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The Impact of a CLIL Virtual Museum Visit on The Development of Students' Intercultural Awareness

Supervisor
Ch. Prof. Marcella Menegale

Assistant supervisor
Ch. Dr. Fabiana Fazzi

Graduand
Mariia Kuznetsova
881706

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Abstract

The main goal of the current research is to study the impact of a CLIL virtual museum visit at The Peggy Guggenheim Collection on the development of students' intercultural awareness. The novelty of this study is in the proposal of a learning module that bridges the gap between formal and non-formal language learning. Through the experimentation of this module with Russian upper-secondary school students, the study aims to tackle the hidden C in CLIL, that is, the cultural dimension. Specifically, data will be collected through a questionnaire to students to investigate how engaging with activities based on Russian arts has influenced their understanding of their own culture and positive attitudes towards otherness.

Keywords: CLIL, Cultural Studies, Language education, Museum learning, Foreign languages

Introduction

"Do you sense how all the parts of a good picture are involved in each other,
not just placed side by side? Art is a creation for the eye
and can only be hinted at with words."
(John Baldessari)

Year by year, museums are perceived more as places to nurture respect for cultural differences, where the intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between communities take place (Bodo, 2012, 181). The world becomes more globalised and tolerant to differences, whereas museums are defined as a perfect place for learning to accept the notion of "otherness". Museums have always been a place for meeting new people and encountering diverse cultures. However, in the spring of 2020, the world stopped. People were encouraged to stay at home, and cultural centres became abandoned for a while.

The Covid-19 pandemic has engulfed the world, yet it facilitated innovations in the educational sector. Learning institutions were forced to find a new way of providing an education, thus schools and universities resorted to online studies. So did museums, developing online learning programmes and focusing on genuine and effective use of its collections (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). The cooperation between learning institutions and museums started to be developed, which led to the phenomenon of virtual museum visits, allowing remote teaching through online platforms (Mazzola, Raphael & Estrada, 2020).

After a few years of the pandemic, museums welcome their visitors again. However, to prevent the spreading of the virus, many restrictions remain in force. For instance, the borders between many countries are still closed. The current situation allows us to implement the virtual museum experience in the learning curriculum of the school whose students do not have an opportunity to travel and participate in learning activities held by a museum outside of their

country. Driven by this idea, the author of this work suggested the idea of carrying out the activity in a form of an online lesson through the ZOOM platform for the students at School No.5 in Nizhniy Tagil, Russia.

The project obtained its form as a virtual museum visit, the modality of which was embedded into the CLIL methodology, which implies the acquisition of content and language within school subjects. In this case, the class of the English Language was chosen, as the C-Culture component of CLIL is often being studied in the framework of FL lessons (Coyle, 2021).

Museum objects have a hidden potential of boosting the (inter-)cultural awareness of the museum visitors by developing their ability to challenge one's prejudices (Bodo, 2012, 188). Consequently, the researcher pursued the aim to estimate the power of museum objects to influence the perception of the native culture of participants and stimulate their interest by improving the understanding of other cultures. The questions which this research attempted to answer were:

- What impact does participation in the CLIL online museum visit and the activities around museum objects have on the students' perception of the Russian art of the 20th century and understanding of their own culture?
- How can museum resources be used to promote the (inter-)cultural component in CLIL to develop students' positive attitudes towards otherness?

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 are dedicated to the literature review covering the intercultural dimension in foreign language education, methodology of CLIL and the educational potential of the museums. Chapters 4, and 5 provide a description of the research methodology and the analysis of the activity's result. Chapter 7 displays a discussion of the findings and draws conclusive remarks.

It is believed that the current research may contribute to clarifying the practice of virtual museums for language educational purposes and support students' intercultural awareness by stimulating motivation and curiosity. Being conducted in Russia, the CLIL virtual museum visit was a previously unknown activity for students, as the idea of content and language integrated learning is not included in the school curricula. Moreover, the students experienced a virtual museum visit for the first time, as not being aware of this modality of museum visits before. The intercultural aspect of an online museum visit is not easy to examine, though we received some encouraging results and positive assessment of the conducted activity from the teacher and learners' side, what opened new horizons for the Russian and international learning contexts.

CHAPTER 1. Intercultural dimension in FL education

There is a need for intercultural dialogue that arises in response to the process of globalization taking place all over the world. Nowadays, in order to be successful in the multi-cultural world, a learner needs to have advanced socio-cultural and intercultural competencies that are often being developed during FL classes. However, a student may face difficulties in acquiring these skills due to some drawbacks that the established system of FL education might have. established system of language learning that has certain drawbacks. The (inter-)cultural dimension, being a relatively important aspect of foreign language (hereafter, FL) education, may bring considerable improvements in this sphere. Even if the development of intercultural dimension in students is not defined as a learning objective, the world of the target language is implicitly present in learning contexts (texts, pictures, people, and their reactions) as well as in real-life environments, as a student can easily engage with cultural products of any given nation through media (Neuner, 2003, 35). Therefore, it is important to pay attention to studying the intercultural aspect of FL learning, perceiving it as the process of developing a tolerant attitude to a foreign culture.

Nevertheless, the textbooks might give a wrong impression of the target language's culture, which may lead to ill-judgements. Some representations of native speakers may create an impression of imposing a foreign culture, leaving no room for acknowledging the native-culture identity. Consequently, the modern FL educational agenda does not concentrate only on foreign culture, taking into consideration the native culture of a learner as well. The focus shifted to comparative cultural studies within FL education, in which native and target cultures are being compared, what became a key for raising students' cross-cultural awareness.

The chapter will present an overview of implementing (inter-)cultural approaches within FL education, starting from an outline of the Cultural Studies within language teaching (paragraph 1.1) and then briefly describing the notion of Intercultural Awareness within FL

education (paragraph 1.2). The chapter ends with the analysis of the implementation of Intercultural Awareness in FL education, exemplifying some obstacles that may prevent this process (paragraph 1.3).

1.1 Cultural Studies within language teaching

In the 21st century, societies both in Europe and in other parts of the world are undergoing economic, political, and social changes. For every community and individual, the question has arisen about how to maintain one's own cultural identity and adapt to the new cultural context in the multicultural world (Matveeva & Kozhbakova, 2019). To satisfy both sides of the issue, it is necessary to develop cultural competence, which is defined as "the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own" (DeAngelis, 2015). Therefore, there is a growing interest in the cultural aspect of FL education.

According to UNESCO, learning institutions have a unique opportunity of fostering an intercultural dialogue that facilitates creating a society feasible for sustainable development[1]. FL education introduces the peculiarities of foreign cultures and promotes the acceptance of differences, intending to develop an understanding of diverse perspectives. Whereas during FL lessons, the culture of the country of the studied language is introduced. Besides, through comparison, learning places highlight the specific features of students' native culture.

Being a communication tool used by people in their daily life, language is not limited to its semiotics. Every language contains information about the culture and history; moreover, it has a close relation to the habits and behaviours of the given nation (Rabiah, 2012). Language is inseparable from culture, as by learning and using a new *language,* an individual learns how

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[1] United Nations: Academic Impact. Inter-cultural dialogue. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/inter-cultural-dialogue

to communicate with a representative of another *culture* (Byram, 1989, 22). Hence, the language conveys the values and cultural meanings of any society, creating a cultural identity that can be explained and then comprehended with the help of language.

According to Byram, "Cultural Studies" is an umbrella term for multiple attitudes to teaching the foreign culture within language classes (Byram, 1988, 3). He claims that students can easily absorb cultural information both consciously and unconsciously, that is why it is an important component of language education. Consequently, language teaching should take into consideration the fact that "words in the foreign language refer to meanings in a particular culture creating a semantic relationship which the learner needs to comprehend" (ibid.).

This concept is not new. Speaking about the relevance of Cultural Studies within the framework of FL education it is impossible not to mention the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that was formulated in the 1930s. Being many times refuted, repeatedly confirmed, forgotten, again attracting the interest of researchers, it has become one of the most popular dilemmas of Linguistics (Buras & Krongauz, 2011). Language and thought relate in many significant ways and the abovementioned hypothesis questions whether language affects our way of thinking. This linguistic theory stands for the fact that the semantic structure of a language forms how a speaker perceives the world (Nordquist, 2019). One of the most precise interpretations of this hypothesis is given by Carroll: "The principle of linguistic relativity that states, at least at hypothesis, that the structure of a human being's language influences how he understands reality and behaves with respect to it" (Carroll, 1956 cited in Robins, 1976, 99).

The hypothesis was given two interpretations: the strong, deterministic and the weaker, relativistic. The strong form implies that language determines thought if how we speak establishes a hard limit on how and what we think (Comrie, n.d.). In other words, the language we speak constrains the way we view the real world. Whorf proposed: "We cut nature up,

organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way – an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language" (Whorf, 1956). The deterministic hypothesis has been discredited over time. The capability of people to learn and use different languages in practice contradicts the strong version of the theory, since a person may speak many languages, though it does not change the way they think.

According to the relativistic hypothesis, instead, while language influences, to some extent, the way people think and perceive the world, it does not fully define or restrict it (Wise, 2013). As it was said by Whorf, languages make their speakers slightly more predisposed to think in certain ways (Whorf, 1956, 159), though it does not mean that people cannot think in other ways. The most frequently used syntactic structures would establish the most readily available models of a verbal description of the world which a person experiences and then contextualizes (Robins, 1976, 105). It might be assumed that culture is expressed and described verbally, for instance, the paradigmatic examples of Eskimos who have over fifty words for snow or Russians with their dark blue and light blue shades. Whether these differentiations in nominations make much practical difference or not, these facts inform us about the cultural differences that are expressed in discourse, which must be introduced to students.

Based on previous arguments, it might be said that language and culture are strongly connected: habits, behavioural patterns and culture-specific world outlooks are expressed in language. This position is shared by Brown: "Language and culture interact so that world views among cultures differ, and that language used to express that world view may be relative and specific to that view" (Brown, 1980).

The abovementioned example is a clear illustration of the notion called "the central code" of the culture, which was introduced by Nostrand. Nostrand says that the central code involves

all the culture's "ground of meaning". It includes the system of common values, patterns of behaviour, and particular beliefs about human nature and society in general (Nostrand, 1989 in Kramsch, 1993, 177). Though, there is an open question about how learners can encounter new cultural realities during the educational process and acquire the notion of interculturality.

1.2 The intercultural awareness component within FL education

Teaching a FL in secondary and high school implies familiarizing students with the linguistic component of the new culture. One of the main goals of teaching a FL is the development of the student's ability to participate in intercultural communication (Turbina, 2018). Therefore, an important question of linguists and teachers is how to include a component of Cultural Studies in the process of teaching FLs.

Russian scientists Ippolitova and Turbina suggest developing *a cultural approach* within FL studies. By this term, they define a complex integrative pedagogical concept that functionally plays the role of the conditions and means of the educational process. The main task of this approach is to educate the individual through comprehending the culture of the people whose language is being studied (Ippolitova, 2010 cited in Turbina, 2018). On the other hand, European and American researchers (Byram, 1988; Kramsch, 1993; Modiano, 2005; Coyle, 2021) suggest bringing the cultural component of students' native culture into FL education. This approach is implemented for students to have a possibility to compare their own culture to the other one by bringing the possibility to reinterpret some of the behavioural patterns that are perceived to be natural and vernacular (Byram, 1988, 50).

The cultural approach represents a culture in all its completeness and diversity; creates conditions for enriching students with information about culture; helps individuals to find their place in their culture, form their own cultural identity and attitude towards other cultures

(Turbina, 2018). Hence, including the (inter-)cultural component in FL education contributes to the removal of isolation, and calls on every person to take care of the preservation of cultural diversity to follow the principles of equality. Moreover, the permanent predominance of linguistic aspects over socio-cultural aspects in FL education, which are often neglected, might create a misleading picture of a target culture. It can be caused by random selection of aspects of a social-cultural topic (Byram et al. 2003, 32) and by presenting an idealised image of the culture in question. In order to avoid such drawbacks of FL teaching, new approaches to studying FL have been implemented recently.

Whereas knowledge of certain cultures may still be important in developing awareness of cultural differences, it must be added that cultural influences in intercultural communication are constantly developing, and life within one's one cultural bubble is not possible anymore. The absence of a component in FL education that would comprise both linguistic and cross-cultural awareness, led to the creation of a new approach that was put forward a few years ago. Baker (2011) denominated it "intercultural awareness" (hereafter, ICA). This approach has cultural awareness at its core, though it has a more dynamic intercultural view. Baker emphasized that in contrast to cultural awareness, which explores how the ideas of native culture express themselves in the framework of intercultural communication, ICA highlights the notion of "INTER or TRANS cultural dimension where there is no clear language- culture-nation correlation, particularly in global uses of English" (Baker, 2011).

FL education has historically consisted of two components: the training of useful skills and the inculcation of an open-mind attitude to the other culture, most often, the culture of the language being taught. Nowadays, there is a changing focus on also studying one's own culture that might be seen as a refreshing vision in English language teaching strategies (Modiano, 2005). Though, this approach is not new. Starting from the 1980s the Intercultural Approach began to be implemented in FL education, being concentrated on the analysis of stereotypes

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and cross-cultural experiences (Neuner, 2003). From this, not only did language awareness begin to rise but also did ICA. Years after, the tolerant behaviour towards the otherness and the acceptance of own cultural distinctiveness became the key notions of intercultural dialogue promoted by UNESCO.

The globalized and multicultural world brings one's own identity as a new value, and learning standards are being revised. The modern FL education must prompt a student to be not only a perceiver of a foreign culture who is asking for acceptance of a foreign group of L1 speakers to be appreciated but also a person who is aware of their own culture positioning (Kramsch, 1993). By developing social skills through language learning, students obtain plurilingual and pluricultural competence which suggests the capacity of using languages "for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social actor has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures" (Coste, Moore & Zarate, 2009, 11). Coyle considers that by developing plurilingual competence in students, teachers should pay close attention to promoting multicultural awareness (Coyle, 2015). The notion of the ICA approach perfectly fits into this concept, as the competencies that are developed by implementing its theories into FL teaching may help to form the foundation of twenty-first-century learning. Being included in the curriculum now, the ideas of multiculturality will increase the chances of students communicating with the representatives of other cultures successfully in future.

Referring to the studies by Canagarajah and Rajagopalan, Modiano claims that a FL teacher needs to be a cultural mediator by promoting the linguistic human rights of the individuals and helping them to develop their non-native speaker identities (Canagarajah, 1999; Rajagopalan, 1999 cited in Modiano, 2005). For doing this, he suggests implementing new dictionaries where lexical knowledge goes beyond a simple word meaning, while some cultural contexts of using these words are indicated (Modiano, 2005). Working at Gävle University,

Sweden, Modiano also mentions the Sweden experience of the emergence of "Literatures in English" as opposed to "English literature". The works of authors from other English-speaking communities (such as Antigua, South Africa, Nigeria etc.) which speak in different from classical British varieties of English are being explored during FL classes. Studying these varieties as lingua franca for getting acquainted with peculiarities of other cultures supports "the Swede's self-perception as a world citizen who relies on the English language to communicate across cultures" (ibid.). Here, according to Baker (2012) lies the very core concept of ICA. ICA is needed for successful communication in the context of lingua franca because this awareness allows overcoming the difficulties in intercultural communication. The skill of ICA enables learners to share diverse cultural meanings in multicultural societies, what in turn gives a chance of choosing some other identity rather than national, or at least not giving it the top priority in identifying oneself and others.

Though, some other factors should be taken into consideration within ICA. Talking about language varieties and the appropriateness of choosing one of many, Harmer highlights the factors such as the *variety of the language which the teacher uses* and *the appropriateness of the chosen variety for students* (Harmer, 1997, 28). Nevertheless, if students are at higher levels, then the usefulness of the intercultural component in studying literature (or any other humanitarian discipline) of diverse English-speaking communities may prevail over the fact that different language varieties are used. However, the need for awareness of many other linguistic varieties may seem unclear, as there is little evidence that knowledge of such uses of language influences much on language teaching (Baker, 2015). Though, taking into consideration that English is being an international lingua franca nowadays, it is becoming evident that different changes happen in local variations of English all over the world. These forms can be far removed in form from the examples of "standard native English" taught in

schools and universities. While being deprived of these examples, students will be lacking the intercultural component in their studies (ibid.).

While some cultural components could be assimilated during FL classes with the help of a teacher who will show their students the cultural examples illustrated in songs, videos, films and art objects, there will be other components of culture that will be internalized unconsciously. Usually, language teachers are to some extent teachers of culture. Although the notion of culture seems so embedded in FL teaching, that is often left unnoticed, as a lack of attention is paid to this aspect (Kramsch, 1993, 48). Teachers can often enact the traditional culture of the language being learnt. By filling their discourse with phrases, expressions, and cross-linguistic borrowings, they become not only *language* but also *cultural* guides for their students. Though there is a risk in making these cultural references too simplistic and even stereotypical. In order to avoid it, ICA should be implemented as a more critical approach to culture. Baker suggests encouraging students to question the representation of any given culture, to explore the possibilities of being shown differently, the relevance of the depicted images to their own perceptions (Baker, 2012). These activities should demonstrate to students the world as a shared community of *different similarities,* what will raise the notion of the equal importance of any given individual despite their origin.

According to Byram, the idealisation of the given culture by being presented only from the bright side in some learning contexts is one of the problems of the current cultural representation within FL teaching. It can make the wrong impression about the lifestyle of representatives of the given culture, creating false stereotypes and showing wrong patterns of behaviour. Furthermore, in real life, students of different ages encounter some problems at home, at work, and even at the learning institution whether it be a school or a university, whereas the world that is shown to them in the textbook is unreal (Byram, 1989, 16). This cognitive dissonance that is often left unnoticed by language teachers leads to the fact that

students might not take the subject of the FL seriously. Furthermore, most students in developed and developing countries[2] have access to the Internet from childhood. As a result, some socio-cultural aspects in FL education are inevitably influenced by the fact that the lifestyle of the culture in question is often represented by mass media (Neuner, 2003, 36). Students of all ages can easily grasp the difference between the way of life shown in their books and the real world represented in mass media. Nowadays, the accessibility of songs, films, and social media accounts that are managed in English can give students the impression that the worlds represented in popular culture and their textbooks depict two different realities. Including the ICA elements in the form of language learning materials, such as the media and the arts, can improve the situation. While encountering texts in their natural form, students will make an impression about any given culture and after will compare it with one's own, finding the similarities and common values to share.

In FL teaching, the socio-cultural component always goes together with the linguistic component, moreover, as Neuner claims, the linguistic aspect dominates what inevitably decreases the importance of the socio-cultural component (Neuner, 2003, 35). Furthermore, there is the concept of communicative competence that is nowadays often taught one-sided as well. Undoubtedly, in order to be effective participants in the international dialogue, students should develop their communicative competence. On the one side, it includes language competence and knowledge of how language is used appropriately (Harmer, 1997), on the other side, it includes knowledge about the culture of the country of the target language and students' awareness-raising of their native culture. Nevertheless, being implemented as a final goal of studying FLs for years, communicative competence has been recently critiqued for creating an idealised picture of a native speaker (Byram, 1997), which is often unreachable for learners

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[2] Developed Countries List 2022. Retrieved from https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/developed-countries

due to many reasons. Moreover, some studies question the need of acquiring this competence because of the restrictions it imposes on learners' worldviews. As Leung (2005) claims, even when the cultural component is saved, it is based on a limited set of "native speaker" norms, "ignoring many of the insights intercultural communication and sociolinguistic studies have achieved" (Baker, 2015).

