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**Exploring the Intercultural Challenges Experienced in  
Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in  
Higher Education:**

**The Case of Commercial Sciences Department at  
M'sila University**

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## **Dedication**

*To my parents*

*To my sisters Isra, Nourane and Nabila*

*To my whole family*

*I dedicate this work*

*Thank you so much for being part of this journey*

*Meryem SALMI*

## **Dedication**

*To my parents*

*Fateh Zerrougui and Meriem Mohammed Saad*

*To my sisters*

*Wiam and Chahinez*

*To all my beloved Family*

*To my best friends*

*I dedicate this work*

*Wissal ZERROUGUI*

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## **Abstract**

The current research aims to explore the intercultural challenges encountered in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) classrooms in higher education. This study adopts a descriptive approach to describe a significant phenomenon and it employs a triangulation of three research instruments which includes a questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations that took place at M'sila University during the academic year 2024-2025. Furthermore, the study targeted a sample population of master one digital marketing students in commercial sciences department at M'sila University. The questionnaire was distributed to twenty-four students from their total number 38. In addition, the researchers interviewed five teachers from the same department. Moreover, classroom observation sessions were undertaken with the same students of the targeted sample alongside their teacher in CLIL courses. The data collected from students' questionnaire were analysed quantitatively with numbers and presented in tables and graphs; however, teachers' interviews and classroom observation data were both analysed qualitatively in a form of words and presented in paragraphs. Lastly, research findings show that teachers and students face challenges related to intercultural awareness during the teaching and learning of subject matter which contains diverse cultural norms across foreign countries in CLIL classes.

**Keywords: Intercultural Challenges, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Commercial Sciences Department, Intercultural Awareness.**

## **List of Abbreviations**

**%:** Percentage

**4Cs:** Content, Communication, Cognition, Culture/ Community

**AI:** Artificial Intelligence

**AICL :** Apprentissage Intégré du Contenu et de la Langue

**CBI:** Content Based Instruction

**CEO:** Chief Executive Officer

**CLIL:** Content and Language Integrated Learning

**U.S.A:** United State of America

**UK :** United King dom

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has been widely implemented in universities worldwide as a way to develop students' content mastery and language proficiency. Moreover, CLIL is more common now in Algerian universities particularly within commercial sciences department in order to prepare students with the necessary skills for global business environments. Although, CLIL has several benefits like improving content knowledge and language skills at the same time, however it can be the environment where both teachers and students face intercultural challenges.

Teaching and learning in CLIL classrooms can be complex, although students share the same culture, yet they face challenges due to the cultural differences between their own culture and the one associated with the language of instruction. Additionally, teachers might experience difficulties while delivering a content that doesn't align with students' local cultural norms. At the same time, students may struggle when they engage with authentic materials that reflect foreign cultural contexts which can hinder learners' interactions and negatively impact their overall learning outcomes. By highlighting the intercultural challenges, the study can help teachers to improve their teaching strategies and students to see cultural aspects from various angles, while supporting both commercial sciences' teachers and students to raise their awareness regarding the importance of cultural sensitivity in order to overcome such issues in CLIL classes in higher education.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

In today's globalized world, universities are using new approach which is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to help students learn both subject matter and a foreign language at the same time. CLIL is becoming more common in countries where English is not the first language, such as Algeria. This approach has many benefits but it also brings several intercultural challenges that can affect both students and teachers.

In higher education, both teachers and students face difficulties related to culture and language. Teachers may struggle to deal with different cultural values, ways of communicating, and learning styles among their students; at the same time students, especially those studying commercial sciences, may have problems in understanding course content when it is taught in a foreign language. These problems can become worse if students are not familiar with the cultural context of the material or if they lack intercultural awareness. As a result, these issues can lead to misunderstandings in class, low participation, and poor academic results.

Despite CLIL is now used in many Algerian universities, there is still not enough research on the specific intercultural problems faced by teachers and students in these classes. It is important to study these challenges in order to improve the teaching and learning experience. This research aims to explore the intercultural difficulties experienced by both teachers and students in CLIL classrooms the case of commercial sciences at M'sila University.

