru, and they have to write a paragraph describing what Peru is like, what there is there, what there is to do there, and why they would like to go there.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the vocabulary seen in the past 5 lessons
<p>Thurs 19th March</p> <p>CLIL 7</p>	<p>Post-intervention questionnaire and interviews</p>	

APPENDIX 3: Post-intervention questionnaire

I would really like to know what you thought of the Latin America topic that we have been studying for the past 6 lessons. Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can – all answers are anonymous!

1. Are you taking Spanish next year (GCSE or NVQ)?

a) Yes b) no

2. Below is a list of all the topics you have studied in Spanish since September. Please rank the topics in terms of how much you enjoyed studying them. Put 1 for the topic you enjoyed the **most**, and 8 for the topic you enjoyed the **least**

- Introducing yourself
- Family and friends
- Personal description (hair and eyes) and describing others
- Sports
- What you do in your free time
- My town/ city
- School
- Latin America (Peru)

3. Please explain your answer to number 2. Why did you rank the topics as you did?

4. How much have you enjoyed the lessons on Latin America and Peru?

Very much 1 2 3 4 5 6 **not at all** (please circle the number that most describes how you feel: 1 = you enjoyed it very much)

5. Please explain your answer to number 4.

6. How much effort did you make during the lessons on Latin America?

A lot of effort 1 2 3 4 5 6 **No effort at all** (please circle the number that most describes how you feel: 1 = you made a lot of effort)

7. Please explain your answer to number 6.

8. How much knowledge (facts and cultural knowledge) do you think you've learned about Peru and Latin America over the course of these six lessons?

Lots 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Not much at all** (please circle the number that most describes how you feel: 1 = you have learned lots of facts and cultural knowledge about Peru and Latin America)

9. How much new language (vocabulary and grammar) do you think you've learned during the past six lessons?

Lots 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Not much at all** (please circle the number that most describes how you feel: 1 = you have learned lots of vocabulary and grammar over the past six lessons)

10. How confident did you feel about writing the paragraph in Spanish to [name of headteacher] about why you would like to go to Peru?

Very confident 1 2 3 4 5 6 **Not very confident** (please circle the number that most describes how you feel: 1 = you felt very confident about writing the paragraph in Spanish to [name of headteacher])

11. Please explain your answer to question 10.

Thank you very much for your responses! ☺

APPENDIX 4: Interview questions

- 1) Are you doing Spanish next year?
- 2) Have you enjoyed the lessons we have done on Latin America/ Peru? Why/ why not?
- 3) Did you find the content of the lessons interesting? Why? Why not?
- 4) What do you think you've learned over the 6 lessons?
- 5) Have the lessons on Latin America made you more motivated to learn Spanish?
- 6) Did you enjoy this topic more than/ less than/ the same as other topics we have studied in Spanish? Why?
- 7) What, if anything, did you find difficult about the lessons?
- 8) What did you think of the piece of writing that you did for the Headteacher? Did you find it difficult? Did you enjoy doing it? How did it compare to the piece of writing you did on your school?

APPENDIX 5: A summary of questionnaire responses

Post-intervention questionnaire: 8 participants

Question	Option	frequency
Are you taking Spanish next year?	yes	4
	no	4
How much have you enjoyed the lessons on Latin America and Peru?	1 [very much]	1
	2	1
	3	2
	4	1
	5	1
	6 [not at all]	2
How much effort did you make during the lessons on Latin America?	1 [a lot of effort]	1
	2	2
	3	2
	4	3
	5	
	6 [no effort at all]	
How much knowledge (facts and cultural knowledge) do you think you've learned about Peru and Latin America over the course of these six lessons?	1 [lots]	
	2	2
	3	2
	4	2
	5	2
	6 [not much at all]	
How much new language (vocabulary and grammar) do you think you've learned during the past six lessons?	1 [lots]	3
	2	2
	3	1
	4	2
	5	
	6 [not much at all]	
How confident did you feel about writing the paragraph in Spanish to Mr X?	1 [very confident]	
	2	3
	3	2
	4	1
	5	
	6 [not very confident]	2

Pre-intervention questionnaire: 11 participants

Question	Options	frequency
Are you taking Spanish next year?	yes	7
	no	4
What have you thought of Spanish lessons this year?	really interesting	
	interesting	3
	OK	3
	boring	4
	really boring	1
What do you think of Spanish in comparison to your other subjects?	great	
	good	1
	OK	5
	not very good	3
	rubbish	2
How useful is it to learn Spanish?	really useful	1
	quite useful	8
	not very useful	2
	Waste of time	
How much effort do you make in Spanish lessons?	I participate regularly	4
	I sometimes participate	5
	I participate when I feel like it/ when I'm interested in the topic	1
	I rarely participate	
	I never participate	1
How do you feel before coming to Spanish?	happy	2
	don't care	7
	scared	
	sad	
	angry	
	other	2
What is the best things about Spanish lessons?	writing activities	2
	reading activities	1
	speaking activities	1
	listening activities	1
	games	7
	other	