1.3 Implementation of the ICA approach in FL education and the obstacles to this process

Starting from the position that intercultural studies must be an integral part of FL education, it is important to understand its place in the "subject" itself. It is also inevitable to take into consideration the preconditions of a curriculum, as the new subject must be seen in its relationship to language learning. Modiano also highlights the possibility of devising a curriculum for the (inter-)cultural component to be included in language education. On this point, he refers to McKay (2000, 11) who stresses the necessity of acknowledging the value of including the knowledge of the students' own culture. This information might be useful for a student who might have a willingness not only to know more about some other culture but also share some information of the native culture with foreigners, performing a form of intercultural dialogue (McKay, 2000 cited in Modiano, 2005). Besides, the high awareness of learners' own culture can be a good starting point in further observing its similarities with other cultures.

Apart from skills that should be taught and practised during classes, Byram also considers the careful choice of topics for cultural studies to be very important in FL education. He claims that the curriculum for language education is determined by students' perceptions of *otherness* and transmitting the "correct" view of other cultures by using books published in countries in question is not always the right solution (Byram et al., 2002, 16). There is always a danger of

culture being ill-judged and limited to a few pictures from a tourist guide. The essence and uniqueness of culture might be misinterpreted, and it risks becoming dull and unclear for learners. If students see only the tip of an iceberg, they gain quite an unreal and unreachable picture that is distinct from their culture, due to the lack of common ground. There is no perfect society, while culture cannot be estimated solely as *good* or *bad.* By representing the whole picture from different perspectives, a language teacher gives their students a chance to notice some points of convergence which will help them get to know the culture of their own country better, by developing empathy towards other cultures and looking for similarities in different lifestyles.

However, including intercultural studies into the FL curriculum will not bring positive results by itself. Byram anticipates that the effects of FL teaching on students' perceptions of other cultures are not as accurate and positive, as it is often assumed by language teachers (Byram, 1989, 7). Sometimes there is a need to revise a body and a form of knowledge of (inter-)cultural studies as an aspect of language teaching that needs "to be equally related to the psychological processes and outcomes and the definition of the concept of culture and of the particular culture to be taught" (ibid.). Yet, as it was proved before, there is a need to move in the direction of ICA for the reason of "the liminal and emergent nature of much intercultural communication through English as a global lingua franca" (Baker, 2011). This in turn asks for the skill to facilitate between diverse cultural frames within different communication modes that may occur in particular examples of intercultural communication (ibid.).

The notion of ICA implies the avoiding of cross-cultural comparisons and sticks to the idea of not splitting the concept of culture into "them" and "us". As Baker puts it (2012), cultural differences may be relevant but should not be stressed in FL education, as it can form the habit of judging people first and foremost based on their national identity. The implementation of the ICA approach in FL teaching can encourage students to see the world

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as a shared community of different viewpoints and customs, forming the idea of multiculturalism and tolerant attitudes to otherness. For instance, in order to avoid the possible transfer of ethnocentrism from an idealized foreign culture to a learner's culture, *the foreign-language approach* was shifted to *the multicultural* one in Denmark. It facilitated changing the focus from studying FL only in mono-cultural contexts to the learner's cultural distinctiveness in the negotiation of the culture and the language learnt (Risager, 1998 cited in Modiano, 2005). Thanks to that change, the notion of the global dimension was added into the FL education, avoiding the perception of imposing the patterns of an unfamiliar culture.

Furthermore, Kramsch suggests the idea of using "authentic text" in FL education. In this context, the term "authentic" was first introduced by Little and Singleton: "an authentic text is a text that was created to fulfil some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced" (Little and Singleton, 1988 cited in Kramsch, 1993, 177). The approach that stimulates the usage of authentic texts highlights the necessity to give preference to natural communication and non-artificial language. Authentic texts require students to adopt communicative strategies, that might be improved through the thoughtful reading of texts and scanning for desired information, for language structures to be used in the written as well as the spoken language (ibid.).

The usefulness of using authentic texts in FL education is also clearly emphasized by Baker. He states that this idea is at the very core of ICA, within a framework of which the adaptable context-specific nature of knowledge develops. The deep investigation of the relationships between culture, communication and language is the key to obtaining the attitudes and skills the global citizen must have. Baker claims that it can be done "through exploring local cultures, exploring the media and arts both online and through more 'traditional' mediums; making use of cultural informants, and engaging in intercultural communication both face to face and electronically" (Baker, 2012).

Byram in turn highlights that the approach to authentic texts should always be critical (Byram et al., 2003). The texts, diagrams, maps, photographs, and audio/visual materials, which present contrasting views, will satisfy the educational request to develop the skills of analysis and argumentation perfectly. By understanding, discussing, and examining not only presented information itself but also the context, from which it was retrieved, students will develop the ability to analyse any new information critically rather than blindly rely on facts built upon some unreliable sources.

However, students, especially young learners, often cannot perceive authentic texts critically. By helping them in doing so, Starkey suggests teachers develop the skills in *critical discourse analysis* (hereafter, CDA) in their students. Van Dijk interprets it as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (van Dijk, 1997 cited in Starkey et al., 2003). Materials in the press and sometimes even in textbooks might contain prejudices and stereotypes, and CDA can provide some guidelines to detect some examples of xenophobia, racism discourse or homophobia by questioning an authentic text (Starkey et al., 2003). With the help of a teacher, students can encounter the texts critically while trying to trace and understand the nature of possible discriminating aspects of texts. If a teacher decides to use the press and media as sources for authentic texts, after making the critical analysis of the discourse students will feel confident to discuss different critical issues. Furthermore, what is even more important and useful, students will learn to make comparisons with coverage in their own national and local press (Prieto Ramos, 1999 cited in Starkey et al., 2003). Some authors highlight that there is a strong need for students to process and analyse the aspects of contemporary society from an unusual angle and consequently learn how to argue and advocate their points of view (Chichirdan et al., 1998 cited in Starkey et al., 2003). Often, even in the process of reviewing one given culture

from different viewpoints, there is a chance to look at it from different perspectives, noticing some peculiarities to provide food for thought for students.

Despite this fact, there is little indication of the ideas of ICA being implemented in FL teaching nowadays. Though the situation is being changed, for instance, such countries as Italy, the US, Spain, and Scandinavian countries try to revise the approach to FL education by implementing new approaches and methodologies. However, in Russia, there is still a rigid focus on communicative competence rather than intercultural competence and awareness. Baker emphasizes two main reasons for it: the need to follow the established guidelines (standards issued by the government or by influential testing organisations such as IELTS and TOEFL) and the lack of coherence in the ways of teaching culture as it is (Baker, 2012). Kramsch points out that being a central part of international communication, culture as a skill has been neglected for long, being called a "fifth skill", being treated as something complementary (Kramsch, 1993, 207). Further research may improve the situation in future, as the more this topic is studied, the more handbooks for teaching cultures will be issued to reveal the opportunities of providing the skills of ICA to students. As for now, numerous drawbacks of the currently approved approaches to FL teaching are indicated which proves the necessity of changing the system of FL education by including the component of ICA in it.

Apart from implementing new ideas in FL education, there are some other preoccupations that educators face. Some teachers do not have an opportunity to experience a culture that their learners encounter, accepting this as an obstacle to giving their students a comprehensive image of interculturality. Anticipating this concern, Byram says that the transmission of information about foreign culture as it is – is not the main purpose of teaching the intercultural dimension within FL classes. According to him, the intercultural component includes helping students to comprehend:

- how intercultural communication takes place;

- how our social identities are involved in communication;

- how the different perceptions of each other influence the communicative success;

- how it is possible for learners to get to know more about their interlocutors not invading their personal space (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, 15).

The task of a FL teacher is not only to make students aware of skills of asking questions about another culture politely and interpret the received response tolerantly but also to make them aware of their own cultural values. Byram calls it *Cultural critical awareness*, interpreting it as an ability to evaluate products and practices of one's own as well as other cultures to make them culturally competent in giving any evaluative response to others (Byram et al., 2002). Being published in a practical introduction for teachers issued by the Council of Europe, the abovementioned values are stated to promote "a position which acknowledges respect for human dignity and equality of human rights as the democratic basis for social interaction" (ibid.). According to Starkey, cultural critical awareness involves the ability to evaluate documents and events by reference to such criteria as human rights and liberal democracy. Therefore, a developed sense of *critical ICA* helps learners to interact in intercultural environments actively, being aware of potential conflict between one's own and other ideological positions. In other words, ICA tends to attempt to find common criteria between representatives of other cultures by raising the awareness of the roles of cultures in intercultural communication (Baker, 2011).

In monolingual communities, students may question the possibility to comprehend the language and culture from the outside. Several curious implications arise from a Practical Introduction for Teachers published by the Council of Europe concerning this topic. Talking about the acceptability of acquiring a foreign culture while studying far away from any other

language societies: "The outsider's understanding of (a part of) another country's identities and cultures is just as valid as that of an insider" (Byram et al., 2002, 16). Instead of getting a close look at the new culture, students as well as a teacher, have a chance to get the perception of a culture from a distance. Byram et al. say: "The insider, someone who belongs to a culture, is very often unable to analyse and conceptualise what is too familiar" (ibid., 19). Most of their experience is unconscious and innate, as it is something they grew up in. The whole cultural canvas of one given culture is often unavailable to grasp by an insider. While a representative of some other cultural community, with the help of, for instance, authentic texts and critical approach to them, can develop their cultural skills in ICA, that will help them to communicate successfully with people from any other culture in future.

By exploring and evaluating the other culture from outside, students will (un-)consciously compare their cultural experience with the one they come across, getting the broader perspective of the world from different angles. If FL teachers will include the component of ICA in FL education, step by step their students will assess their own culture more adequately and accept the other culture as a brand-new world.

In the context of this work, some may wonder about the belonging of Russia to the system of European education. Russian education system supports the same values of language education of European countries. Even if the teaching methods in language education are not as diverse and interactive as in European Union countries, the Russian educational system shares the principles of diversified and inclusive FL education, taking the European standards as a goal. However, talking about the Russian landscape, it is important to take into consideration that more than 150 nationalities are coexisting in this country, each of them speaking in their own minor language (the official language of the country is Russian). The concept of *otherness* is very familiar to Russian students, as there are often a few representatives of not-Russian nationality in one class. There is no doubt that students with

different backgrounds share the same symbolic area of reference during lessons of the Russian Language or Literature, they also have the same cultural sources to refer to. Even though, teachers must pay greater attention to the relations between students of different cultures and focus on the choice of contexts, making the learning texts more nationally diverse. As it was stated by Zarate, "a theoretical declaration of equality between the cultures coexisting in a school system may be accompanied by an actual situation of inequality as regards relations between these cultures" (Zarate et al., 2003). Hence, including the characters of national minorities in learning contexts may help reduce the prejudices and stereotypes the national majorities can have. There is a need to cultivate the ICA even in monolingual communities of this kind because monolingualism does not exclude multiculturalism. Members of the groups with national minorities must study not only the national culture and the culture of a FL but also stick to the viewpoint that shares the ideas of cultural fluidity that celebrates diversity as a new value. The approach of ICA is established to challenge prejudices about foreign culture and use them as a tool to discover the otherness by noticing the complexity and the mosaic nature of any given culture.

To develop in students the abovementioned skills, Byram suggests experiencing the native culture as not necessarily "the norm", comparing it with other cultures worldwide (Byram, 1989, 20). It might be a key to the growing tolerance of other cultures, as it may further lead to the development of an ability not only to make general comparisons but also trace the influence of cultural frames on communication. According to the ICA approach, students need to be aware of the (inter-)cultural roots in terms of possible misinterpretations during intercultural communication. As Baker puts it, this level of cultural awareness shows the high level of cultural perceptions, what brings students closer to the development of high ICA competencies (Baker, 2012).

Cultural comparisons are used by both ICA and cultural awareness approaches to familiarize language learners with diverse cultural practices related to communication. Such comparisons are necessary for learning more about the traditions of other cultures. Though, cultural comparisons must be addressed with caution (Baker, 2011). Simplistic remarks about other cultures that focus primarily on national images of culture, such as those found in many language education resources, are unlikely to encourage fluid negotiation between different cultural codes. Instead, some prejudices are more likely to emerge. As an alternative, to foster the ICA skills among students, more emphasis should be placed on reflexivity in viewing the intercultural component as it is an essential requirement for effective intercultural communication.

As was illustrated in this chapter, many techniques can promote intercultural awareness within FL education. Although, one teaching approach that deserves particular attention is considered to be a particularly effective tool in decreasing the sense of cultural exclusion and exclusivity. Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereafter, CLIL) is a methodology that has spread widely across Europe, especially in Italy, for its high effectiveness in language learning as well as acquiring new subject-related knowledge. It has also demonstrated its benefits for intercultural education, as it will be shown in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2. CLIL as a methodology to shift the "we VS they" cultural paradigm

CLIL as an innovative approach started to take shape in the 1990s being rooted in the European context as a step forward to multiculturalism across countries. Being a starting point in the expansion of new intellectual horizons in learning, CLIL ensured that existing linguistic and cultural conditions for teaching and studying are fully exploited (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010). Hence, the creation and further development of this approach was the innovation the system of education needed.

Apart from providing students with the opportunity of learning both content and language at the same time, the studies outlined in this chapter have shown the effectiveness of CLIL regarding the intercultural aspect of language learning. Although, it is necessary to keep in mind the socio-cultural context of CLIL such as the history and educational background of the country where this approach is to be applied.

The chapter will present an overview of possibilities for CLIL as a learning approach to influence positively the students' intercultural awareness, starting from the historical roots and prerequisites for CLIL (paragraph 2.1) and then briefly describing the intercultural component in CLIL (paragraph 2.2). Moreover, the likelihood of implementing CLIL in Russia is analysed, proposing some changes to be made (paragraph 2.3).

2.1 What is CLIL?

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) arose in the 1990s as a result of a European multilingual policy with the initial purpose of promoting the development of two additional languages other than students' mother tongue (Council of Europe, 2007). CLIL has its roots in the immersion approaches that originated in the 1970s in Europe (mostly Scandinavia) and in Canada (Eurydice, 2006 cited in Hemmi & Banegas, 2021).

The term CLIL was coined in 1994, and then it was promoted by the European Commission to encourage a positive attitude to the multilingual policy (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008). At first, it was developed in schools in Western European countries. The new approach was implemented in form of a few subjects or modules within one subject, with the help of supplementary language (Eurydice, 2006 cited in Hemmi & Banegas, 2021).

Before CLIL started being implemented, foreign language education was in upheaval (Lorenzo, 2010), and changes in the FL education sphere were demanded. A state of turmoil was caused by "the new forces at work in our post-modern world: globalization, mobility, integration, and fusion" (Mehisto, 2007). As Pérez Cañado (2013) put it, "Since the demolinguistics of Europe has consistently evinced that the resources and efforts invested in language learning have failed to deliver the goods, rendering FL education unresponsive to idealized competence standards". Marsh (2002) termed it the "delivery gap" between what is given in FL education and the results of the learners' language performance.

In order to influence the situation positively, language teaching measures needed to be stepped up. Against this rough patch that was admitted by many pieces of evidence, CLIL seemed a possible way out to change the flow of things and handle the drawbacks of language education, the system of which should have been modernised by some novel view. The CLIL approach "has become an important tool in supporting the achievement of the European Commission's objective of improving the foreign language proficiency of its citizens", as Lasagabaster & Sierra (2009) affirm. This approach emerged in harmony with wider educational perspectives, becoming "a European solution to a European need" (Marsh, 2002, 11). As it is stated in the document issued by the information network on education in Europe named Eurydice, "The promotion of linguistic diversity in education and training has always been an important consideration in planning the successful construction of Europe" (European Commission, 2006). This confident approach is supported by Coyle, who highlights that

multilingualism and pluriliteracy are the qualities that independent learners need to obtain for living in the multicultural "tomorrow's world". Therefore, despite approaches that mix language and content learning might be a challenge for teachers and researchers (Coyle, 2015), CLIL provides teachers with a methodology that is based on the creativity of an educator and detailed lesson planning.

CLIL is known as an approach to learning and teaching English as a foreign language. Nowadays, this method is defined as "a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010 cited in Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). Coyle claims that humanity is now entering a new era that unites many aspects of learning within which the learning of language should be placed into a more coherent whole (Coyle, 2015). The wide acceptance of CLIL because of globalization caused the shift that followed the growing tendency to study English in schools worldwide. As a new learning approach, CLIL can be embedded into the curriculum in any learning system in the world, consequently, at the beginning of the new millennium, CLIL starts to be implemented in countries out of Europe as well. There are some reasons for this approach to be so widespread:

- Hemmi and Banegas claim that sociocultural theory is the main principle on which CLIL rests. This theory has its main idea that learning occurs *across the collaboration*, which is inevitable during the implementation of CLIL methodology (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). According to Cupchik (2001), with the help of interactive tasks that motivate students to look for meaning together within a learning context, CLIL has an aim to develop the skills and knowledge of learners. Therefore, through *collaborative work*, students actively build their knowledge;

- Coyle emphasizes that CLIL unites *the concepts of cognitive development* and *critical thinking skills*. She says, "CLIL practices are expected to help learners transition from

lower-order thinking skills such as remembering, understanding, and applying to higher-order thinking skills such as analysing, evaluating and creating" (Coyle et al., 2010 cited in Hemmi & Banegas, 2021).

Furthermore, Dalton-Puffer denominates CLIL as an approach where a programme of subjects (history, art, biology etc.) stated in a curriculum keeps a tank of meanings, topics and concepts which might become a platform for "real communication" based on the knowledge of the subject where natural use of the studied language is quite achievable (Dalton-Puffer, 2007 cited in Coyle, 2015).

Pérez Cañado emphasizes a few benefits of CLIL by highlighting a few dimensions affected by this approach:

- *Linguistic dimension*: there is an increase in the level of competence of a language learnt (especially in communicative skills, as students are pushed to use more complex language) and the enrichment of specific vocabulary.

- *Learning dimension*: CLIL sets up the conditions for incidental learning, having a process of acquisition (instead of enforced learning) as a basis. Then, using the FL for communication implicitly, CLIL presents a context for profound learning.

- *Cognitive dimension*: providing opportunities for language acquisition, CLIL develops students' cognitive development, broadening a wider variety of not only communicative skills but also interpersonal capabilities.

- *Social dimension:* CLIL allows every student of any social class to study FL in a significant and interactive way, which supports students from different social backgrounds.

- *Pragmatic dimension:* dual-focused learning introduces the multilingual world to students, preparing them for a future academic and working career. It gets students

acquainted with cultural and linguistic challenges they may face living in an increasingly globalized, multicultural world.

- *Cultural dimension:* CLIL raises intercultural awareness, making students more open-minded and tolerant to other cultures. It provides (inter-)cultural understanding, developing international communication skills. By offering impressive opportunities for intercultural learning, CLIL also promotes the concept of global citizenship which is included in the Sustainable Development Goals through SDG 4: Ensuring Inclusive and Quality Education for All and Promote Lifelong Learning.

The United Nations included global citizenship as one of its targets to be reached by 2030. The international community has agreed to guarantee that every student has an opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills that are necessary to foster sustainable development, involving its intercultural dimension[3]. Learning institutions (schools as well as universities) can teach notions of global citizenship, introducing learners to the ideas of the multicultural world and their place in it. Moreover, FL teachers need to convey the idea of first obtaining and then using their skills and education to socially participate in the life of a community, contributing to its development by applying their competencies. Experts of the CLIL approach such as Marsh, Coyle and Meyer claim the focus to be not only on empowering communication across languages and cultures (taking into consideration both academic and social dimensions) but also on supporting the vital role of language in shaping students' learning (Coyle, 2015). For instance, the implementation of CLIL in the curriculum may influence such indexes as students' self-esteem and self-demand (Baranova, Kobicheva & Tokareva, 2019).