### **2. Research Questions**

This investigation has one main question and two sub questions as following:

#### **2.1 Main Question**

- ✓ What are the intercultural challenges experienced in CLIL classes in higher education?

## **2.2 Sub-questions**

- ✓ What are the intercultural challenges encountered by teachers when teaching content in CLIL classes?
- ✓ What are the intercultural challenges faced by commercial sciences students when dealing with content in CLIL classes?

## **3. Research Objectives**

The current research aims to explore the intercultural challenges experienced in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classes in higher education, specifically within the context of Algerian universities, with a particular focus on M'sila University. This study is guided by two primary objectives:

- ✓ To explore the intercultural challenges encountered by teachers in CLIL classrooms.
- ✓ To investigate the intercultural challenges faced by Commercial Sciences students when engaging with content in CLIL courses.

## **4. Research Methodology**

The current study adopts a descriptive method to explore an educational issue and give the appropriate description of it. Moreover, to enhance the credibility and ensure both validity and reliability of the findings, this research uses the triangulation method for its data collection process.

### **4.1 Research Participants**

In this study, the sample consists of commercial sciences master students at M'sila University. These students are studying the content in English language for the first time. The sample also includes several teachers from the same department who are using English to teach their subjects which is an opportunity to conduct interviews with them.

### **4.2 Research Instruments**

Three research instruments were utilized in this investigation. First, the questionnaire is distributed to commercial sciences students to explore their perspectives towards the intercultural challenges they are facing in their CLIL classes. Second, the interview is conducted with commercial sciences CLIL teachers to know their opinions about what intercultural difficulties they encounter when teaching the subject matter in CLIL context. Finally, classroom observation is carried out with students and teachers during their CLIL lessons to observe their real behaviours inside the classroom as well as to support and confirm the data gathered from the previous research tools.

### **4.3 Data Analysis**

After collecting data through the questionnaire and interview, the researchers conducted a descriptive analysis to report and interpret the responses. The results are presented in tables, bar graphs and pie charts to clearly understand what are the difficulties related to intercultural awareness in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in higher education. Additionally, data from classroom observations were analysed descriptively as well based on specific checklists designed by the researchers.

## **5. Aim of the Study**

The present study aims to explore the challenges related to intercultural awareness that arise in CLIL commercial sciences classes in higher education. It seeks as well to examine these challenges from teachers' and students' perceptions and how cultural differences might affect the teaching and learning experiences within the CLIL context.

## **6. Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it explores the intercultural challenges that teachers and students face in CLIL (content and language integrated learning) classes in higher education.

CLIL becomes more common in Algerian universities especially in commercial sciences so exploring these challenges is necessary to improve teaching and learning.

The study will help teachers become more aware of cultural differences in the classroom and adjust their teaching methods to be more effective and inclusive. It will also highlight the difficulties students face when learning content in a foreign language, which can lead to better support and guidance for them. It fills a gap in research on intercultural issues in CLIL education in Algeria and can help improve educational practices and policies.

### **7. Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation contains three main parts. The first part includes the general introduction with some elements that serve as an overview about the whole study, including statement of the problem, research questions and objectives, methodology, the aim and significance of the study. Moving to the second part, chapter one, is about theoretical aspects. It is divided into two sections; each is related to one variable. The first section sees content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach from various perspectives, while the second section investigates intercultural awareness from many aspects. The next part is chapter two; it is about the practical fieldwork which consists of research instruments' descriptions, data analyses, discussion of results, and a general conclusion summarizing the entire work.