Question	Options	frequency
What is the worst thing about Spanish lessons?	writing activities	2
	reading activities	3
	speaking activities	4
	listening activities	4
	games	
	other	1
How confident do you feel about writing in Spanish?	very confident	
	quite confident	3
	OK	6
	not very confident	2
	not confident at all	
How do you feel about learning grammar in Spanish?	great	
	quite good	1
	OK	9
	not very good	1
	rubbish	

APPENDIX 6: A summary of interview responses

Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5	Interviewee 6
Are you doing Spanish next year?	"yeah, NVQ"	No – doing extra literacy	No – doing German	Yes - NVQ	Yes - NVQ	Yes - NVQ
Have you enjoyed the lessons we have done on Latin America/ Peru? Why/ why not?	"Yeah – it's kinda fun learning about different countries"	"yeah" "cos we did some games". Enjoyed last man standing.	"er... sometimes" "sometimes it's hard to understand it and then sometimes it's easy to understand it" Hard to understand the concepts	"yeah" ... "I just find Spanish really interesting"	"Ok...ok" When asked why he said he didn't know why.	"yes, but I can't explain why"
Did you find the content of the lessons interesting? Why? Why not?	"yeah" ... "the way we were taught". Activities particularly enjoyed were BINGO and 'last man standing'.	"yeah" "cos we got to find out what was in Peru"	"yeah sometimes. If we have to do like loads of writing paragraphs then it's kinda boring."	"yeah" "I just liked the learning that we did - I think what we did was interesting... it wasn't boring" Finds some topics boring in Spanish (sports/ food and drink) as she thinks they are "quite easy".	"yeah" When asked why he said he didn't know why	"they were OK"
What do you think you've learned over the 6 lessons?	"um... I've learnt that Peru is less modern than England and... um... it's quite nice in Peru."	"um... how to say 'one can go to Peru'" "how to say what the things are in Peru"	"er... the... like... like em 'pretty' and different verbs and stuff"	"er... vocab" Thinks she was more knowledgeable about Latin	"er... just like more exotic stuff" "like 'forest'"	More vocabulary and knowledge about Latin America

Have the lessons on Latin America made you more motivated to learn Spanish?	“Quite a bit” of new vocab learnt. For example “feo” and “bonito”	“Yeah a little bit...cos I durmo really...I durmo”	In terms of knowledge of Peru, thinks she knows a bit more than before	America than she had before.	Thinks he knows “more maybe” about Peru.	“yes – they’ve given me more vocab to use”
Did you enjoy this topic more than/ less than/ the same as other topics we have studied in Spanish? Why?	“I enjoyed sports more” ... “cos I like sports a lot”	“more than” ... “cos it wasn’t about...um... like sports and stuff where we didn’t get to learn where they come from and where they were invented and stuff” . Liked the topic of sports but would have liked to have learnt where they came from.	“the same as” “because we do the same in this topic as we do in other topics”	“Erm...I think the others were quite... we’d done them before... I hadn’t done this before in Spanish so... I found it really interesting”	“nah” “Cos I don’t really want to learn Spanish... cos I have to translate into a different language already” Finds Spanish difficult	“the same” “cos it’s basically the same”
What, if anything, did you find difficult about the lessons?	“some” ... “the letter to Mr Munday – it was quite hard”	“um... some of the words were quite difficult” However the words weren’t more	“sometimes the writing the letters” is difficult	“Erm...erm... I found it fine”	“I durmo”	“I can’t think”

<p>What did you think of the piece of writing that you did for Mr Munday? Did you enjoy doing it? How did it compare to the piece of writing you did on your school?</p>	<p>“probably about the same” as the piece of work completed on school. “I enjoyed them the same amount”</p>	<p>difficult than words in other topics this interviewee had studied. “um it was ok it was just difficult and I didn't know what to put” “different words” used in the piece of writing on Peru to the piece of writing on school. Preferred the piece of writing on Peru “because it was more tricky and it helps us with our Spanish”</p>	<p>Found it difficult. Not sure how it compared to the school writing. Thinks she enjoyed the writing on Peru more than the one on school – not sure why.</p>	<p>Didn't find the writing difficult. “ I think the Latin American one went better cos I knew more... to write something more like detailed” Enjoyed doing the piece of writing on Latin America better than the one on school.</p>	<p>“don't see the point of it” Found it “sort of difficult” “it included the same stuff” as the writing on school. Didn't enjoy one writing task over the other – they were both the same to him.</p>	<p>Good, enjoyed it a little bit. The writing on Latin America was longer than the one on school. Enjoyed the writing on school more – not sure why.</p>
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