It was illustrated during the research conducted by Baranova and her colleagues (ibid.), who were implementing the methodology of CLIL in the Russian higher education

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[3] United Nations: Academic Impact. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/global-citizenship

environment. The study was based on the data which was gathered during the research study conducted in St-Petersburg Peter the Great Polytechnic University. The research was conducted on two groups of 4th-year students from the Faculty of Advertising and PR, studying the discipline "International Business". The CLIL group included 23 students, the non-CLIL group – 22 students, the experiment was carried out in 2018. The CLIL group had additional disciplines in English, which helped students to combine the learning of language and content, whereas non-CLIL students studied according to the traditional plan (separate discipline "International Business" in the native language and separately "Business English"). The assessment was conducted through the comparison of the data that were provided by the results of two tests (before and after the activity), that were consisted of four parts: Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking. The CLIL group was assessed having the higher results in Reading, Writing and Speaking for CLIL group. Moreover, in order to explore the students' perceptions about teaching and learning offered by the CLIL course, the close questions were designed, defining five indicators: Desire to Continue Learning English after university, Learners' Anxiety, Positive attitude to English, Self-esteem and Self-demand. According to the findings, students from the CLIL group have a higher level of motivation to learn English than do the non-CLIL group (ibid.).

The comparative experiment supported the conclusion made by Lasagabaster, Doiz and Sierra (2014). The researchers carried out a longitudinal study on upper secondary school students aged 12-15, dividing the participants into CLIL and non-CLIL students. The researchers observed that CLIL students were more motivated than non CLIL students across all age groups. As regards the second aim, the authors found that while younger students (12-13 years old) showed a higher level of intrinsic motivation, older students (14-15 years old) were more instrumentally motivated and showed much more interest than their non-CLIL counterparts (Lasagabaster, Doiz, Sierra, 2014 in Fazzi, 2019). In this way, it supports previous

findings of the Russian researchers that recognize the interaction between motivation and language attainment.

Apart from Content and Language, CLIL has a hidden C-Culture component. Although the process of studying content in a FL is inseparable from a deeper understanding of foreign cultural habit, C-Culture is often forgotten by teachers. It arouses interest towards foreign culture, consequently, teachers may foster the development of intercultural competence by aligning these cultural codes with students' native ones.

2.2   Intercultural aspect of CLIL

In order to investigate the intercultural aspect of CLIL, the 4 Cs Framework will be taken as a basis. Originated as a planning tool created by researchers and teachers working together, nowadays, in terms of the features of CLIL, the 4Cs model (Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture) can help to figure out how CLIL can be understood and implemented in practice from a wider perspective. It might be said that during lessons' planning, teachers have always taken into consideration these four elements, though Coyle highlights that the abovementioned elements should be "*explicit* in defining and planning tasks and activities" (Coyle & Meyer, 2021, 19).

The 4Cs framework emphasizes each of its four elements equally, promoting an approach to studying foreign languages where *culture* (C-Culture) is presented inseparable from more familiar to teaching community *content* (C-Content) being learnt, whereas through the processes of *cognition* (C-Cognition) and *communication* (C-Communication) the process of learning is carried out. Replacing the model of learning where merely repeating and understanding take place, being embedded in CLIL, the 4Cs model emphasizes other values. Learners process *content* through *communication*, being supported by their peers and teachers

(Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). As was highlighted by Lorenzo and Dalton-Puffer, classrooms might be considered as a C-Culture element at the micro-level (Lorenzo & Dalton-Puffer, 2016), because in classrooms students exist in communities of people from different backgrounds, what opens unlimited opportunities for learning (consciously and unconsciously) with support provided by a teacher.

Accordingly, the culture of the community represented by individuals should also be emphasized while speaking of CLIL. As Hemmi & Banegas put it (2021), citing Coyle et al. (2010, 41), "The culture here refers to developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship, whereas community refers to being part of a learning group and local and global community". These two notions are interconnected, as every person, being a part of a community, needs to have a skill of intercultural understanding. Nowadays, we all have a sense of belonging not only to our own culture but also to the world community, what asks us to have an awareness of intercultural relations, being open-minded and tolerant towards other cultures. Students all over the world need to be taught of being competent in intercultural communication, and the integrative nature of CLIL classes allows combining traditional foreign language learning with the learning of the content of a given subject, also fostering intercultural learning.

The extremely important C-Content component of the 4Cs model can likewise be understood and taught in a way that encourages the intercultural learning process. Sudhoff (2010) points out, "By using materials that convey, portray or reflect insights into foreign viewpoints, it becomes possible to (re)construct the underlying perspectives. Foreign positions on a given topic, underlying assumptions, attitudes, feelings and interpretations can be grasped and analysed". A student can compare foreign opinions and values with their own, and here is the point where intercultural learning begins.

Talking about C-Culture in particular, Coyle underscores that the cultural component in her 4Cs model "is based on opportunities for deepening and articulating an explicit awareness" (Coyle in Masih, 1999, 66). Pérez Cañado (2003) points out that CLIL increases the intercultural awareness of different cultures co-existing in this world and promotes the idea of the global citizenship agenda. CLIL within its cultural dimension empowers "intercultural knowledge and understanding, develops intercultural communication skills, and promotes intercultural communicative competence".

Coyle introduces the concept of *cultural exigencies,* highlighting the importance of seeing the world through trans-disciplinary studies as fundamental for productive learning (Coyle & Meyer, 2021, 24). Though, at this point Coyle steps aside, stressing the need of repurposing C-Culture for making learning more meaningful. Lorenzo and Dalton-Puffer come up with the idea of sharing the C-Culture component of the 4Cs model of CLIL in two levels, the macro, and the micro:

- MACRO LEVEL: takes an account of domains associated with seeing the world through sociolinguistic aspects (political, aesthetic, economic, spiritual etc.);
- MICRO LEVEL: being also called a classroom level, at which C-Culture must deal with the ontological demands of learning and subject disciplines (Lorenzo & Dalton-Puffer, 2016).

Therefore, emphasizing that there is no strongly defined C-Culture but *C-Cultures* instead, Coyle cites Alexander who understands their related relationship in this way: "classroom cultures, values and interactions are variously shaped by collective, communitarian and individualist emphases in accounts of social relations and by culturally located stances on human development, the nature and acquisition of knowledge and the act of teaching" (Alexander, 2017 cited in Coyle & Meyer, 2021, 27). Stating the notion of C-Culture as "the nature and acquisition of knowledge", it might be said that apart from culture

as the historical background of oneself, it is also the knowledge about linguistic tools to think, classify, evaluate, and define using a foreign language.

The culture of communication is inextricably linked to the native culture as well as the target language culture. Though, some errors may influence the perception of the culture in a wrong way, for instance: the idea that culture is fixed and permanent, which often is followed by a number of stereotypes about the given culture. Besides, there might be the focus on one main target language country, while the minor cultures are neglected. For instance, during learning Spanish, the focus is on the culture of Spain rather than on the culture of countries of Latin America. Whereas learners are often more interested in diversity and (dis-)similarities of representatives of other cultures. The element of cultural comparison may serve well in language teaching as it stimulates curiosity, as was highlighted by Stern: "culture is the necessary context for language use" (Stern, 1992 cited in Coyle & Meyers, 2021, 140). Getting to know more about other people and their cultures, students will explore new cultural codes and habits, while reflecting on the ones they already have.

The intercultural aspect of CLIL can be promoted by developing the C-Culture component of the 4Cs model by increasing the students' acceptance of otherness and achieving greater intercultural competence. In doing so, Gay argues for: "seeing cultural differences as assets; creating caring learning communities where culturally different individuals and heritages are valued; using cultural knowledge of ethnically diverse cultures, families, and communities to guide curriculum development, classroom climates, instructional strategies, and relationships with students" (Gay, 2010, 31). Such an approach will help students to respect and value people of diverse nationalities, identities, and ideologies within their own culture. Furthermore, it will encourage them to communicate across linguistic and cultural barriers easier, teaching them to see the personality behind the possible stereotypes.

However, traditional language-based approaches seem not to satisfy the abovementioned needs. For instance, nowadays, there is almost no data on implementing any component of the CLIL approach in school education in Russia. And if implemented, the data is very fragmentary. Apart from including some cultural elements in the teaching methodologies implicitly, teachers mostly are not aware of the possibilities that CLIL may provide them with. Though, students need "to develop their own cultural tools to understand, deconstruct and reconstruct the language in use that impacts on an individual's sense of self and necessary skills" (Coyle & Meyer, 2021). It was proved by the work of the New London Group (Cazden et al. 1996 cited in Coyle & Meyer, 2021, 146), that diversity of communication channels and developing a linguistic and cultural multiplicity nowadays demand a wider view of literacies than is represented in the earlier language teaching approaches.

Moreover, stressing the need of a learner to be actively involved in using cultural tools is expressed by Jackson's term "cultural consciousness" denominated in 1975. According to Coyle, this quality should be developed in all learners, whereas teachers should be cultural guides, encouraging intercultural awareness among students. This attitude appeared in the framework of *the critical literacies movement*, which in turn was inspired by *the genre movement* that empowers students and their teachers "to understand how one's culture and language shape the perception of oneself, of the world, and of our relationship with others" (Pratt & Foley, 2020 cited in Coyle & Meyer, 2021, 147).

Although, to give a closer look at the connection between culture and language in FL learning, the following example of the potential for intercultural learning is described by the Council of Europe (2001, 43), in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): "The learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture. […] The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner

becomes plurilingual and develops interculturality. The linguistic and cultural competencies in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how". Moreover, apart from the strong tie between language and culture in the process of implementing the CLIL approach into the foreign language studying, CLIL cultivates the way of thinking that makes the cultural roots (C-Culture) and references of academic disciplines explicit. In doing so, it also provides an authentic context based on substantive (evolving from the subject) and syntactic (about the nature of the subject) demands (Coyle & Meyer, 2021).

Sudhoff (2010) states that the key to effective participation in the life of modern society is the parallel development of foreign language skills and intercultural communication competencies. The process of fostering intercultural communicative competence can be set in motion thanks to "the dual focussed nature of CLIL-classrooms, i.e., merging a foreign language with the content subject matter, seems to provide an ideal environment to initiate intercultural learning: *content is never culturally neutral*". Because of the process of globalization that influences the educational sphere a lot, aside from analysing foreign cultural perspectives, a student of the 21st century must know how to (re)construct one's own cultural perspective (Byram, 1989, 51).

After finishing school, a learner steps into the world where their identity merges with the cultural personalities of other people. According to the author, the ability to shift different cultural perspectives should be taught precisely at schools. Hence, this intercultural learning process might take place in the early stages of foreign language learning in order to launch the intercultural learning process at the very beginning of the shaping language and cultural identities. Consequently, developing the C-Culture in the framework of the 4Cs model during CLIL language classes will help students to develop their sense of interculturality. This notion demonstrates similarities to Kramsch' idea of *the third space* that theorizes the capacity for FL

learners to obtain the enriched cultural identity, which is developed in the process of integration "of the various cultural influences present and presented within the learning process" (Kramsch, 1993).

The need for the development of interculturality leads to the formation of what Sudhoff denominates "the (post-)communicative era of foreign language teaching". Citing Willis (1996), Sudhoff states that the notion of this idea is tied with the student-centred approaches of task-based and project-based language learning (Sudhoff, 2010). Here, the focus is on practical language use, which can be realised by implementing authentic learning contexts which reflect real-world situations. Being involved in authentic communication, student learn to act naturally in culture-conditioned settings. Depending on a given task, learners develop their autonomy by carrying out tasks independently, whereas the skills of collaboration and teamwork are being trained.

It might be assumed that the cultural element permeates a whole school programme. The lessons of history, art, literature, geography, and other disciplines always keep the notion of culture inside. Although talking about big countries such as Russia, China or the US, their territories cover the variety of nationalities living there. Consequently, there is an emphasis on studying their own cultural aspects during school education rather than discovering some cultural aspects of foreign cultures. So, there is a question concerning a need for CLIL in such multinational communities arises. The author of this work sees a huge demand for that because nowadays it is impossible to deprive students of the chance of constructing an intercultural identity while studying at school. CLIL provides an opportunity of adding the intercultural dimension to the school curricula. In the circumstances, where no CLIL element was implemented earlier, well-designed foreign language lessons with some cross-cultural elements included may serve as a good starting point for students to immerse themselves in the brand-

new world. The world, where they value the uniqueness of other cultures, and where foreigners, in turn, are interested in their cultural identity.

Although for FL teachers for whom the idea of CLIL is completely unfamiliar, it might be difficult to imagine how this approach could be implemented in practice, moreover, if there are following curriculum changes, there is a need to introduce the notion of this method to students as well. And even when the idea of CLIL is clear for teachers and students, some educators may not see the necessity of implementing this approach, replacing it with a simple reflection of the peculiarities of native and target language cultures. Byram (1989) claims: "students need to be encouraged not simply to observe similarities and differences between the two cultures, but they should also analyse them from the viewpoint of the others and try to establish a relationship between their own and other systems". This viewpoint was greatly shared by Kramsch who states that creating "a sphere of interculturality" helps to satisfy the requirement of productive international communication and understanding of other cultural identities (Kramsch, 1993, 205-206). Accordingly, the demonstration of different cultural perspectives to students allows them to shift between different cultural dimensions, leading to the development of high intercultural competence (Bennett, 1993 cited in Sudhoff, 2010).

Nonetheless, the high intercultural potential of CLIL is possible to realise only within a well-structured, disciplined, and friendly learning environment. There is a chance for every foreign language teacher to make their classroom student-centred and truly original, but one must take into consideration that it implies continual work with the teaching materials in a new way, constantly looking for something curious for students to discuss and analyse. Overall, it results in the modernisation of classroom didactics and the variety of approaches and forms of the teaching activities, what is never left unnoticed and is appreciated by students of all ages. However, the effectiveness of the CLIL approach depends much on the educational system of

the country where this methodology is implemented. The Russian context will be studied within the framework of this thesis.

2.3   Implementation of the CLIL approach in Russia

In the context of globalisation and internationalisation, the development of education systems requires a systemic approach, new technologies and effective management solutions. Even though Russia is not part of the European Union, trying to catch up with the world's leading education standards, it was among the countries which were participating in The Bologna Process (Russia joined the process in 2003). After signing the Bologna declaration, higher education in Russia started being designed to expand knowledge and cultural boundaries, ensure the intensive development of academic fields, integrate global experience and knowledge, enhance academic mobility, and increase the number of professional communities.

The task of each school in Russia and any other country is to prepare each pupil for the life in a globalised and multicultural society, therefore, every school faces challenges related to the internationalisation of education in one way or another. The challenge of globalization proved to be daunting for post-Soviet education, due to the long preservation and short-lived collapse of the USSR, which entailed a long process of elaboration, development, and adaptation of its own educational standards. The education community has been looking for ways to accelerate self-development, by entering the global education market, moving to global educational standards that imply openness and accessibility of national education to the whole world.

As it was illustrated before, CLIL is considered an effective tool for shaping foreign language competence and giving comprehensive knowledge of the given subject as well as

raising intercultural awareness. Therefore, for many Russian teachers, the question arises of how to build integrated teaching in which the subject matter component is preserved (yet not affected) and the language competence of the students is improved. There is no need to mention that when CLIL started to spread across Europe as a novel educational approach, teachers from different countries had the same concern, which is successfully solved with the help of a bunch of practical methods that were implemented in the field. Whereas, for Russia as well as for all post-Soviet countries, the CLIL approach is not a widespread phenomenon.

Sidorenko and Rybushkina (2017) claim that one of the reasons is a lack of a pronounced need for linguistic consolidation of the society of post-Soviet countries. More than 150 nationalities are living on the territory of Russia. The Russian nationality prevails, as well as the Russian language is considered the only official language of the country. As for minorities, almost every nationality has its own language, and the language policy concerning local languages often depends on the local authorities. Talking about the neighbours, in many countries of the former Soviet republics Russian is still used alongside the national language as a second language. In the end, we get a huge region that is the size of one-sixth of the planet Earth that speaks Russian to some extent.

In comparison with the situation in Europe, due to the rather high level of academic mobility, English is essentially the only possible mean of communication in the classroom that is understood by all. While in Russia, there is no need to introduce the practice of teaching a subject in a foreign language if all the students and the teacher speak the same language. Currently, the implementation of the CLIL approach in Russian higher education has been implemented at five universities in different parts of the country (Baranova et al, 2019). Talking about schools, if developed, the approach seems to be very sporadic.

These harsh facts reveal the inconsistency of the traditional system of language training in Russian schools and universities. Unfortunately, in recent decades it has proven to be ineffective in coping with modern challenges (Sidorenko & Rybushkina, 2015). The same authors suggest considering some specific features of the Russian educational system which, in their opinion, should be considered when developing CLIL techniques:

1. *the socio-cultural feature* lies in a lack of multilingualism, in contrast to the EU countries. In Russia, several regions retain their national language (Tatarstan, Udmurtia, Bashkiria, etc.), while Russian remains the official state language in which state policy, economic development and education are conducted;

2. *the socio-economic feature* is that migration processes do exist in the Russian Federation but not on a European scale. From the point of view of language, this is hardly a problem as the Russian language remains a second language for the vast majority of migrants;

3. *the political and economic feature*: compared to European countries, mobility in Russia is less developed due to several political, cultural and economic reasons, which leads to a lack of specialists who are native speakers of a foreign language or who speak a foreign language at a level that is sufficient for conducting classes. There is a lack of own resources because higher education institutions have not taken into account and are not prepared for the highly competitive situation in the global market of educational programmes. The system of school and university education in Russia has followed the traditional policy towards language education, considering the foreign language as a secondary necessity;

4. *the legal feature*: lack of academic freedom for Russian educational institutions to make global decisions on any kind of changes, even if these changes have the

potential to improve the situation for the better. The Russian system of school education is characterised by an extremely high degree of standardisation.

Coyle and Meyer (2021) emphasize that the boundaries of the place of CLIL within a teaching and learning curriculum are vague and may vary from one national curriculum to another. Developing the idea of the legal feature suggested by Sidorenko and Rybushkina (2015), the process of including CLIL as a language teaching approach indeed may cause a problem in Russian schools. Universities are strictly subject to state educational standards, and any deviation can lead to a violation of the legal framework. In order to prove it, an example of the new federal law on advocacy (in the sense of educational activity) that entered into force on June 1, 2021, will be given.

According to this law, it is prohibited to use educational activities to incite social, racial, national, or religious discord, including by providing students with false information about the historical, national, religious, and cultural traditions of nations, as well as to inciting actions contrary to the Constitution of the Russian Federation. The establishment of the law was caused by "the absence of appropriate legal regulation that creates the preconditions for the uncontrolled implementation by anti-Russian forces in the school and university environment of a wide range of propaganda activities, including those supported from abroad and aimed at discrediting government policy in the Russian Federation, revising history and undermining the constitutional order, under the guise of educational activities"[4]. This law vividly reflects the current political rhetoric of the Russian Federation, which, unfortunately, does not imply a rapid integration with the rest of the world's educational system.