# **CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **Section One: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

1. Introduction
2. Historical Overview of CLIL
3. CLIL Definition
4. CLIL Features
5. CLIL Vs CBA (Content –based approach)
6. CLIL Framework (4Cs)
  - 6.1. Content
  - 6.2. Cognitive
  - 6.3. Communication
  - 6.4. Culture
7. The Significance of CLIL
  - 7.1. Importance for Students
  - 7.2. Importance for Teachers
  - 7.3. Importance for Higher Education Institutions
8. Challenges of CLIL Implementation

## **Section One: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

### **1. Introduction**

This section provides a theoretical knowledge about Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a pedagogical framework. The section begins by historical overview of the core concept of CLIL. The section defines the term “content and language integration learning” and provides its key features. Then, it differentiates between content and language integrated learning and content-based approach. Moreover, it explains CLIL frameworks (4Cs). In addition, it shows the significance of CLIL for students, teachers and higher education institutions. Finally, it identifies challenges of CLIL implementation.

### **2. Historical Overview of CLIL**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an educational approach that emerged in the 1990s (Carrió-Pastor & Bellés-Fortuño, 2021; Dalton-Puffer et al., 2022) as part of a European multilingual policy. Its main aim was to help citizens learn and use three European languages to support economic growth, EU cooperation, and responses to migration and globalization (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). However, the idea of teaching content and language together started earlier in the 1960s and 1970s through bilingual and immersion programs in Canada and some European countries like the Netherlands, Finland, and Sweden, where multilingual education was encouraged (Hemmi & Banegas, 2021, p. 1). The term “CLIL” was officially introduced in 1994 and promoted by the European Commission between 1995 and 2006 (Coyle et al., 2010; Hemmi & Banegas, 2021). Since then, CLIL has been widely used in schools and universities, in different ways depending on each educational system’s needs (Carrió-Pastor & Bellés-Fortuño, 2021). Despite nearly three decades of practice, CLIL is still seen as a flexible and evolving method shaped by national contexts and educational goals (Sidorenko & Apresyan, 2019, p. 64), and it continues to spread worldwide (Lo, 2020; Carrió-Pastor & Bellés-Fortuño, 2021).

### 3. CLIL Definition

Content and language integrated learning, commonly known as CLIL, is an educational approach which integrates both the content and the language in a single curriculum where content learning and language learning are taught equally (Rosy Yumnam, 2023, p.83), that is to say, educators teach the subject matter knowledge through the use of a foreign language as a medium of instruction in order to improve students' language and content skills concurrently. For instance, Barwell (2005) states the integration of language with subject matters like science and mathematics is about teaching the two simultaneously within the same classroom. (p. 143).

The term CLIL has been always a subject of interest for many researchers. Dalton- puffer (2007) provided his definition about the term CLIL saying that it involves educational environments where students learn the content with a language which is not their native one (p.1). For instance, in Algeria the Arabic language is the mother tongue for Algerian students and in some CLIL classes English and French are often used as mediums of instruction to teach scientific subjects. Also, Marsh (2002:17) defined this language of instruction as “any language other than the first language including foreign language L2, or minority language” (page 245). Moreover, in CLIL the content and language are equally important as Coyle et al. (2010:1) said: “Content and Language Integrated Learning is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language”. Alongside, Marsh (2002:58) provided another definition where he emphasized on the integration of content and language as they should be taught together not separately. For example, the teacher in a CLIL class must provide activities that address both content language learning.

In CLIL approach the term “dual role” has been understood in different ways, according to Ting (2010:3) “CLIL advocates a 50:50 / content: language CLIL equilibrium”, it means

that there is a balance when it comes to teaching content and language. Moreover, Coyle defines CLIL as an educational approach, however other scholars view it differently. They mentioned that “CLIL is an actual instructional technique used to enhance foreign language learning” (Ball and Lindsay et al 2010). Despite the various definitions presented by many researchers, the core concept of CLIL stays the same as all definitions highlight the idea of integrating content and language learning in the same educational environment with a great focus on language- content learning parallelism.

### **4. CLIL Features**

CLIL methodology is characterized by its unique features that distinguish it from the traditional teaching methods. These features are Created in order to develop students’ language acquisition while learning the subject matter. Each feature plays a crucial role in shaping an effective, supportive CLIL learning environment. Many researchers agreed that CLIL is characterized on the three main features which are multiple focus, safe and enriching environments, and authenticity.