Furthermore, the lack of the inclusion of Russia in the world's education community is its historical background. After the collapse of the USSR, only a small percentage of Russian

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[4] State Duma of The Federal Assembly of The Russian Federation: What will be the new law on educational activities? Retrieved from http://duma.gov.ru/news/50970/

scholars were able to communicate professionally in languages other than Russian, when the borders of the Western world were opened. Thus, Russian scientists, known in the Soviet Union for their achievements in physics and astrophysics, biophysics, molecular biology and other technical and applied sciences, experienced serious difficulties in trying to join the global scientific community due to problems communicating in a foreign language. In those days, teaching was more theoretically oriented, and the emphasis was on reading and translation. However, this was a general trend in language education in the USSR. The needs of society were limited to written communication, and oral communication was not in demand due to the political situation.

Taking into consideration all the above-mentioned reasons and evaluating the readiness of the Russian education system to accept new technologies and approaches, the author of this work assumes that it is not as mobile and open to change if these changes require a global revision of the content of educational programmes and curricula. CLIL is supposed to be a very effective tool for addressing the global challenges of higher education in Russia, though its practices have not yet been tested and adopted definitively by the education system. At present, Russia is a great lack of theoretical resources for any research in CLIL. The freely available papers are dedicated only to some attempts of implementing this approach in different forms (taking the European experience as a basis) and exploring the preconditions for this approach to be implemented in Russia.

Besides, nowadays, there is a high demotivation among Russian pupils and students to learn English due to the lack of possibilities to practice it except during working holidays abroad or summer vacation. Without strong intrinsic motivation, the possibility to practice language skills abroad becomes the highest source of extrinsic motivation among students (Rubtcova & Kaisarova, 2016). The low level of motivation is proven by the results of the

survey[5] conducted by Levada Centre in 2014 among 1602 persons which illustrates the factual level of FL knowledge communicated by Russians. 70% of the respondents aged from 18 to 55+ said that they do not speak any foreign language to any extent.

Unfortunately, for this moment, the significant changes in the methodology of teaching foreign languages in the West have little impact on the teaching process at governmental schools in Russia. In my opinion, there are a few main reasons which may serve as an excuse, firstly, often the work of a foreign language teacher is strictly conceptualized across national curricula as focusing on the structures and grammar of the language, trying to develop the communicative competence in addition to reading, listening, and writing skills. Furthermore, in Russia, the critical literacies movement that is characterised by the term *cultural consciousness* might have little buy-in from language teachers considered to be irrelevant, especially, for teaching younger learners. Nevertheless, Coyle emphasizes that "the need to develop critical literacy skills for constructing and using cultural tools, suggests that language teachers may be well placed to develop culturally inclusive and language-rich learning spaces in their classrooms" (Coyle & Meyer, 2021, 148).

Apart from the obstacles that the implementation of CLIL faces in Russia, there are some other problems that teachers all over the world face regularly while working with this approach. Nevertheless, some difficulties emphasized by Dickey are particularly embedded into the Russian educational landscape:

- *teachers' qualifications*: summarising the background experience of teaching languages in Russia, the lack of sufficient training corresponding to the world's standards is often an issue. Talking about CLIL, to use this approach, teachers

[5] Levada-Centre, FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS. Retrieved from
https://www.levada.ru/2014/05/28/vladenie-inostrannymi-yazykami/

should also have adequate knowledge of the given subject that is taught and/or the overwhelming knowledge of the target culture;

- *insufficient development of learning resources* caused by the reason of CLIL still to be quite a novel method of teaching. Often, because of the strong control from the government, there is a shortage of training programmes and a lack of diversity in approved teaching manuals in Russia. Therefore, a lack of developed content materials may discourage teachers from the task of preparing the original materials;

- *increased workload* that CLIL implies for teachers, as it necessitates initiative on their side, also a great effort of learning to communicate and liaise with other content and/or language instructors to ensure the delivery of CLIL properly should be made. Teachers in Russia often struggle with extra paperwork to do, so only the enthusiasts who do love their work will dedicate their time to this;

- this pedagogical technique might be even more intimidating for *the learner*. It presents a more complex cognitive challenge, which can leave a student confused, overloaded or irritated. The problem arises when learning complex academic subjects in a FL, which can make the experience of learning more daunting. As Dickey agrees, the more complex one component, language, the less attention can be paid to the other, content (Dickey, 2004 cited in Pérez Cañado, 2013).

In addition to the possibility for students to encounter difficulties in learning both language and content at the same time, there is always a problem that arises at the early stages of learning a foreign language: the fear of making mistakes. This difficulty is a big struggle for teachers and language tutors to overcome and create such an atmosphere where a learner does not feel anxious. Among the studies dedicated to the implementation of CLIL in Russia, there is one by Millrood and Maksimova (2017) that confirmed that this approach helps students to divert their attention away from the difficulties of worrying about making linguistic mistakes,

as their focus is on the content of the subject. Moreover, a recent comparative study on implementing the CLIL approach into the university programme "International Business" in St-Petersburg Peter the Great Polytechnic University dated back to 2019 showed that students in the curriculum of whose some elements of CLIL education were included (the English language modules, international communication, English for specific purposes, business correspondence in English) had a higher level of motivation to learn English after the experiment than the non-CLIL group had (Baranova et al., 2018). As a result, it is possible to say that the implementation of CLIL may increase the students' enthusiasm regarding a foreign language and its usage in their academic and professional careers.

Despite having similar needs to European higher education, Russia has different social motivations, economic opportunities, cultural traditions, and therefore different conditions for implementing the CLIL approach. To start with, such small steps might be taken: implementing the introductions of subject courses in a foreign language, besides, small modules within the overall course could be taught in a FL, provided all the materials are adequately understood by the students and remain a manageable task for a schoolteacher. By implementing the CLIL approach into the Russian school curriculum, there is a practical possibility of changing the attitude to foreign languages and cultures among students raises, and it would be ignorant not to take it into account.

Thanks to the media, multiculturality becomes a part of our world wherever we live. Starting from the school education, students must be taught a tolerant attitude to the *otherness* whether it be a person of other nationality who speaks a different language or any other minority representative. Being a link between two different countries, foreign language classes serve the goal of opening an unfamiliar world best, while a foreign language itself is a bridge between two different cultures.

The author of this work believes that the shift of the "we VS they" paradigm in sense of intercultural communication is quite possible. However, while adopting the Western educational approaches or developing our own methodological techniques, we always need to consider a comprehensive knowledge of the sociolinguistic context of Russia, which will help in implementing novel methods of teaching into the current curriculum. For instance, new learning environments could be used for increasing intercultural awareness among students. Recently, a keen interest was observed in museum education and the use of virtual reality for educational purposes. The potential, opportunities and drawbacks of the foregoing teaching tendencies are explored and discussed in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3. The educational potential of the museums

Nowadays, museums have the possibility to influence relations between individuals and groups, communities, and cultures. As an educational institution, museums can help people to uncover their own cultural roots with the purpose of better understanding themselves as well as others (Gajic, Milutinovic & Klemenovic, 2008).

Yet, the educational potential of the museums is still undiscovered to its fullest. There are many innovative ways of interaction between museum objects and learners to be exploited and, for this reason, museums have a great possibility to become innovative learning environments (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). Moreover, museums can promote intercultural understanding and awareness facilitating human diversity as a significant aspect of peoples' life. By fostering intercultural dialogue, museums have the possibility to influence the understanding of different perspectives and lifestyles positively, which in turn can encourage the development of cognitive and creative processes (Bodo, Gibbs & Sani, 2009), as intercultural dialogue within a museum is a process that involves a respectful interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds or world views.

Museums and other cultural institutions (such as libraries, historical or botanical societies, community cultural centres and others) have a vast potential to confront cultural stereotypes and to create learning environments (ibid.). Learning in the museum has a possibility for providing intercultural education through its exhibits by encouraging integration and the respectful coexistence of various communities. Implementation of some new approaches such as virtual reality can also facilitate learning in museums, leading to the creation of shared spaces and a sense of belonging.

The chapter will present an overview of the educational potential of the museums, firstly, exploring the learning potential of museums (paragraph 3.1) and then briefly describing the possibility of museum objects in fostering intercultural education (paragraph 3.2). The chapter concludes with an analysis of the implementation of fragments of virtual reality, in particular, virtual tours, in learning activities for promoting learning in museums (paragraph 3.3).

3.1 Place for learning: the museum as a learning context

In circumstances of continuing globalisation and internationalisation, English is becoming the lingua franca for many people all over the world. The opportunity to obtain a higher education abroad, get a job in a foreign company or to have a trip to some other country is very appealing for most of the youth nowadays. Often, the English language represents a bridge that leads to undercover chances and bright prospects. Linguistic competence is continuously turning into the binding bond for a dozen of countries, many of which are establishing English as a common language. Furthermore, European citizens are encouraged to be competent in at least two foreign languages apart from their mother tongue for allowing intercultural communication and establishing the ideas of multicultural identity (European Commission, 2005).

Nevertheless, in order to obtain this goal, the forms of formal education might be not comprehensive enough. So, it became necessary to acknowledge non-formal and informal ways of learning languages (Council of the European Union, 2014), helping diversify FL learning opportunities across different learning strategies (Fazzi, 2019).

As Hooper-Greenhill (1994) puts it, true learning has not been completed till the new material is combined with the old, and the museum visit is a perfect setting for introducing some new information (idem.), bringing the experience of obtaining knowledge outside of

learning institutions. Nevertheless, museums are lacking interaction with the audience, while the exhibits that every art centre keeps inside, could be a source of knowledge for people of different ages and motivations. Some collections are very flexible in meanings that could be exploited, while others represent only one topic, therefore, it could be hard to find several connotations for exploring an exhibition. Despite the museum's specification, whether it to be paintings or historical exponents, they convey a meaning which could be analysed, framed, and reframed within the planned lesson. Even though, it is often questionable how to include museums' resources into education, especially, in FL education.

As Benson and Reinders claim (2011), studies on museum-based learning have recently become a popular topic to investigate, leading to an increasing interest in studying languages beyond the classroom, namely, in a museum environment. According to them, currently, learning should be seen in terms of involvement in cognitive processes of different contexts (ibid.). Training linguistic skills in new contexts has a positive influence on the ability to acquire information and apply new knowledge "on the go". Moreover, a museum is a place where objects created by different nationalities are represented, consequently, the process of practising the language in such a place develops the intercultural awareness of students.

Although it is not as easy and coherent as it sounds. There should be good communication between museum representatives and a school in order to perform an activity of this kind. As shown in a study dedicated to museum-based learning, the fact that a learning module conducted in a museum fits the school curriculum is important for most teachers (Anderson & Zhang, 2003 cited in Fazzi, 2018). These preoccupations are based on the students' perception of knowledge they will obtain in a museum. As Falk and Dierking claimed, it is easier for young learners to perceive new information and remember it for longer periods of time, when a teacher linked a museum visit to a school curriculum (Falk & Dierking, 2000). The opportunity for children to share and personalize their experience influences the assimilation

of new information positively. If the museum visit is supported by similar topics before and after the event, it will illustrate the usefulness of the visit by making the acquisition of learning more coherent.

The museum-based learning asks both teachers and museum educators to be well-aware of the topic of the museum visit. The tasks should be tailored considering students' interests and level of motivation. Moreover, the complexity of the museum's visual environment should be taken into account. Museum educators should always keep in mind that for students who have not been interested in art before the lesson, this experience might be a challenge to face and cope with, besides practising a FL (Shoemaker, 1998). Despite focusing on the FL learning based on artworks in the context of this work, it is a must to notice that non-formal language learning is an interdisciplinary method of language acquisition that can include diverse disciplines and educational topics, what will be further covered by the overview of including CLIL in the museum-based learning.

Considering the topic of this dissertation, it might be questionable where is it better to "place" a "virtual museum visit" in terms of the way of delivering the activity. The lesson takes place *inside* the classroom, but with an educator (a student) broadcasting from a museum. Benson (2011, 9) introduces the concept named *language learning beyond the classroom,* also providing a list of alternate terms: "out-of-class", "out-of-school", "after-school", "extracurricular", "extramural"; "non-formal", "informal", "self-instructed", "non instructed", "naturalistic", "independent", "self-directed" and "autonomous" language learning. While some of the abovementioned terms relate to an activity delivered anywhere but at school or university, Benson highlights that some activities can be held inside educational institutions. The difference between ordinary learning activities and the ones that are related to museum learning in any sense is the lack of formality, what allows us to define this approach to language learning as "non-formal" or "informal" (EU Commission, 1995).

To be more precise in these terms, by summarising the European Commission's (2012) definitions with those of Eshach's, Fazzi (2019) suggests the characteristics of non-formal learning tasks:

- they take place beyond the classroom (summer camps, learning clubs, museums, theatres, parks etc.) or with the provision of the unusual learning component that mixes up the ordinary learning schedule;

- they are defined by learning goals, timetable and content;

- they presume support from the educator's side;

- they involve the willingness to learn, and intrinsic motivation from the learners' side;

- their goal is to provide a new experience, being more dedicated to the meaning, rather than to form;

- they are not usually evaluated in terms of awarding grades;

- they are usually short-formed or provide students with once in a time experience.

Talking about non-formal and informal learning contexts, the level of communicative competence, motivation and other linguistic and non-linguistics aspects are highly developed in learners who perform tasks in non-formal and informal settings (Fazzi and Lasagabaster 2020). The importance of communication in FL beyond the schoolbooks was previously illustrated in this work by the studies of Byram (1989) and Modiano (2005). Besides, the significance of practising FL beyond the classroom was specified by Menegale (2013), as her studies have shown that students consider that they often (almost 46% of examinees) encounter informal contexts that are not presented in their schoolbooks, moreover, the knowledge that they acquire outside of formal learning contexts is more useful for them in real life. The abovementioned and related findings motivated researchers to implement new approaches for fostering the usage of non-formal and informal settings for FL studying. The museum

environment turned out to be a perfect setting for obtaining this goal, as numerous exhibits all over the world can serve as a source for new materials to explore by educators and tasks being carried out by students. Moreover, museums provide the sociocultural environment for a learning context, which is vital for students' capacity to reflect on their experience and form new experiences that are based on the same objects and notions (Falk & Dierking, 2000, 92).

Developing this idea, Falk and Dierking (2000) created the framework that presumes the fact that learning is an "integrated experience that happens in the real world" (Falk & Dierking, 2000, 10). They denominate it the Contextual Model of Learning, distinguishing three types of corresponding contexts which indicate learning as a process that is born in a synthesis of all three perspectives. The authors also introduce eight important factors that influence learning, while each of them functions in one of three contexts of the abovementioned Contextual Model (idem, 178):

1.   Personal Context is linked to subjective motivations, expectations, personal beliefs, past knowledge and the desire to control one's own learning. According to the model, all these aspects affect the learning outcomes of a school-based visit:

- Motivation and expectations

- Prior knowledge, interests and beliefs

- Choice and control

2.   Sociocultural Context is based on the human beings' habit to socialize, considering inevitable interactions with other individuals during a museum visit:

- Within-group sociocultural mediation

- Facilitated mediation by others

3.   Physical Context is the significance of side effects that have a strong impact on the ways learners interact with the three-dimensional environment and, consequently, learn from it (Fadda, 2020):

- Advance organisers and orientation

- Design

- Reinforcing events and experiences outside the museum

Individually or collectively each of these factors contributes to the learning experience in a museum. If each of the aspects is fully represented, it leads to the process of meaning-making which provides students to acquire additional meanings in the museum objects, obtaining knowledge of different epochs, nations, and cultures.

Furthermore, a museum visit is a chance to change of learning scenery, what is appreciated by learners. It is proved that museum visits have long-lasting positive emotional outcomes "such as increased motivation or interest, sparking curiosity, and improved attitudes towards a topic" (Knapp, 2000, Jarvis & Pell, 2002, quoted in Fazzi, 2019). These effects can influence the quality of education positively by providing learning opportunities that bridge the gap between a classroom and the real world (Mathewson-Mitchell, 2007). And if it is assumed that a museum, but not a classroom, represents the real world, Wilson (2012) claims that "museums provide students with great opportunities to produce meaningful output by providing them with something relevant and strongly connected to the real world to talk about". Moreover, perceiving museums and art galleries as learning contexts, a FL learner can come across an object which contains the representation of a language of the target culture (Fadda, 2020). Witnessing the language in use on artefacts or works of art could be a source of intrinsic motivation that will inspire learners to proceed with studying. In addition, the museum objects are always contextualised by labels that define the attitudes to the past and the present. For instance, the nature of the language used to present a topic of an exhibition conveys a certain interpretation of experience (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 115). It allows museum educators to include the work with texts in their tasks to help students understand the topic they are not well-

aware of, besides, including texts on labels at work could be a starting point for a fruitful discussion.

The power of motivation in museum learning is also emphasized by Bamberger and Tal (2006) who stress that curiosity, intrinsic motivation, choice, and control that go along with the fact that the learning occurs in short-time units are factors appealing to students. Though this approach could be demanding to teachers and museum educators (Fazzi, 2018). Being tailored according to the language abilities of students, tasks should motivate students to practice FL also giving them an opportunity "to learn to cognitively cope with the content and the language forms which they find themselves confronted with during the CLIL lessons" (Berton in Coonan, 2008, 142); it is quite a challenging task, also considering the timeframe of a lesson. Nevertheless, museum objects are a source of knowledge to be explored by students, the notion of interculturality is among them.

3.2   The power of objects for intercultural education

Technological changes and thousands of ways of obtaining knowledge through media made museums challenge the new role in this cultural shift. As Hooper-Greenhill (1994, 6) put it, "Now, there is a clear and consistent demand for a close and active encounter with objects and exhibits. A physical experience using all the senses is called for". To build a new powerful future for museums, the author suggests expanding the traditional educational role of museums, turning them into user-centred learning spaces (ibid.) that could compete for visitors' time, and meet their expectations.

In order to turn museums into multifunctional learning contexts, Hooper-Greenhill suggests teaching through objects, using the exhibits as a tool to dispel the prejudices visitors might have and to get them acquainted with the past (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 12), which will

serve as a ground for making useful connections and tracing relationships between epochs and cultures. Moreover, museum objects allow visitors to make cross-curricular links, providing them with inspiration that seems to last long after the visit (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994 cited in Fazzi, 2019).

The work with objects in a learning context is demanding both for students and educators. However, the shift in the perception of museum objects in sense of reconsideration of museums as learning spaces can be possible due to carrying out the tasks. Students learn to give new meanings to objects, redefining implications that are on the surface (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, 152), what may develop their interest in art and help to build the ICA. The possibility to see and evaluate things differently by looking for another perspective is one of the strengths of this approach, because of the potential to explore a plurality of meaning for any one object" (ibid.). During the process of the exploration, some personal stories behind an object, significant events that influenced the artist may come up, opening a range of possible meanings for creating tasks fostering learners' curiosity and motivation. In this sense, objects allow multiple stories to emerge, promoting meaning-making (Paris and Hapgood, 2002 cited in Fazzi, 2019).

Considering objects as tools in the learning context, Vartiainen, Liljeström and Enkenberg (2012) denominate *learning objects* as "designed digital representations from real objects in a context that are related to the phenomenon in question and to tools that mediate the process of the negotiation of meaning". Moreover, the authors emphasize that learning objects are a link that connects one's experiences and ideas with the topics of a discipline, offering a mixture of personal and scientific responses (Vartiainen, Liljeström & Enkenberg, 2012). According to Lord (2007), "museum learning is always described as mainly affective, as it has a strong impact on our attitudes, interests, appreciation, beliefs, or values" (Lord, 2007 cited in Fazzi, 2018). The activities based on using museum objects promote thinking outside the box, as students can reconsider some viewpoints by analysing the artworks or artefacts from the

point of view of their natural contexts, considering additional meanings and hidden implications. Though, the activity should be carefully guided by an educator being following chosen methodology.

Considering the dual nature of the CLIL approach, educators and/or teachers need to create tasks that are language and content oriented. The task-based framework by Willis (1996) is a model that allows the integration of CLIL in the museum context naturally, providing the programme of a lesson with clarity. According to Willis, activities are based on three stages:

- *the pre-task phase*: at this stage, a teacher/educator explains the nature of the museum visit, introduces the topic, paying attention to phrases and words that might be unfamiliar to students;

- *the task-cycle phase*: at this point, learners carry out tasks based on the interaction with museum objects. Students can perform tasks in pairs and groups;

- *the language focus phase* (also called *the post-task phase*): the language, content or other students' skills and findings are identified and analysed by an educator/teacher.

Taking into account the unpredictability of this interaction, this cycle can be covered within one lesson or can be prolonged for the next lesson (Willis, 1996 quoted in Berton in Coonan, 2008, 142). Coonan (2012) states that some aspects should be considered while planning a CLIL programme or module: context, learning situation, aims, objectives, linguistic needs, contents, methodology, timetable, evaluation (Coonan, 2012 in Fazzi, 2019).

Talking about the implementation of CLIL in museums, a question arises about the students' attitude towards this approach. Citing Rohmann (2013), Fazzi and Lasagabaster (2020) agree that learning in the museum is more personal than formal learning, which is more text based. Museum learning is full of meanings because it is established on cognitive and

sensitive domains (Rohmann, 2013 in Fazzi & Lasagabaster, 2020). These factors, as well as the more engaging nature of tasks, are appreciated by learners (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009). Besides, the efforts of a person who is responsible for creating tasks also do not go unnoticed (Coonan, 2007 in Fazzi & Lasagabaster, 2020).

As it was illustrated in the previous chapter, the CLIL methodology is often a catalyst in turning the educational path into a more interactive and intercultural mode. The implementation of this approach in museums was a natural response to the need for the creation of a new way of using the museum context. The educational museum programmes based on the CLIL approach are aimed at practising visitors' foreign language skills in an original learning setting, while also improving their knowledge of art or science (depending on the museum specification) with a chance of promoting the component of interdisciplinarity and interculturality.

In order to make the museum a learning space, Hansen and Johnson emphasize that it should change its dynamic, by making learning "a two-way process". A museum should become a place for gathering knowledge about different communities, local and distant ones, different epochs, presenting not only the past but also the present (Hansen & Johansson, 2006). Exhibitions within one museum can become a mirror of history, showing that society came a long way to reach the current point. In this context, objects become milestones to base the present values on, and this potential of exhibits should be exploited.

Being present in the museum, objects from different cultures has the power to tell a story that was not heard before. By doing so, a museum gives a floor to some given culture to represent itself and become more visible and substantial (ibid.). Thus, during the process of communication with museum objects, visitors have a chance to increase their intercultural awareness. By representing daily experiences of different communities, museum objects

cultivate broad thinking and shape the attitudes towards representatives of diverse cultures. In this way, tailored exhibitions could promote the intercultural view among visitors helping them link the knowledge to definite life experiences (Giusti, 2013). Through the museum visit, a visitor could cross the bridge that is led from their own culture to a different one, with museum objects being the pillars of this connection.

Museums can act as impactful institutions that could influence not only personal perceptions but also to be powerful regarding public opinion. Museums raise the questions of cross-cultural understanding by changing the way visitors usually look upon the past, re-evaluating some events or at least questioning them in the light of history (Hansen & Johansson, 2006). While museum objects can be witnesses of the past and representatives of the present, a museum can be a time machine that mediates contemporary issues and their connections in history. Nowadays, museums aim not only at preservation of heritage but also at developing cultural codes, while promoting personal identity (Gajić & Milutinović, 2010).

All this leads to the forming of *intercultural competence*. Giusti (2013) claims that it is a responsibility of a teacher to provide the intercultural component to be implemented in lessons. This intercultural thought could be continuously trained through interaction with a museum. Moreover, the classroom can be exploited as a multicultural environment with many stories and cultural heritage of each student (Giusti, 2013). Nevertheless, being a place where different cultures and heritages meet, a museum, which also welcomes visitors from all over the world what brings even more interculturality in its context, should become a place to build a common ground to share cultural, aesthetic, linguistic. Museums can become an innovative platform by using new tools for promoting civil action, using diverse cultures as a resource of exchange and a place of dialogue (ibid.).

Nowadays, many museums are making a shift towards dynamic learning, creating open spaces for people of different ages can learn at their pace, doing their own research within the museum environment. As Gajić and Milutinović (2010) put it, "learning in informal settings such as museums, for example, relates to the systematic and cumulative aspects of the experiential nature of learning based on encounters with real objects". From that perspective, museums are ideal places for active learning and personal meaning creation (Griffin, 2000). Gajić and Milutinović emphasize that the museum activities based on the museum objects lead to personal development through the achievement of cognitive goals. This could be reached through "the emotional engagement and involvement of intellectual and psycho-motoric activities" (Bognar & Matijevic, 2002, 77 cited in Gajić & Milutinović, 2010). Moreover, for being more accessible to a wider audience, museums go online, opening new horizons for education.

3.3 Virtual tour as an activity promoting learning in museums

Technologies have quickly progressed in changing our working and studying places in the last few years. By giving a possibility to be involved in the learning process to people who had never had a chance to, devices influenced the accessibility of education worldwide. Due to the spreading of means and platforms for online communication, natural communication channels had to step back, while digital tools became mediators in personal interaction. Many spheres benefited from extending the reach of new audiences and becoming more approachable to new clients and customers. The means of connecting people are still being developed, and education has not only been spared by this phenomenon but also benefited from it.

Nowadays, technology becomes a source of new ideas and approaches in education. By supporting social activities of studying processes, the new equipment provides teachers and

learners all around the world with opportunities for accessible education. Due to the pandemic, the world has given little time to adapt educational institutions to the new digital reality. And if people lost the ability to connect in the way they were doing it for ages, it did not come as a surprise that language education, being a function and consequence of social life, found itself in a position of being dependent on students' environmental manipulations. Nevertheless, because of its evolution and adaptability, language learning became adjustable to environmental, social and cultural factors (Morchid, 2020).

The use of new ways of implementing technologies in education facilitating virtual experiences has provided new prospects for learning and teaching FL. Constant developments in technologies allowed carrying out many linguistic projects due to "the advantage of the immersive qualities of the virtual worlds, of the rich variety of the setting and access to native speakers of target languages" (De Jong Derrington, 2013, 135).

The shift in technologies allowed students with different learning and economic backgrounds to get access to Virtual Realities (hereafter, VR). As VR is a broad expression that could be applied to different spheres, we need to take into consideration that it is an umbrella term for "a set of images and sounds, produced by a computer, that seem to represent a place or a situation that a person can take part in"[6]. As it was demonstrated in the previous chapters, FL education is highly contextualised, consequently, Lan (2020) recommends integrating the fragments of virtual realities in FL classes, as VR gives learners the ability to be immersed in diverse contexts by providing them with profound interactions. Lan believes that the variety of virtual experiences that VR can provide is one of the most significant

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[6] Cambridge Dictionary: virtual reality. Retrieved from
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/ru/%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%8C/%D0
%B0%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9/virtual-reality

advantages of this learning method. He also emphasizes that only if studying approaches are particularly learner-centred, the implementation of VR will lead to effective FL learning.

Taking into consideration such an activity as a virtual museum visit, Blyth (2017) specifies that more and more FL educators implement VR technologies in FL learning. It provides learners with an opportunity to gain a new learning experience that they did not have a chance to obtain due to some obstacles such as the cost of a visit, the physical distance of a learning institution from a museum etc. Furthermore, starting from the first studies in this field, Christal et al. (2001) expressed the idea of the importance of using VR technologies for promoting culture. They also believe that the implementation of VR tools into FL education will influence the cooperation between a museum and a learning institution positively. Moreover, carrying out virtual museum activities on the Internet or with the help of some other technological resources improves the intercultural awareness of learners and fosters critical thinking about the connections between language and interculturality (Sederberg, 2013, 251).

Thereby, the educational environment is currently changing due to facing the reality of living in studying in the pandemic. The discovery of virtual resources vastly used for learning purposes, what made it necessary to review international education systems in terms of knowledge fluidity and accessibility. And if before virtual resources were treated as something additional and unnecessary of being implemented into the learning process, nowadays, VR is used as an informal as well as formal learning modality (Li & Lalani, 2020). These new methods of learning have both advantages and drawbacks, and it was covered by many researchers in this field.

Particularly, "it has been observed that in virtual environments students tend to display less social anxiety and low levels of inhibition" (Roed, 2003 in Compagnoni, 2021). Furthermore, it has been proven that users of VR technologies perceive each other realistically

having computers and laptops as mediators of their communication. This is explained by the term "social presence": "feeling of being there with a real person, which is a crucial component of interactions that take place in virtual reality" (Biocca, Harms & Burgoon, 2003, p. 456).

Moreover, the positive effects were observed during the integration of VR tools in addition to the museum education, because due to some difficulties such as disapproval by the school administrations or physical distance between a learning institution and a museum, it might be hard to reach the place to carry out some learning activities on site (Ruanglerbutr, 2016 in Compagnoni, 2021)

Despite the advantages of using VR in museum education, there are some drawbacks that teachers and educators need to be aware of while implementing new technologies in their learning curriculum. Firstly, according to Sederberg (2013), it is more demanding for students to be focused due to the lack of physical objects to observe in reality. To overcome this difficulty, the author suggests encouraging activities helping students to link virtual museum visits to classroom education, in order to make it more efficient. Discussions, open questions, audio, and video support can serve as a source of motivation for learners to see the connection between reality and a museum and gain much experience from it.

Furthermore, the novelty of online education as a phenomenon can cause significant pressure on learners during online communication. Nadler denominated this phenomenon "ZOOM fatigue" (Nadler, 2020 in Compagnoni, 2021). Despite the common opinion that young people are more technology-knowledgeable, as Nadler put it, "their knowledge mostly arises from the use of technology as a tool to interact with others and compensate for temporary physical distances, not as the only means of communication". In order to help students to cope with this problem, an educator or a teacher needs to be well-prepared for the lesson they are about to give. For instance, the possibility not only to show a museum itself but also to have

an opportunity to share the screen of the laptop during an online museum visit will gain learners' interest in what is shown, although they can participate only by speaking or writing in the chat. According to Gaia (2020), it will reduce the students' anxiety and "will include much more flexibility in terms of schedule and organization of the visit, less time and money spent on transports, and the possibility of using high-quality sound and images" (Gaia, 2020 in Fadda, 2020).

In spite of some noticeable disadvantages, the large-scale inclusion of VR was not a choice made by teachers or educators, it became a necessity. And as the world is still facing the Covid-19 reality, it is useful to focus on opportunities that online learning provides:

- because lessons are planned to take place at a certain time, students include it in their schedule and then participate in lessons accordingly; in the end, the programme is more structured;

- there is an opportunity to practice a FL online with peers from all over the world, and frequently, direct contact with other students motivates students to participate in lesson activities keenly. There is also a chance that their progress will be appreciated, and the usage of FL will be trained;

- the online environment is highly motivational for shy and quiet students, especially if their web cameras are turned off. The fear of making a mistake is reduced or completely removed because of the low probability of students being embarrassed in front of peers (Hampel & Barber, 186 in Felix, 2003).

To sum up, virtual resources give learners the possibility to acquire new information on multisensorial levels and increase their intercultural awareness. It was proven by recent studies that VR environments help students to learn more about cultural characteristics and aspects without the risk of being stereotyped by traditional educational sources (Elia, 2017 cited in Compagnoni, 2021). Moreover, Berti (2020) emphasizes that VR offers learning environments

that are practically helpful in preparing learners for real-life communication and interactions in a globalised and multicultural society. Berti claims, "The concrete, yet virtual, tasks that students do in virtual environments contribute to meaningful language learning through culturally situated social interactions contrasting with the potential disengagement of less stimulating learning materials such as traditional text-books".

Virtual tour as an activity promoting learning in museums is an innovative way of studying, that makes learning enjoyable for learners, reduces their anxiety and allows them to visit museums and galleries all over the world while being in a comfortable setting of their classroom. Despite it should be prepared and tailored by teachers or museum educators very carefully, it will be appreciated by students (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009), who will also be intrigued by new learning activities to be implemented in their learning path.

CHAPTER 4. Methodology

The present study aims at investigating how participation in the CLIL online museum visit and the activities around museum objects influence the students' understanding of their own culture and positive attitudes towards otherness. According to Lasagabaster (2019), studies correspond that learners achieve better results in foreign language learning when it is integrated with content instruction. Therefore, the online museum visit was agreed to be conducted within the English language lesson. In doing so, this activity was implemented within the framework of the CLIL approach.

All the activities of this module were performed in the form of the virtual museum visit that was realised on the free platform for video communications. The tasks were inspired by drawings of three Russian artists that are presented in The Peggy Guggenheim Collection. The fact that Russian painters are displayed in this Italian museum among many other artworks of the 20th century by artists from different countries was a starting point for the exploring the interculturality during the virtual museum visit.

The chapter will present the research that has been conducted in the form of a CLIL virtual museum visit with the purpose to evaluate its impact on the development of students' intercultural awareness. To begin with, the research context will be presented (paragraph 4.1), followed by the data about the school that hosted the project and its participants (paragraph 4.2). Also, information about the museum will be provided (paragraph 4.3). Afterwards, research questions, hypotheses (paragraph 4.4) and the planning process (paragraph 4.5) will be described in detail. Moreover, research instruments (paragraph 4.6) and activity description (paragraph 4.7) will be clearly illustrated, considering the structure and aims of the last. The chapter concludes with a description of the questionnaires (paragraph 4.8) and the methodology for data analysis (paragraph 4.9).

4.1 The research context

The CLIL approach was chosen as defining methodology for the activity because of the crucial lack of awareness about innovative approaches to teaching FL in Russia (see § 2.3 for more details). Language teachers in this country have considerable potential to include CLIL methodology in their curricula, though they are often unable to implement this approach due to the absence of support from the government.

CLIL could give considerable help in promoting the ICA component within FL education (see § 1.2 for more details). However, because of the language policy that is realised by the Russian authorities (that is rooted in the USSR language strategy), the intercultural component of language studies is hidden by more traditional approaches, hence, it is difficult to shift the "we VS they" cultural paradigm (see § 1.3 for more details).

Nevertheless, the focus towards innovation in education has been done a few years ago in most countries all over the world due to the pandemic of Covid-19, which made online education available much faster than if it might be done "in peacetime". Unexpectedly, the whole world faced a problem which must be solved immediately. The shift in technologies allowed students with different learning and economic backgrounds to get access to VR (see § 3.3 for more details), what made education more accessible, and provided opportunities to perceive new environments as learning contexts beyond school (see § 3.1 for more details). For instance, online visits to museums obtained the possibility for these learning spaces to become more diverse and informative.

Throughout all the activities, *visual thinking strategies* (hereafter, VTS) were applied as the method of facilitating the language activity in a museum by asking the questions that are supposed to open a lively discussion and engage students to participate actively (Mazzola, Raphael & Estrada, 2020). Moreover, the use of VTS within the CLIL online virtual museum

visit by a teacher/educator is aimed at making the learning environment more comfortable for students, as it helps them to understand how to interact with a work of art.

4.2   School context and participants

Being located in Nizhny Tagil, School No.5 opened its doors in 1935. Nizhny Tagil is the second-largest city in the Ural region with a population of almost 362 thousand citizens. Unfortunately, this industrial city, which is sited 1,8 thousand kilometres from Moscow, cannot boast about being a place for innovations, especially in scientific areas that are far from mining and processing raw materials. Although, the new generations are striving for positive changes for the city and the well-being of its citizens, bringing the ideas of renovations to different areas of the city life. The author of this work was born and raised in this city, she also finished School №5 in 2014, and is still in good relations with her English teacher, who kindly agreed to support this project by assisting in its implementation on-site.

Starting from 1965, the School №5 included teaching some subjects in English. Nowadays, French, German, and Czech could be chosen as additional subjects, it is also possible to learn Italian. There are special courses for high school pupils: "The Language of the English and American Press", "Technical Translation", and "English and American Literature". Moreover, the Development Centres always welcome students: English theatre, The Globe International Service Club, a museum of the school's history, a fashion theatre, a Czech language group, sports groups for games, and vocal ensembles. The school participates in the international programme FLEX (study and stay for a year in the USA) and is on friendly

terms with its twin towns schools: Cheb (Czech Republic) and Chattanooga (USA). Since 2008 the school has been participating in cooperative projects with the national branch of UNESCO[7].

The school has always supported the extra-curriculum activities that have been impacted positively on students' motivation. For instance, before the pandemic, the school has been organising trips to European countries every spring during the school holidays. The goals were aimed at getting students acquainted with foreign cultures by providing them with opportunities to practice the usage of target languages abroad and to develop the skills of intercultural communication in a natural environment. The trips lasted approximately for two weeks, students often visited several countries during this period, what helped them to form an opinion on the lifestyles of foreigners by comparing them with their own lives and discussing it with their teachers afterwards. These tours were organised by a team of English language teachers who are real enthusiasts of teaching their subject and implementing new approaches to FL education.

The group of participants in the study was composed of 4 male and 7 female students, forming a group of 11 learners, which represents half of the whole class. During the lessons of English in the school, students are usually divided into two smaller groups to facilitate the process of learning both for students and teachers. Learners have regular classes with this line-up for seven hours per week (five hours of General Practice, one hour of Business English, one hour of Technical Translation (due to the specificity of the region)). The author of this work has never met the students before, though was well-aware of their age (the upper-secondary in Russia corresponds to the age of 16-17) and their English language level. According to their teacher, all students have a B1 level, though some of them have a higher level because of either their educational or personal background. All students are of Russian

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[7] School No.5, Nizhny Tagil. Retrieved from https://shkola5nt.ru/page/28

citizenship, though the nationalities of some students are mixed; they have always been living in Russia. Their teacher holds the position of a Head Teacher of English in the school.

4.3 Museum

The Peggy Guggenheim Collection is one of the most important European and American art museums of the twentieth century in Italy. It is located in Venice, in a former home of American art collector Peggy Guggenheim. She spent her life relocating a lot because she was surrounded by the world's political climate of turmoil. At the age of 50, she moved to Venice and purchased Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, on the Grand Canal in Venice. She also moved her collection of artworks by artists of the 20th century with her. The Peggy Guggenheim Collection is part of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi[8]. The museum is one of the finest collections of Modern Art in the world. It represents such art movements such as Abstraction, Suprematism, Surrealism, Cubism, Futurism, Arte Povera, Constructivism, Dada and may others. Events for children and adults that are dedicated to art often take place in the Collection. The museum constantly develops activities for its young visitors, for instance, the projects "Scuola di Guggenheim" and "Kids Day" deserve special attention.

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[8] Peggy Guggenheim Collection. The museum. Retrieved from: https://www.guggenheim-venice.it/en/the-museum/

4.4 Research questions and hypotheses

With the implementation of the CLIL approach, it is possible to include a FL language component in any school subject to promote additional skills and abilities of students. Whereas CLIL museum visits may help learners to experience new learning modalities with the possibility to develop their ICA. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed:

- RQ1: What impact does participation in the CLIL online museum visit and the activities around museum objects have on the students' perception of the Russian art of the 20th century and understanding of their own culture?

- RQ2: How can museum resources be used to promote the (inter-)cultural component in CLIL to develop students' positive attitudes towards otherness?