#### **4.1 Multiple focus**

The first characterizing element of CLIL refers to multiple focus. It is about the integration of both content and language learning. In CLIL lessons, students are required to understand the subject matter through the use of a foreign language, in other words students are not only learning a subject matter, but also learning a new language at the same time to foster their engagement with content knowledge and language development. Moreover, teachers must balance the two components ensuring students’ progress in both areas (Mehiston and Marsh, 2008, as cited byBeataNawrot-Lis,2019).

#### **4.2 Safe and Enriching Learning Environments**

The second key feature of CLIL is related to creating a safe environment where students can be psychologically comfortable when dealing with language. So, it is important to keep in

mind that learners should not be afraid of making mistakes, but rather feel encouraged when using the language (Beata Nawrot-Lis, 2019, p.43, as cited by Beatal Nawrot-Lis, 2019). On the other hand, the teacher has the responsibility to offer a supportive environment for his learners where they can have the opportunity to use the language gradually, because the students in their first classes are expected to use their mother tongue in a certain activity. Additionally, “the reason for such an approach would be the fact that in the first months of the course, mostly receptive skills of the learners are developed and afterwards the students are also able to produce the target language” (Deller and price, 2007, as cited by Beatal Nawrot-Lis, 2019).

### **4.3 Authenticity**

In CLIL classes the learning materials and activities chosen by the teacher should be obtained from real life contexts where learners are supposed to interact with the language that is used in everyday life situations. This confirms what Morrow suggests as a main principle in the CLIL basics, he stated that “authenticity is a real language produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message” (1997, p.13, as cited by Beatal Nawrot-Lis, 2019). Therefore. To bring authenticity into the classroom, CLIL teachers should provide their learners the possibility to engage them in real life communication by attending conferences with native speakers or exchanging emails and blogs (Coyle, Holmes, et al 2009, as cited by Beatal Nawrot-Lis, 2019) in order to maximize students’ language proficiency and strengthens content knowledge.

### **5. CLIL Vs CBI (Content –based instruction)**

The term CBI stands for content-based instruction, and it is crucial to distinguish it from CLIL approach. Accordingly, many researchers looked in depth into this concept for instance (Brinton, et al, 1989, p. Vii) defines CBI as “the concurrent study of language and subject matter, with form and sequence of language presentation dictated by content material”. It

means that teachers choose what words and grammar rules they teach and in what order based on the topic or subject being taught. For example, if students are learning about ecosystems in a science class, the teacher will focus on introducing specific vocabulary and certain sentence structures that aligns well with the topic.

CLIL and CBI are two distinct educational approaches in their origins. CBI was developed in North America (USA) while the term CLIL was launched in Europe in 1990 (Dalton-puffer et al, 2010). They are also different in their goals; CBI aims to develop the subject content through the use of a foreign language. So, language acquisition occurs incidentally where students use the language in order to discuss the content. Whereas the main goal of CLIL is to achieve a balance between the content and language, they are both equal and students seek to grasp the content appropriately at the same time develop language proficiency purposefully. On the other side, some other researchers consider CLIL and CBI as the same approach since both integrate content and language learning. Like, Ruiz de Zarobe (2008p. 61. Footnote) considers them synonymous where CLIL is the most popular term in Europe and CBI in USA and Canada.

### **6. CLIL Frame Work (4Cs)**

#### **6.1 Content**

The term Content refers to the subject matter taught in class it focuses on helping students build new knowledge, skills, and understanding over time (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 53, as cited by Tsuchiya & Pérez, 2019). This can happen through one subject or by linking different subjects depending on the learning goals (Coyle et al., 2010; Ikeda, 2011; Mehisto et al., 2008, as cited by Tsuchiya & Pérez, 2019). In CLIL classrooms, students are expected to learn academic content while also improving their foreign language skills. In the Algerian higher education context, this can be seen when students study their academic subjects in

English or French which allow them to understand key ideas while also developing language skills that are important for their academic and professional futures.