The first research question is aimed at exploring the possible effects of the CLIL online museum visit on learners' opinions about their compatriots in the native cultural context. It will be studied when students will be doing interactive activities around museum objects. It aims at encouraging "a deeper level of learning" (Coyle, 2021).

The second research question has arisen with the purpose to trace the possible development of ICA that is promoted by museum objects and tasks based on them. Using language as a tool for acquiring knowledge, learners get the opportunity to obtain the content in FL using their knowledge in diverse contexts. A museum is a stimulating environment to promote the intercultural component in CLIL through FL lessons, what may develop students' positive attitudes towards other cultures.

The abovementioned research questions allowed us to formulate the following hypotheses:

- after experiencing the CLIL virtual museum visit, students will understand the notions of the Russian art of the 20th century better, what will form a high awareness of their own culture;

- the CLIL virtual museum visit and the activities around museum objects will stimulate the students' interest in other cultures and will help them to develop positive attitudes towards other cultures.

Taking into account the Russian educational environment, as far as we know there were no studies conducted on implementing a comprehensive CLIL module at Russian schools before (Baranova et al., 2019). Moreover, the are no governmental initiatives on developing FL learning in schools or universities, so nowadays no holistic changes that could improve FL learning in Russia were detected. Besides, the studies on the intercultural component implemented in museum learning through the CLIL approach is a relatively new topic with not much literature to be found. Furthermore, the element of learning in the context of VR makes this study distinctive in its kind.

4.5   Procedure

The learning activity was conducted on 25 January 2022 (Tuesday). Taking into consideration that the Collection is closed for visitors on Tuesdays, under these circumstances, it was much more convenient to realise the idea of the CLIL virtual museum visit. Furthermore, it was planned by a researcher in the long-term perspective to do this activity at the end of January, as, according to the teacher, the activity would fit the school curriculum. As was proven by the previous studies (Anderson & Zhang 2003; Fazzi 2018; Falk & Dierking 2000), it is easier for learners to perceive new information and remember it for longer periods if the museum visit is linked with a school curriculum. Students were following the programme of

the Starlight student book (Evans et al., 2010), and around that time they were studying the module *Travel Time*. It helped students to be inspired by the idea of going on the virtual trip to Venice, taking into consideration the fact that it is almost impossible for Russian tourists to come to Italy at the time of the pandemic.

Several days before the activity took place, the author of this work recorded a video message for students in two languages. It was mostly done in English, a few sentences in Russian were said to establish closer contact with learners. The idea of the CLIL approach as well as the nature of the virtual museum visit were explained to them. The purpose in so doing was an attempt to reduce students' anxiety and uncertainty about the participation in the project they were about to be involved in. The video was sent to the teacher and shown to learners afterwards. Besides, one day before the activity all the participants had a preparatory call on the ZOOM platform in order to check the quality of video and sound. All the materials including handouts and questionnaires for students and a teacher were sent to the teacher two days before the virtual museum visit, what allowed her to organise a pre-task activity that was prepared by the researcher.

4.6   Learning activity

The learning activity was task-based and, following Willi's Model (1996) was divided into three parts: pre-task, task cycle, post-task. The input was based on three works of Russian abstract artists of the 20th century (Kazimir Malevich, El Lissitzky, Wassily Kandinsky), whose works are presented in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. The selection of certain artworks was due to the personal choice of the researcher. Moreover, two out of three artists (Malevich and Lissitzky) have a story of joint work, what influenced the development of two related art movements that were led by them. According to the researcher, it allows students to make a

comparative analysis of different artistic styles. The museum contains three works of Kandinsky, the certain drawing was chosen due to the multiple meanings that the artist wanted to convey. It gave students the possibility to explore the artwork by themselves, finding their own meanings and connotations. According to Coyle (2021), this way of thinking presents clear cultural roots, making the hidden component of C-Culture explicit.

The CLIL virtual museum visit was conceived as a ZOOM call within the English Language lesson. During the call, the researcher was in the museum, while students were in their classroom in Russia. The author of this work was broadcasting from the museum, showing students the paintings, paying their attention to the way how are they placed on the walls: next or far from each other, surrounded by artworks made by Russian or foreign artists etc. Moreover, the ZOOM call allowed making an impression of the offline museum visit, as the researcher tried to provide learners with a chance to watch the pictures closely and for a long time. The broadcasting was made with the help of a smartphone; the video was streaming on a TV in the classroom; videos of the virtual museum visit were recorded and saved by the teacher, and then shared with the researcher via Google Drive.

The tasks to be done by students were described in their handouts and then repeated by the researcher in a more comprehensive and detailed manner, using VTS. The communication was conducted in English, Russian was used as a last resort, and mostly by the researcher to ensure that students understood the task correctly. The virtual museum visit lasted for approximately 80 minutes (two lessons of 35 minutes each + the break of 10 minutes which the participants decided to skip in order to continue with the visit).

4.7   Research instruments

The instruments used to collect data to answer our research questions were:

1.   Students' questionnaires

2.   A teacher's questionnaire

3.   Lesson video recordings

4.   The review of the activity in the form of essays and content published on Instagram (was given to students as an optional post-task)

4.7.1 Students' questionnaires

The teacher distributed the questionnaire to students the next day after the activity. It consisted of the Likert scale which includes ten statements. Responses included four options to mark one of each: "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", "strongly disagree". The scale in the students' questionnaire consisted of 10 statements (items). 3 out of 10 items addressed the first research question, being focused on attesting the students' opinion on the educational potential of museums and the influence on the perception of their native culture (statements 4, 6, 7). 4 out of 10 items were included to explore the influence of virtual museum visit on students' ICA (statements 5, 8, 9, 10), what corresponds to the second research question. Moreover, 3 out of 10 items were included with the purpose of evaluating the engagement of learners and their motivation during carrying out the tasks in this novel VR environment (statements 1, 2, 3).

Moreover, four open-ended questions were added to the questionnaire. In accordance with the research questions, they aimed at estimating the influence of the virtual museum visit on the ICA of students, also exploring the museums' potential for understanding of the native culture of learners. Furthermore, one question about learners' motivation and engagement was included in the open questions.

4.7.2 A teacher's questionnaire

The questionnaire for a teacher consisted of five open questions, what allows to get the teacher's opinion on the students' engagement and receive valuable feedback about the activity. One more English teacher intended to participate in the activity, but she could not manage to do it, therefore, the researcher received only one questionnaire from the teachers' side. In accordance with the students' questionnaire, questions for a teacher were built upon the research questions aimed at tracing the intercultural comparisons and reflections that were promoted by the activities around museum objects.

Questionnaires for students as well as the one for a teacher include the introductory part where the regards are given, and the purposes of data collection are explained in a detailed way. Both types of questionnaires could be found in the Appendix.

4.7.3 Other research instruments

The review of the activity in the form of essays and content published on Instagram are presented as additional research instruments to collect data to answer our research questions. These two types of tasks were made by four students as an optional post-task. After carrying out the activity, the researcher decided to give this task as homework. It was optional, as the completion of this task requires developed language skills; moreover, it is time-consuming and depends on the willingness of a participant to share their personal opinion.

As it was the students' post-task at will, two students provided the essays in written form, while another two participants made publications in their Instagram account (one post and one story) sharing their emotions and experiences with their followers.

Both types of data in the form of essays and Instagram publications were used as personal feedback to help us to answer the research questions. By providing their opinions, students were sharing their experience of acquiring new knowledge concerning Russian art and their native culture. Besides, they were expressing their thoughts about the aspect of interculturality and attitudes to other cultures. This feedback completed the picture of the gathered data, contributing to the research greatly.

Among other things, the lesson video recordings were done by the teacher. Due to the process of the analysis, the recordings provided information about the students' engagement and motivation, what also helped to trace and consider learners' opinions in the light of the notions of ICA and the interest in their own culture.

4.8   Pre-task activity

As a pre-task activity, the introductory text about Peggy Guggenheim, her collection, and the building where the museum is located was presented to students. The text followed warm-up questions:

- Would you open the doors of your home for visitors if you were an art collector?
- Which of the two legends about the palazzo do you like more? Which one is **truthful**, in your opinion?
- Did you know the word *palazzo*? It comes from Italian and means *palace*, but it is also used worldwide! Do you know any other words that come to English from Italian? Did any of these words find their place in the Russian language as well?

    - *Teaching aims*: to introduce the background of a museum to students; to arouse their curiosity; to create a stimulating learning environment; to present minor language similarities between Italian, English and Russian.

- *Structure:* the text in handouts was given as homework to students. The text is followed by a few warm-up questions which were discussed during the introductory part of the virtual museum visit.

- *Elapsed time*: 10 minutes.

Hi everyone! My name is Peggy Guggenheim, I am an American art collector. I was living in Venice around 40 years ago **while** gathering pieces of modern art from all around the world. Today you will get acquainted with some of the best **representatives** of my collection: Wassily Kandinsky, Kazimir Malevich and El Lissitzky. Have you heard these names before? I am sure that yes! Let's set up on a great art journey to Venice!

But first, let's have a look at the story of my house in Venice where I was living for many years! It is called Palazzo Venier dei Leoni (*Venier's Palace of the Lions*). It was designed in the mid-18th century by architect Lorenzo Boschetti for the Venier family.

Look at the photo of the palace, what is unusual in it? The original project **included** a few floors more! However, the project, which began in 1748, was stopped a year later, and the real reason for that is *still doubtful*. There are two legends about that. The first one talks about the powerful Venetian family that stopped the construction, for their palazzo, which stands just in front, would still be the most beautiful. The second legend is more **trivial**, the Venier family just ran out of money, and only the ground floor of the palazzo was built.

In the end, the ambitious project **remained** unfinished. This palazzo changed a few owners for more than a century, and in 1948 I bought it! It became my home, I also left some space to a small but **precious** collection of modern art. Then, I decided to redesign the space and starting from 1951, I began to open my home and collection to the public!

Now my home is **known worldwide** as *the Peggy Guggenheim Collection*, which **consists** of paintings by artists such as Kandinsky, Picasso, Malevich, Magritte, Lissitzky, Dalí, Pollock, Mondrian, and many others!

✓ Would you open the doors of your home for visitors if you were an art collector?
✓ Which of the two legends about the palazzo do you like more? Which one is **truthful**, in your opinion?
✓ Did you know the word *palazzo*? It comes from Italian and means *palace*, but it is also used worldwide! Do you know any other words that come to English from Italian? Did any of these words find their place in the Russian language as well?

Fig. 1. The pre-task activity

4.9 Task cycle

<u>*Getting acquainted with the Russian abstract art*</u>

- *Teaching aims*:
  - ♦ *Language:* to train the skill of reasoning in English and expressing one's opinion; to train the art-related vocabulary; to train the ability to perceive the multi-layered concepts in FL.
  - ♦ *(Inter-)cultural component in FL teaching:* as an introductive task, it had its aim to show students the variety of meanings that could be "extracted" from the drawing. The ideas of abstract art are often deeper than they seem, therefore, it is important to convey to students a notion of the diversity of connotations that could be hidden behind a canvas.
- *Structure*: students get to see the paintings by Lissitzky and Malevich that are shown on their TV and are encouraged to share their emotions about the drawings. After, learners name the colours and shapes they see. Given the fact that both paintings are untitled, students are suggested to names them. Not being aware of what picture belongs to each of the two artists, learners read their quotes (the authors are mentioned) and then discussed them in pairs, trying to find the hints that could help them to recognise the artist upon his quote. After the discussion, pupils were asked to read short extracts about the artistic styles of Lissitzky and Kandinsky. Then, students were suggested to have a discussion altogether, figuring out which artwork was created by whom.
- *Elapsed time: 17 minutes*

1916

1919-1920

What do you feel looking at the paintings? What emotions do you have?

Name the colours and figures that you see here! Can you identify, how many **layers** of shapes and colours are in the print?

Which painting is more chaotic? Which one is more organised?

Both pictures are ***untitled***, how would you call them?

Read the artists' **quotes** and try to **guess** which picture was painted by Malevich and which one is drawn by Lissitzky? Discuss it in pairs!

El Lissitzky: "The task of architecture is for the new town will not be laid chaotically but clearly and logically like a **beehive**"

Kazimir Malevich: "I paint energy, not the soul"

Now, let's turn the page and read some background information about the artists! And then we will discuss it all together.

Fig. 2. Getting acquainted with Russian abstract art (1/2)

> With geometric figures, <u>Kazimir Malevich</u> does not draw on the **surface of the canvas** but creates a new existence. The white background is **comparable** to the space, the figures are placed in orbits. Art is life-building, for which **liberated** forms and colours become the material. Later, the theme of architecture begins to be developed in the art of Malevich.

> Malevich **gives a way to** <u>Lazar Lissitzky</u>. Lissitzky **came up with an understanding** of projection, he organised the chaos of geometric figures with **axes**. The figures are no longer moving in space but **layered** on each other, the compositions become more difficult. The viewer is **immersed** in the picture, lost in it, but slowly the architectural purpose takes control, and the projections become **visible**.

Let's have a look at the pictures once again! So, which one is by Malevich, and which one is by Lissitzky? What helped you to understand that?

Fig. 2. Getting acquainted with Russian abstract art (2/2)

Following the abovementioned task, a supportive linguistic task was presented.

- *Teaching aims*:
  - ♦ *Language:* to train the usage of the vocabulary from different semantic fields; to train the skills of comparing and reasoning.
  - ♦ *(Inter-)cultural component in FL teaching:* being a follow-up exercise for the previous task, the focus here is still on the Russian culture. Though the contrastive nature of this exercise concludes the topic of puzzling working relations of Malevich and Lissitzky and their contributions to Russian art.
- *Structure*: in order to conclude the previous task, a simple practical exercise was offered. Students were asked to fill the gaps in four sentences. The pairs of words have already been given; they also corresponded to the number of the sentence. In each pair of words, the order of words could be left unchanged, otherwise, words may be swapped.
- *Elapsed time:* 9 minutes.

Developing abstract art in Russia, these two
artists were still quite different.
To get to know more about them,
have a look at the sentences below
and put the words into the blank spaces!

> ***SUPREMATISM**
> A term invented in 1915 by Kazimir Malevich for a
> new system of art. Malevich saw it as the **purity of
> shape**, free from any social meaning.

1. Lissitzky played a leading role in the *Suprematists'* reference to
_____. The creative working _____ between Malevich and
Lissitzky represent Suprematist architecture.
2. Malevich **established** _____, Lissitzky established _____.
3. Malevich views the Earth _____, Lissitzky climbs _____.
4. Malevich _____ his work, Lissitzky _____ and leaves for
Moscow, then for Europe.

1. *architecture, relationships*
2. *dynamics, statics*
3. *inside the canvas, from the sky*
4. *continues, gets out of the game*

Fig. 3. Getting acquainted with Russian abstract art: the exercise on vocabulary

Encountering Kandinsky and his "White Cross"

The name of the picture is a reference to the Orthodox Church traditions. The idea resonates with the cross on dresses of saints in Russian and Byzantium icons. Kandinsky was changing the styles of drawing many times, as well as membership in different art movements that he supported. He was covering multiple topics and cultures in his work, thus, the idea of multiculturality centred in the art of the given artist was conveyed.

- *Teaching aims:*
  - ♦ *Language*: to encourage students to express opinions in English; to boost the discussion about complex art- and culture-related issues in FL.
  - ♦ *(Inter-)cultural component in FL teaching*: to provide students with a better understanding of their own culture.

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- *Structure:* it is complicated to perceive and understand this painting as a whole, when visitors see this artwork for the first time. Thus, to help students not to be lost in this picture, it was suggested to name only one object they see in the picture. However, it was easier for some learners to describe the drawing in one word. The name of the picture was not conveyed to students, so then they were asked to choose one of three suggested names and explain their choice. Afterwards, they read the quote of Kandinsky and, having the written questions as a basis, opened the discussion.

- *Elapsed time:* 9 minutes

Fig. 4. Encountering Kandinsky

The Kandinsky world's recognition

- *Teaching aims:*

  - *Language:* to train the perception and understanding of English texts; to facilitate the discussion and cooperation in English with their classmates; to encourage students to exercise in making up a cohesive text in FL.

♦ *(Inter-)cultural component in FL teaching:* the story about a famous Russian artist who became known worldwide thanks to the American art collector was aimed to mention to promote students' positive attitudes towards other nationalities. Whereas the fact that Russian artist is well-known abroad had to encourage learners to know more about Russian culture. Besides, the tasks of this kind are designed to "build knowledge and develop skills, to incorporate language learning and intercultural understanding and to connect learning to the real-world" (Coyle, 2021, 21).

- *Structure:* Starting with a short introduction in the form of Peggy Guggenheim's quote and a made-up text, students were asked to read a piece about the first solo exhibition of Kandinsky in Great Britain. The text also includes a curious story of his works being presented to the curator of the Solomon Guggenheim's Museum in New York. A story is cropped into five parts, which students had to put in the right order for seeing the whole picture of the discovery of Kandinsky. Students had to work and discuss their ideas in pairs. After the task was carried out, the researcher asked a few open questions concerning the importance of the intercultural aspect in the process of understanding art per se.

- *Elapsed time*: 12 minutes.

I took advice from none but the best. I listened, how I listened! That's how I finally became my own expert.

So, I was discovering art by myself, **relying on my inner sense of beauty**. I knew people, and I never stopped exploring the world of art in the search for new faces and talents. Now, I had a wonderful story to tell you! Did you know that it was me who promoted Kandinsky's art worldwide? Read a story about his first personal exhibition in Great Britain and put the parts of the story in the right order for seeing the whole picture! Put the correct number of each paragraph in a square. Work in pairs!

The Kandinsky world's recognition

☐ **Though**, my uncle Solomon Guggenheim, who **owned** a gallery in New York, had yet never bought any of Kandinsky's paintings. So, Kandinsky asked me for a friendly **favour** to **encourage** my uncle to buy one of his early works. I promised to do my best, never dreaming of the result.

☐ I remember how I got to know about Wassily Kandinsky. My friend once sent me his works, and I liked them! When we met,
I asked Kandinsky if he wanted to give an exhibition at my art gallery in Great Britain, and as he had never shown there, he was **delighted** about that idea!

☐ The funny thing is, when Kandinsky began **to gain** international **attention**, Rebay **claimed** to have discovered the artist all on her own and to have introduced him to my uncle. History, as you can see, is a funny and **flexible** thing.

☐ Kandinsky and his wife arranged the whole London show themselves. I only sent them a gallery plan, and they even decided where each picture was to be placed. They were very business-like. No one looked less like an artist than Kandinsky, he seemed like a Wall Street broker!

☐ I wrote to my uncle asking him if he still wanted to buy the painting of an extraordinary Russian artist, however, my letter was **forwarded** to Hilla von Rebay, the curator of his museum. In reply, Hilla called Kandinsky's work **inappropriate** and made it very clear that she had no respect for my taste in art. It made me laugh! I honestly had a **gut feeling** that Kandinsky is the artist the whole world wants to know about. And I was right.

- Would you **approve** the picture of Kandinsky for your private collection?
- Some buy Russian artworks; others collect paintings by European or American artists. In your opinion, do the paintings help us to understand the other culture? Why?
- Is there any link between an artwork and the culture of the person who painted that? Is it helpful for us to understand the other culture by exploring some artworks, or it's not that important?

Fig. 5. The Kandinsky world's recognition

Amazons of the Russian Avant-Garde in Venice

- *Teaching aims:*

  ♦ *Language:* to help learners to trace the nature of international words *("Who are 'amazons'? Why did they name the exhibition like this?")* as it was done in the pre-task; to encourage students practice language structures related to analysis and comparisons.

  ♦ *(Inter-)cultural component in FL teaching:* to give students food for thought concerning the possibility to develop the ICA that is acquired during the process of interaction with museum objects. It was possible to shift the focus from international words to the notion of interculturality, what was made students think that it is useful to understand other nations' cultures because it helps to avoid various prejudices.

- *Structure:* The researcher read the text about the exhibition of six women artists of the Russian Avant-Garde that took place in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in 2000. Afterwards, she explained the main idea of this extract: the works of Russian female artists were gathered from all over the world to be shown in Venice, in the unique setting of the PGC. This museum was an ideal location for this exhibition, as it provided visitors with an understanding of the achievements of Russian artists against the background of French and Italian Abstract art. Based on this explanation, several open questions were addressed to students with the purpose to demonstrate the possibility to overcome prejudices towards other nationalities by getting acquainted with their artworks.

- *Elapsed time:* 13 minutes.

*In 2000, there was an exhibition **Amazons of the Avant-Garde** in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection*

*Avant-garde ideas, styles, and methods are very original in comparison to the period in which they happen

From 1 March to 28 May 2000 the Peggy Guggenheim Collection presented Amazons of the Avant-Garde, an exhibition **dedicated** to six extraordinary women artists of the Russian avant-garde: Alexandra Exter, Natalia Goncharova, Ljubov Popova, Olga Rozanova, Varvara Stepanova and Nadezhda Udaltsova. The first museum exhibition of its kind, Amazons of the Avant-Garde, brought paintings from private collections and museums in Russia and the **former** Soviet regions such as Kyiv, Ufa, Kazan, Perm and Kirov as well as Ekaterinburg, Moscow, and St. Petersburg.

Russian art of the early twentieth century was inspired by the integration of European ideas such as Abstraction, Futurism and Cubism. The presentation of the exhibition at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection offers an ideal **setting** for understanding the **achievements** of these Russian artists against the background of French and Italian Cubism.

Who are "amazons"? Why did they name the exhibition like this?

In your opinion, what was the reason to bring a hundred paintings from all over the world to show them in one place, what for was it done?

*What do you think, whether the international exhibitions of this kind help people understand other nations' culture? Is it helpful to see the art from other countries to avoid **prejudices**?*

Fig. 6. Amazons of the Russian Avant-Garde in Venice

4.10 Post-task activity

The post-task activity was designed with the purpose of getting the students' feedback on the CLIL virtual museum visit in an informal way. The task was optional, five out of eleven students (two students got sick and had to stop attending classes for some time) did the task. The researcher also received two reviews on Instagram (through being tagged) and two essays expressing a personal opinion on the activity.

- *Teaching aims:* to provide students with an opportunity to look back and estimate the personal value of this learning module.

- *Structure:* the researcher thanked students for participation and encouraged them to give feedback about the activity on Instagram or in the worksheet (included in the handouts).

- *Elapsed time:* 10 minutes (explanation, taking pictures, saying goodbyes).

That's all, guys! Hope you enjoyed our virtual museum visit!
If yes, let the whole world know! Write a post on *Instagram* or *VKontakte* and share it with the following hashtags:
#peggyguggenheim #thepeggyguggenheimcollection #thepgc

Tell us **how it went**, what drawing you liked most and whether you are interested in visiting the Peggy Guggenheim Collection **personally**! Please tag Maria for her to read your feedback: *@the_fifth_ocean*

You can also tag the museum in your posts or stories and get a chance to be reposted on their Instagram page for real! **@guggenheim_venice**

Otherwise, write the short article here and send it to Maria, she will be **intrigued** to receive your comment!

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Fig. 7. The post-task activity

4.11 Additional handout: the wordlist

Apart from the tasks, the researcher made a wordlist with the words from higher levels of the knowledge of English (B1-C2). It was suggested to students to use it once they have doubts about some unfamiliar words. The wordlist was made in a form of an English-Russian dictionary with the translations provided. Moreover, additional words that were relevant to tasks were included in the list (art-related terms, shapes names etc.). This was done to reduce the learners' anxiety that might be caused by the lack of linguistic competency that is sufficient for effective participation in the activity. The words that students might not know (according to the researcher's opinion) were written in bold in all tasks presented in handouts. There were eight sections in the wordlist, each related to the page number written at the bottom of each page of the handout.

The next chapter will provide the analysis of the data collected during and after the activities presented.

CHAPTER 5. Analysis

In this chapter, the qualitative data collected through the research instruments (transcriptions of students' interactions, the data from questionnaires and personal feedback) will be analysed to demonstrate learners' motivation, curiosity towards their own culture and the willingness to discover the notion of interculturality. In accordance with the RQ, the findings of our research will be divided into two broad subject matters: the educational potential of museums aimed at understanding the native culture (paragraph 5.1) and the influence of the virtual museum visit on the ICA of students (paragraph 5.2). Moreover, the learners' engagement will be also analysed aiming at evaluating participants' motivation and fulfilment from the activity (paragraph 5.3). A detailed interpretation of the results will be given in the Discussion.

5.1 The educational potential of museums aimed at understanding the native culture

To answer the first research question, namely, whether participation in the CLIL online museum visit and the activities around museum objects influence the students' understanding of their own culture, the following data have been considered:

- Questionnaire for students: items 4, 5 and 6

- Questionnaire for students: item 13

- Lesson video recordings

- Essays

Below, the table with the participants' answers is presented. The number of marked options is indicated in cells:

	Totally agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally disagree
Item 4. I think that museum objects are helpful in language learning	1	3	1	
Item 5. The activity provided me with a better understanding of my own culture		4	1	
Item 6. The fact that our artists are well-known abroad encourages me to know more about Russian culture	4		1	

Fig. 9. Table showing students' responses to the items 4-6

Item 13 corresponds to the aspect that focuses on exploring the possibilities of museum objects to foster understanding of the native culture of learners. The question and answers are provided below (original spelling retained, the answers are anonymised):

- Item 13: In your opinion, why is it important to study the works of Russian artists in English lessons?

- *I think it's not important because not all students are interested in it and it's totally unnecessary for them. Also not everyone can understand it correctly.*

- *Firstly, studying the works of Russian artists in English lessons is helpful in language learning. Secondly, you can analyse Russian artworks on the other side and understand the meaning of artworks in new way.*

- *It could be easier to study English discussing culture of your own country as it's closer to you. What is more, it is much more interesting to get acquainted with your country using other language.*

- *It develops your cultural level and your interest in art, plus it's a good practice for speaking English.*

- *We can learn more about Russian artists but in different way or maybe we can find out what authors think or tell about them (Russian artists).*

The answers are not very cohesive, though biases that contradict hypotheses are possible, especially if the deviation is slight. Furthermore, the students' interest in their native culture is clearly illustrated by the following extracts from the class discussions transcripts.

Extract 1: after the fruitful discussion of the artworks, participants are trying to figure out the authorship of two drawings (by Malevich and Lissitzky) according to the authors' quotes and texts about their style of drawing:

D: This one was drawn by Malevich because there's some energy.
A: I think that this picture (pointing out at the other picture) was painted by Malevich, I see more soul in this.
N: The text about him is more about liberated forms and colours. Talking about the quote, I see the soul here, when I first saw it, I felt this energy. Energy about light colours, yellow and white, a lot of light colours and I felt this energy. As for the second picture, I think it's by Lissitzky because he said something about the axes, and I can see in this picture some lines (waving his hand showing the lines) at the bottom, I see "X", and I can feel the energy of this picture too.

Extract 2: students have a conversation discussing the quote by Kandinsky: "To create a work of art is to create the world". Before, the researcher asked them whether they agree with it:

P: I believe that every picture or painting is some new world in which the particular heroes with their own ideas. I believe that to create a work of art is to create the world.
D: I agree with it. It's like, if you are an artist, you can create something where you want to live, you can create what you want to use and something else, so to create the work of art is to create your own little world.

Presented transcripts illustrate the curiosity about Russian art that linguistically is expressed in reasoning and expressing opinions in English, which also includes diligent work with texts in students' handouts. Learners were successfully carrying out the tasks that are based on museum objects, which increased their awareness of their native culture. It is proved by the extracts from the essays:

1) *<...> How could we have thought four years ago that distance learning is possible and it is very effective? <...>*

   Although at first, we accepted the offer to participate in this hardly understanding the meaning, but then we realised, how unique the opportunity is. <...>It was also a valuable experience for me that I learned something new about the leaders of our country.

2) *<...> The virtual lesson consisted of an introduction to paintings of Avant-Garde artists: Kazimir Malevich, Lazar Lissitzky, Wassily Kandinsky. We went into the meaning of the paintings of these artists. <...> Personally, the vision of Lazar Lissitzky is close to me. The select colours, the purity of shapes, the fact of layering the figures and their connexion – it is fascinating.*

5.2   Influence of the virtual museum visit on the ICA of students

To answer the second research question, namely, whether participation in the CLIL online museum visit influence the learners' attitudes to other cultures and the notion of interculturality they acquire during the activity, the following data have been considered:

- Questionnaire to students: items 7, 8, 9 and 10

- Questionnaire to students: item 14

- Lesson video recordings

- Essays

Below, the table with the participants' answers is presented. The number of marked options is indicated in cells:

	Totally agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally disagree
Item 7. I had the chance to make comparisons across different cultures		3	2	
Item 8. It is easier to overcome prejudices		2	3	

towards other nationalities by getting acquainted with their artworks				
Item 9. The fact that artworks of Russian artists share the same art spaces with other artistic geniuses from all over the world encourages me to know more about artists from abroad	2	2	1	
Item 10. I think that an intercultural approach can help in language learning	4	1		

Fig. 10. Table showing students' responses to the items 7-10

Item 14 corresponds to item 8, which is aimed to estimate positive attitudes to other cultures that might be developed due to the implementation of an intercultural approach in FL education. The question and answers are provided below (original spelling retained, the answers are anonymised):

- Item 14: If you answered, "Totally agree" or "Agree" on the 8th question, please explain your reasons.

 🔶 *Art depends on the talent and thoughts of people, not their nationality.*

 🔶 *Honestly, when I study the artworks of different artists, I first of all pay attention to inner world of artist then culture of his nation.*

 🔶 *I disagree with this statement. Actually, analysing a picture I try to understand what the author was thinking when creating the artwork, about his inner world but not about his culture and nation.*

 🔶 *I think it's easier for me because I love art and it's easy for me to understand it in principle, but this is not quite true because all people have the same view of art.*

 🔶 *(No answer)*

A significant deviation between the expected and the empirical results could be found here, what may lead to the unexpected outcomes of the current study. Whereas the question

was about the possible ways of overcoming the prejudices with the help of art, replies illustrate the lack of wrong stereotypes per se.

It is confirmed by the extract from the essay of one of the students:

- *Honestly, I really like to analyse the paintings of Avant-Garde artists because they show the world in other forms, from different views. These pictures aren't clear – that is what gains my attention. <u>They are devoid of any prejudices.</u>*

The focus here has been slightly shifted to the concern of whether art can be stereotyped, and the students illustrated the rejection of this idea, providing the opinion that art is free from prejudices. However, the implemented method of VTS (see § 4.1 for more details) helped to guide the language activity in a museum in the right direction by asking questions that encouraged students to communicate with the researcher on the topic of ICA, which might be developed through the interaction with the museum objects. The following extracts are presented to illustrate that:

Extract 3: the researcher asked some questions to foster the discussion:

Researcher: Some buy Russian artworks; others collect paintings by French or American artists. In your opinion, do the paintings help us to understand the other culture? Why? <…> Is it helpful for us to understand the other culture by exploring some artworks or it's not that important?

A: I think it's right but what's more important, is to make people think about art itself, I don't know… About our society, about the problems of a personality.

Researcher: It's a good point, thank you! Also, is it possible to understand the other culture by exploring the artworks? Or not?

D: I think, yes. Because you need to understand what other people want to tell to you by these pictures, but in fact, if you see pictures by different nations they're all different and you can see various emotions with some energies in it, and it's all interesting and it's all wonderful. It's also interesting to understand how people view their world.

P: I think it's really important. But talking about this type of art, it is really difficult for me to understand that those painters are from different countries.

A: I think it's a good way to understand in the world of the painter to understand these things, his soul.

Extract 4:

Researcher: In your opinion, what was the purpose to bring a hundred paintings from all over the world to show them in one place, what for was it done?

N: Russia is an unusual country, and art from this country is unusual too; a lot of pictures and beautiful art are unusual to other countries. For example, you can see European style in American pictures, in some American pictures you can see European style. But Russians have an unusual, very interesting style because nobody can repeat it because Russians have unusual energy of the art.

D: People want to see how people draw pictures in one country but not the same people. These all are different, different from other countries. And they wanted to show women art from one country.

Extract 5: after reading and discussing the text about the exhibition the Amazons of Avant-Garde in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, the researcher asked some questions to promote the aspect of interculturality in discussion:

Researcher: What do you think, whether the international exhibitions of this kind help people understand other nations' culture? Is it helpful to see the art from other countries to avoid prejudices?

A: I think it's quite useful to understand other nations' cultures because it helps us to avoid various prejudices.

N: That's interesting to know more about other countries by looking at the pictures. And it's possible… Get to know something new about the culture of these countries.

B: It's helpful.

Extract 6:

Researcher: Let's imagine that you have some negative stereotypes of one culture. Once, you visit the exhibition where the artists from this culture (citizens of the country/nation you have some prejudices about) are presented. Then, through the drawings, you get to know this culture better and understand, that those people are not that bad. Could you imagine that, or it doesn't relate to you?

D: I think it can be true that news can create these relations by talking about wars or something bad, but when you see "kind" (laughs) pictures and some beautiful drawings, you can understand that those people are really not that bad. Because when you see the paintings from your own country, you live only in your own world.

Moreover, the essay by one of the students revealed a noteworthy aspect to be covered: "*For me, this was the first experience of communicating with a person living in Europe, which is very important because speaking has a great significance in the exam that I will take next year*". The exam that was mentioned by the student is The Unified State Exam which is the only form of graduation examination in schools and the main form of preliminary examinations in universities since 2009. Graduates experience the highest level of stress and responsibility before taking their exams, whereas teachers carefully guard them in their journey by monitoring any changes in the exam's structure. Taking into account the English Language exam, it emphasizes the four groups of tasks: reading, listening, writing, and speaking, helping learners to develop their communicative competence, though the intercultural aspect of FL learning is an educational goal that is hard to achieve in this setting.

There is a concern about the disconnection between learners' views stated in the questionnaire and their opinions expressed during the lesson. The questionnaires were filled in afterwards the activity, and the researcher was not present at this stage. The participants made this task at home, with no teacher to help them. On the one hand, students filled the forms by themselves, and their answers illustrate the developed language skills. On the other hand, as the notion of interculturality is not included in FL education in Russia, this approach is extremely new for students, they are not aware of its nature and benefits. Because of that, in

the researcher's opinion, with no assistance, they might be confused by the 8th question in the questionnaire. It resulted in a high proportion of disagreement with the statement about the possibility to overcome stereotypes using artworks in FL education in the questionnaire, however, this contradicts the transcripts of learners' discussions recorded during the lesson.

Nevertheless, the opinion that students managed to grasp the meaning of ICA during the activity is also shared by the teacher, whose comments are delivered through the teacher's questionnaire. She is sure that during the CLIL virtual museum visit the students had the opportunity to make intercultural comparisons and reflections during the activity, what, according to her opinion, is very important in FL education. The thing she appreciated most was the fact that students were able to speak English without paying attention to mistakes, expressing their opinions on the topics they were not experts in. Evaluating virtual museum tours as a tool to trigger the development of students' intercultural awareness in FL education, she stated that she would like to strengthen this component in the curriculum, as it "broadens students' minds, helps them master language skills and encourages them to study English and, maybe, other foreign languages". The teacher also stated her wish to host any other activities of this kind in her classes, expressing comprehensive support from her side.

As the teacher was present during all time when the activity was conducted (two lessons + a break), she was able to recall her expectations before the task started and compare them with her own opinion after the activity finished: "Actually, I was rather doubtful about the students when we first started to discuss the project with Maria. I was not sure whether they would talk about such a specific topic. But when the activity started and they saw Maria at the museum in Venice talking about the masterpieces presented there, their shyness disappeared. They started talking as if they were professional art critics or guides in the art museum. They were really curious to learn the information presented by Maria". It illustrates that during the CLIL virtual museum visit the new information was acquired by students eagerly and the

learning environment inspired learners to train their language skills, what was caused by the high level of motivation to participate in the activity. The abovementioned features characterise the CLIL approach, and if the goals of this activity were obtained within the learning context of the country where students have never had such experience, it can be counted as a success.

5.3 Learners' engagement

Apart from the eagerness to understand the native culture and the tendency to make intercultural comparisons, the researcher believes that it is important to analyse the students' engagement, motivation, and level of satisfaction by the activity. For making that, the following data have been considered:

- Questionnaire to students: items 1, 2 and 3

- Questionnaire to students: items 11 and 12

- Instagram posts

- Essays

Below, the table with the participants' answers is presented. The number of marked options is indicated in cells:

	Totally agree	Agree	Disagree	Totally disagree
Item 1. I liked the activity in general	4	1		
Item 2. I thought the tasks were interesting	3	2		
Item 3. I was motivated for doing these tasks	1	4		

Fig. 8. Table showing students' responses to items 1-3 in the questionnaire

The abovementioned data illustrates the high level of students' motivation and satisfaction with the activity. This statement is proven by the answers to the first and the fourth

open questions. The questions and answers are provided below (original spelling retained, the answers are anonymised):

- Item 11: What did you enjoy most about the virtual museum activity?
  - *I liked most English practice with someone who lives in Europe and the opportunity to learn something new about Russian artists because I am not an artist and don't know a lot about it.*
  - *In fact, I enjoyed that I had opportunity to access two countries at the same time and to visit the museum staying at home.*
  - *I was in my own school in Nizhniy Tagil, and at the moment I could visit the Italian museum. At the pandemic situation, it was rather convenient.*
  - *I enjoyed everything, but most of all I enjoy the tasks and the discussion process itself, it was very pleasant to practise English with such a person.*
  - *The most I enjoyed by looking at the paintings because I didn't have that experience before.*

- Item 12: Do you think if this approach of teaching English is realized in Russian schools, will it increase the level of motivation among Russian students to learn English? If so, why?

  - *I think yes because students will have an opportunity to see these paintings in some English-speaking countries and will want to ask some questions to the guide so it will be very useful to master language skills.*
  - *I don't think so. It is better to study everyday day life, history and culture of English-speaking countries in English lessons because it will motivate students to practice language more and will analyse English lessons on the other side.*
  - *I think so. I believe learning other languages might help you to know more about cultures of different countries. It could encourage students even more to study English as it shows us the world beyond borders of our country.*
  - *I think so, of course, yes. As soon as there is an interesting topic for conversation, you want to talk about it in any language.*

↭ *I think if student want to learn English he will do it, if student don't want to learn something he won't do it. If this approach of teaching English is realised in Russian schools then we will have more opportunities to learn English.*

Positive reviews extracted from the questionnaires correspond to the positive feedback that was given on Instagram by two students (original spelling retained):

↭ Instagram post:

Today I took part in an amazing event. A graduate of our school directly from Venice gave us a lesson entirely in English, where she told us about the works of Malevich, Lissitzky and Kandinsky. The most interesting thing is that all the works, which was shown, are stored in an equally interesting museum – the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Most of all, of course, I liked the opportunity to practice the language with a person living in Europe. But also, I got acquainted in more detail with the work of Russian artists, because I used to know only the "Black Square" from Malevich
Thanks to our teacher, I really wanted to visit this museum and see not only the works of Russians but also foreign ones. I really hope to visit Venice one day and see these pieces of the art live.
Teacher/presenter: @the_fifth_ocean
Museum: @guggenheim_venice
#guggenheim#art#english

↭ Instagram story:

On Tuesday at school, I got a new interesting experience. @the_fifth_ocean held an interactive lesson for us – a tour of @guggenheim_venice. To speak English and look at art, I'm only "for"!

Provided feedback illustrates the high value of the given learning experience to students. They have never experienced anything similar within the English Language lessons school programme, what is illustrated by the teacher's quote from the questionnaire: *"The activity is absolutely different from the language lessons I normally carry out"*. The modality of the virtual museum visit that is framed by the CLIL approach impacted greatly on the students'

motivation to learn English. It could be illustrated by the extracts from the essays which were voluntarily provided by two students (original spelling retained, the answers are anonymised):

1) *<…> Our wonderful teacher straight from the Italian museum in Venice talked about artists and most importantly showed their paintings. Even though the quality was different through the phone than in real life, it was still very fascinating. For me, this was the first experience of communicating with a person living in Europe, which is very important because speaking has a great significance in the exam that I will take next year.*

2) *<…> In view of the last events in the world, I could visit an art exhibition in Italy without leaving school in Russia recently. And you know, I was very intrigued by this event. In fact, there were a lot of questions: How will it go? Will I be interested in it? Will be it understand to me? But then all doubt disappeared, I just enjoyed the work process. <…> I am grateful to Mary for such an incredible opportunity! This lesson gave me a motivation to continue to develop myself. Develop my language skills. Moreover, I will make my efforts to visit not virtual, but real Italy. And of course, visit the Peggy Guggenheim Collection personally.*

All the findings demonstrate the high level of motivation to continue developing FL skills after the conducted activity. Students' reviews illustrate their excitement and willingness to have similar learning activities in future.

The question concerning the hypotheses' confirmation and reasons for it will be examined in the last section of the work.

CHAPTER 6. Discussion

In this chapter, the main results will be discussed considering finding answers to our RQ. In order to highlight the main issues that data analysis has raised, we will start by review of the learners' attitudes towards their own culture within the conducted activities (paragraph 6.1). Then, the willingness to discover the notion of interculturality by Russian students will be interpreted (paragraph 6.2). Furthermore, the feedback from learners will be described in order to illustrate the potential of the implementation of the CLIL learning modality within the Russian learning context (paragraph 6.3).

6.1 The educational potential of museums aimed at understanding the native culture

The results of the research illustrated the considerable interest that was expressed by the participants in the Russian culture. They used museum objects as study materials to get to know more about their compatriots who were known worldwide as outstanding artists. Students were voicing their opinions about the artworks during the lesson with no fear of making a mistake, what illustrates their motivation in taking part in the activity. This behavioural pattern is confirmed by the study of Millrood and Maksimova (2017), who specify that the implementation of the CLIL approach helps students to divert their attention away from the difficulties of worrying about making linguistic mistakes, as their focus is switching to the core content of the studied topic.

While all participants found enjoyment in the process of getting acquainted with the representatives of their culture, considering it very useful and valuable, some even chose their favourite artist among the three discussed and stated the reasons for it. Students were working with the quotes of artists and the texts about their work style to better understand the ideas the Russian abstract artists wanted to convey to the world.

All the students mentioned that the activity based on the artworks of their compatriots is a unique opportunity to acquire new knowledge about their culture practising their language skills. It was also mentioned that this method of studying FL helps to analyse artworks from the other side, acquiring new meanings and connotations using the other language. Besides, it was revealed that it is easier to study English while discussing the native culture, as "*it's closer to you*". Most students evaluated this experience of distance learning as very effective, what is proven by the captivating quote by Coyle: "Effective learning cannot take place without language and thinking: learning *is* language and thinking" (Coyle, 2021, 26).

However, opinions about the difficulty in understanding abstract art and the lack of interest in this topic were expressed. To avoid these challenges that are faced by students and coped with by teachers (as it is expressed in the lack of students' motivation), educators should try to adapt the materials and tasks for students who have not been interested in art before lesson (Shoemaker, 1998). To arouse the interest in art and to make it more valuable for students, the author of this work suggests diversifying the artworks by exploring various types of pictures. For instance, the paintings that draw attention to the social problems of different times may increase the students' motivation to express their opinions on some large or complex topics. Besides, this approach has considerable potential to be included in the History or Sociology lesson that is based on CLIL methodology, what will be a major innovation for the Russian educational context.

The interpretation of data collected led to confirmation of the first hypothesis, demonstrating that the CLIL virtual museum visit fosters a better understanding of students' native culture and helps them to increase awareness of their own culture.

6.2 Influence of the virtual museum visit on the ICA of students

The research findings illustrated the controversial results concerning the ICA that can be developed within the virtual museum visit. The aspect to be studied here is placed on the students' opinion about the possibility to overcome some cultural prejudices with the help of the artworks by artists from different cultures.

During the lesson, the students highlighted that it is possible to define various emotions and energies in paintings that will help to develop the vision of how different people see their world. It was also noted that the study of paintings by artists of foreign countries is helpful to avoid different cultural stereotypes. Moreover, the participants came to the conclusion that this process may develop the awareness of other nations' cultures because it helps us to avoid various prejudices.

Furthermore, learners agreed that observing pieces of art made by authors from different cultures may help to develop tolerance towards foreign cultures. According to students' opinions, it is also possible to change negative attitudes about some cultures that are formed by mass media to positive ones by getting acquainted with artworks. Thus, students' reasoning seems quite clear and cohesive.

Even though in the classroom learners were sharing the views of the possibility to study artworks to eliminate prejudices about other cultures, the opposite results can be seen in the questionnaire's open questions. Most of the answers convey the idea of putting the personality of the author, their ideas and intentions first, and only then take their nationality and culture into consideration. It seems that the absence of stereotypes is the point of departure for these students to acquire other cultures. Despite no particular focus on the intercultural approach in FL teaching in Russia is made, the learners understand its notions, demonstrating the lack of

judgements that are based on origin, and it is considered to be a decent example of ICA (Baker, 2011).

However, some other reasons might be suggested to cause the above-mentioned contradiction. The participants made this task at home, with no teacher to help them. Because of that, they might find some questions in the questionnaire confusing, what followed the abovementioned discrepancies in the result. The learners' answers during the lesson and the teacher's opinion upon the activity confirm the researcher's view that states that students acquired the notion of ICA either way. In particular, they highlight that art is devoid of any prejudices, stating that neglecting the art produced by other cultures narrows one's outlook.

Although there are some statements that are unfavourable to the intercultural approach, hence, the author of this work revealed some other factors which might influence the twofold results of the research. The learning environment and the presence of the educator/teacher are extremely important during the whole activity, as in case of some doubts, students have a possibility to ask a question or get clarification. Multimodal lessons like the one that was given often have a multi-layered nature, and all the aspects must be taken into account, though, the researcher tends to the fact that a couple of questions in the questionnaire were misinterpreted by students who were conducting the task on their own.

Additionally, it should be considered that the work of FL teachers in Russia is specified by a national curriculum that focuses on a grammar-based teaching approach aiming at the development of communicative competence (Azar, 2007). According to Coyle (2021), the ways how the intercultural aspect is presented in textbooks are not enough for students to acquire the notion of ICA and identify cultural roots as a starting point for "facilitating meaning-making, knowledge building and shaping identities". Moreover, there are no explicit cultural links between the content that is studied within the framework of the first (native)

language and FL classes. In order to foster intercultural awareness, teachers of native and foreign languages need to arouse curiosity about the intercultural (inter-)relations among learners, while learning spaces have to motivate learners to look for peculiarities of different cultures.

The researcher considers that the results of the questionnaires and the transcripts vary because the interculturality has never been taught to students as an idea that can naturally be embedded in the learning process. The participants could not fully understand the nature of the approach and how their FL learning can benefit from it. In other countries, this aspect is taught and instilled by experienced teachers for years, as it is included in the school curriculum. As a result, countries with advanced educational systems have students with a highly developed sense of ICA. Though, these initiatives should be supported by the government, which is, unfortunately, is not the case in Russia.

Nevertheless, the research findings demonstrate the students' ability to build judgements that are not built upon the origin and not give it the top priority in identifying oneself and others, which corresponds to one of the notions of interculturality.

6.3 Learners' engagement

The research findings illustrated the high level of learners' engagement in the process of activity that was confirmed by strong motivation and evident satisfaction. Students pointed out that they enjoyed the process of having the discussion in FL and practising their language skills with a person who lives abroad, as for many of them it was the first opportunity to communicate with someone who does not constantly live in Russia. Besides, learners got highly involved because of the opportunity to participate in the virtual museum visit while being in their classroom, this experience became especially valuable because of the pandemic. Moreover, students appreciated the activity because they had a chance to encounter and discuss some

paintings that they have never had a chance to see before, also, they found information about the artists and their artworks very interesting. As our virtual museum visit was held during the English lesson within the CLIL approach, the strong motivation of the participants corresponds to the comparative studies by Lasagabaster and Doiz (2015) and Baranova (2018), where the group of students with elements of CLIL included in their English teaching had a higher level of motivation to learn English than did the non-CLIL group.

Being inspired by the activity, one of the students who published their feedback on Instagram expressed their desire to visit the museum by themselves and to have a chance to see the works of Russian and foreign artists live. This is a good example of the theory expressed in Fazzi (2018) that museum visits have long-lasting positive emotional outcomes "such as increased motivation or interest, sparking curiosity, and improved attitudes towards a topic". The other student willingly wrote an essay on the topic of the virtual visit, stating that the activity gave them the high motivation to continue developing their language skills. This behaviour pattern proves the thought of many researchers that was illustrated in Fazzi and Lasagabaster (2020): the level of communicative competence, motivation and other linguistic and non-linguistics aspects are highly developed in learners who perform tasks in non-formal and informal settings, namely, in museums.

When asked to estimate the potential increase of students' motivation due to the implementation of the intercultural approach of teaching FL in Russian schools, some answers demonstrate the predominance of the cultural approach (Turbina, 2018), which is illustrated by the strong preference in studying exclusively foreign culture within FL lessons. Moreover, the desire of the intercultural aspect to be included only for the reason of being able to communicate in English abroad was expressed. As it was previously said by Rubtcova and Kaisarova (2016), without strong intrinsic motivation, the possibility to practice language skills abroad becomes the highest source of extrinsic motivation among students.

On the other hand, Russian students feel the need for innovations in FL teaching, as it provides new opportunities to learn the language and to get to know more about cultures of different countries and compare them, perceiving English as a source of information about the world "beyond the borders of our country". Byram (1988) share the same opinion of the importance of comparing the students' native culture with other ones within FL education.

However, the research findings revealed major limitations connected to the Russian learning context that impacts the development of the ICA among students adversely. Nevertheless, the conducted activity highly motivated participants to develop their FL skills and encouraged them to know more about modern art and the representatives of this movement. The explanation of it might be found in the following reasons: the uniqueness of the approach within the Russian educational context, what stimulates the students' interest. Therefore, the uniqueness is justified by the lack of awareness of novel FL teaching methodologies in Russia and dependence on the curriculum provided by the government, what is proven by the teacher's quote from the questionnaire: *"<…> I am limited to the program that I have to follow but I could include some elements of such virtual visits especially when we have some cultural awareness lessons".* Moreover, the possibility to have at least a virtual trip is very alluring for students and it influences their motivation positively. It also fit into the current learning programme, as now participants are studying the module "Travel Time" in their English Language textbooks.

The Russian learning environment makes the implementation of the ICA approach a demanding task to cope with. Although some suggestions and recommendations could be produced. According to the researchers' opinion, the intercultural component within FL education might be fostered and developed by including more comparisons of Russian art with the artworks by foreign artists. Moreover, the process of exploring the potential of other art movements and styles can awaken deeper interest among learners. For instance, the paintings

with some historic background will perfectly fit into the curriculum of other subjects, such as History or Sociology, what will allow exploiting the potential of the CLIL approach to the full. Furthermore, including the ideas of ICA starting from the early stages of school education will help students to acquire the intercultural worldview within the time of finishing school, as otherwise it could be neglected by high-school students who have to organise their time correctly due to their final exams.

Conclusion

Situated in the field of online language learning, this research has attempted to shed light on the creation of students' intercultural awareness that is formed by the activities that are based on the interaction with museum objects. The research was conducted within the framework of the CLIL approach that helped students to acquire new information in their target language. The virtual museum visit was chosen as a format of the interactive lesson to provide new possibilities for online language learning, leading to successful language acquisition. Museum objects were explored in their power to convey the (inter-)cultural ideas and provide a better understanding of students' native culture. By hypothesising that the interest in native culture and ICA of the participants would turn up due to the interaction with the artworks, the research addressed the following questions:

- What impact does participation in the CLIL online museum visit and the activities around museum objects have on the students' perception of the Russian art of the 20th century and understanding of their own culture?

- How can museum resources be used to promote the (inter-)cultural component in CLIL to develop students' positive attitudes towards otherness?

The activity conducted within the English language lesson highlighted the great curiosity of Russian high-school students in their own culture. Moreover, despite the lack of significant traces of implementing an intercultural approach in Russian school education, the participants showed a keen interest in the notion of ICA and the ways it can be used in reducing prejudices regarding other cultures. Learners appreciated the VR modality of FL learning and were very motivated in doing the tasks. Furthermore, data from questionnaire results and personal feedback discovered the attractive aspects of obtaining the (inter-)cultural awareness with the

help of museum objects in the VR modality that was not earlier covered by any of analogous studies.

The research findings demonstrate the potential of the learners to see the deep meaning behind the canvas, tracing the (inter-)cultural roots of their and other cultures. In particular, the results showed the lack of prejudices concerning other cultures and zero judgement that is based on nationality. To sum up, despite the ideas of ICA are not very much developed in Russia, its notion is familiar for students. The activity awakened their interest in foreign art and its representatives, which is considered as a good point for starting to develop the skill of ICA.

In conclusion, the results confirmed that the virtual museum visit being realised within the framework of the CLIL methodology influences the students' understanding of their own culture positively and can be used in promoting an optimistic attitude towards other cultures. The research and its findings can be interpreted as a step towards the innovations within the Russian learning context, as it shows the ways of diversification of FL education that can result in instilling the intercultural vision to learners, and this skill is always in demand.

The implementation of modern learning practices may provide learners, teachers, and educators with the new opportunities. In Russia, this learning context encompasses a few brand-new approaches in FL teaching, which may help learners to acquire the skills of the citizen of the world and to become more included in global processes.

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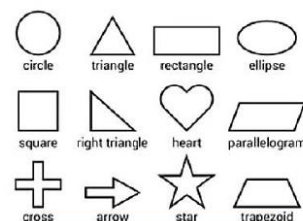
APPENDIX A. Wordlist for students

Wordlist: your dictionary for today's lesson

How to use it? The words that may be unfamiliar to you are **written in bold**.
So, if you do not know some words, go to this dictionary, and look for them!
Each page of your printed set of tasks has a page at the bottom.
Each section (1-8) relates to (соотносится с) the page number.

circle · triangle · rectangle · ellipse
square · right triangle · heart · parallelogram
cross · arrow · star · trapezoid

A hint: shapes names, you'll need it!

1

While – в то время как
A representative – представитель
To include – включать в себя
Doubtful – недостоверный
Trivial – банальный
To remain – оставаться
Precious – ценный
Known worldwide – известный на весь мир
**To consist of** – состоять из
Truthful – правдивый

2

A layer – слой, уровень
Untitled – безымянный
A quote – цитата
To guess – догадываться
A beehive – улей

3

The surface of the canvas – поверхность холста
Comparable – сопоставимый
Liberated – освобожденный
To give a way to – давать дорогу
To come up with an understanding – осознавать
Axes – оси
To layer – наслаивать
Immersed – погруженный
Visible – видимый
The purity of shape – чистота формы
To establish – создавать
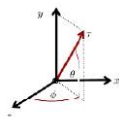
4

Relying on my inner sense of beauty – полагаясь на свое чувство прекрасного

The words from page 5!

Though – хотя
To own – владеть
A favour – услуга
To encourage – воодушевлять
Delighted – восхищенный, радостный
To gain attention – привлекать внимание

5

To claim – заявлять
Flexible – гибкий
To forward – пересылать
Inappropriate – неприличный
A gut feeling – внутреннее чувство
To approve – одобрять

6

An amazon – амазонка
To dedicate – посвящать
Former – бывший
A setting – окружение
An achievement – достижение
A prejudice – предрассудок

7

To influence – влиять
A hypothesis – предположение
To be injured – быть раненым
Luckily – к счастью

8

How it went – как все прошло
Personally – лично
Otherwise – или же
To be intrigued – быть заинтригованным

APPENDIX B. Questionnaire for students

Questionnaire for students

Dear all, thank you for your participation in our activity! Now, I would like you to fill in this form by expressing your degree of agreement with the following statements. Then, answer the open questions. The survey is anonymous and will be collected by your teachers and sent to me to be analysed for private study purposes.
Thank you for your help!

Statement	Totally agree	Agree	Dis agree	Totally dis agree
1. I liked the activity in general				
2. I thought the tasks were interesting				
3. I was motivated for doing these tasks				
4. I think that museum objects are helpful in language learning				
5. The activity provided me with a better understanding of my own culture				
6. The fact that our artists are well-known abroad encourages me to know more about Russian culture				
7. I had the chance to make comparisons across different cultures				
8. *It is easier to overcome prejudices towards other nationalities by getting acquainted with their artworks*				
9. The fact that artworks of Russian artists share the same art spaces with other artistic geniuses from all over the world encourages me to know more about artists from abroad				
10. I think that an intercultural approach can help in language learning				

Open questions: you may ask your teacher for help to formulate your thoughts in English to answer them.

11. What did you enjoy most about the virtual museum activity?
_____
_____
_____

12. Do you think if this approach of teaching English is realized in Russian schools, will it increase the level of motivation among Russian students to learn English? If so, why?
_____
_____
_____

13. In your opinion, why is it important to study the works of Russian artists in English lessons?
_____
_____
_____

14. If you answered, "Totally agree" or "Agree" on the 8th question, please explain your reasons.
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX C. Questionnaire for teachers

Questionnaire for teachers

Dear Elena and Maria, thank you for dedicating your time to participate in our activity! Now, I would like you to fill in this form by answering the questions about the lesson that was carried out. Your contribution is very much appreciated, <u>thank you for your help!</u>

Within the framework of my Master's thesis, I propose a learning module that bridges the gap between formal and non-formal language learning. Through the experimentation of this module with Russian upper-secondary school students, the study aims to tackle the cultural dimension of the approach to language studies named **CLIL** (*Content and Language Integrated Learning*). Data is to be collected through a questionnaire to investigate how engaging with activities based on Russian arts has influenced students' understanding of their own culture and positive attitudes towards otherness. Please answer a few open questions for me to see the whole picture of our interaction. Thanks a lot!

1. If you were present during at least part of the activities that were carried out, did you observe any emotional reactions in your students? What did you notice (curiosity, shyness, joy)?

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Did students have the opportunity to make intercultural comparisons and reflections during the activity? If so, what do you think promoted them?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. How do you think using virtual museum tours could support students' intercultural reflections in foreign language education?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. In what way, was the activity different from the language lessons you normally carry out? Is there any aspect, you would like to implement in the future? If so, which one and why?

   _____
   _____
   _____

5. Would you like to strengthen the intercultural component in your curriculum? Are there any obstacles from the organisational point of view that may prevent you from doing it?

   _____
   _____
   _____