### **6.2 Communication**

In CLIL, Communication includes three types of language use, the language of learning (needed to understand the subject), the language for learning (used to participate in class tasks), and the language through learning (which comes out naturally during classroom interaction) (Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010, as cited by Tsuchiya & Pérez, 2019). These types of language help students become active users of the foreign language in academic settings. In Algerian universities, students often need to use English or French to understand lectures, take part in discussions, or work on group activities. As they communicate in class, they also learn new vocabulary and expressions that were not planned in advance which help them to improve both their language and subject knowledge.

### **6.3 Cognition**

Cognition refers to the thinking skills that students use while learning, from simple ones like remembering facts to more complex ones like solving problems or thinking critically when using a foreign language (Coyle et al., 2010; Ikeda, 2011; Mehisto et al., 2008, as cited by Tsuchiya & Pérez, 2019). In CLIL, students are encouraged to think deeply and not only memorize. In the Algerian higher education system, this is important because students are often asked to read, analyse, and present information in a foreign language, which helps them develop both their thinking abilities and their language skills at the same time.

### **6.4 Culture/Community**

The terms Culture and Community are sometimes used in similar ways in CLIL theory (Ikeda, 2011, p. 8, as cited by Tsuchiya & Pérez, 2019). Culture means learning to understand other cultures and becoming more globally aware, whereas Community focuses on the idea that learning together in a classroom can be a rich and supportive experience (Mehisto et al.,

2008, p. 31, as cited by Tsuchiya & Pérez, 2019). In Algerian universities, CLIL can help students become more open to global perspectives by including international topics or cross-cultural discussions in class. At the same time, when students from different regions or backgrounds work together in a shared learning environment, they develop a stronger sense of community and mutual respect.

### **7. The Significance of CLIL**

As it is mentioned before CLIL is an educational approach that combines teaching subject matter with language learning, using a foreign language as the medium of instruction. Hence, it has a significant role for students, for teachers and for higher education institutions.

#### **7.1 Importance for Students**

Foreign language application in class helps students use it effectively. Learners learn to think and communicate in the target language, understand new words, and build their knowledge. This approach, known as CLIL, also helps students develop important thinking skills like problem-solving and creativity (Carloni, 2013; Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010; Meyer, 2010). By learning subjects through a foreign language, students gain a deeper understanding of other cultures and become more open-minded. CLIL encourages active learning, independence, and teamwork, which increases students' self-esteem and confidence. It also helps them become more autonomous learners by doing independent research and solving problems in a foreign language. CLIL is a powerful way to connect language, culture, and society, making students more aware of cultural differences.

#### **7.2 Importance for Teachers**

Communicative language teaching puts students at the center, it focuses on their communication needs to develop curriculum goals in higher education. Students learn through discovery and often work on projects that need cooperation in the target language. Teachers use authentic materials and interactive exercises to encourage student interaction, which helps

them develop their creativity and teaching techniques (Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010). The 4Cs model, Content, Communication, Culture/Community, makes teaching more effective, it lets students develop skills, gain knowledge, and build their identity. CLIL also develops cooperation among teachers and institutions because it enables them to exchange experiences and participate in international projects. This collaboration enhances teamwork skills between language and subject teachers, increases teachers' motivation and self-confidence which leads to professional development.

### **7.3 Importance for Higher Education Institutions**

CLIL implementation can enhance a university's recognition and attract more students which contributes to its development and ability to meet local needs. This approach benefits society by producing graduated students who are motivated to succeed in professional world. These graduated students are ready to succeed in international companies and multicultural environments, where language and subject skills are crucial for success. So, they become more interesting to employers who wants employees with international work skills (Aguilar & Muñoz, 2014; Fitriani, 2016; Margado & Coelho, 2013; Muszyńska & Papaja, 2019; Vilkanciene, 2011).

CLIL can help universities become more well-known and attract more students. It also prepares students for jobs in a global world. Because of CLIL, students learn both their subject and a foreign language, like English, at the same time. To illustrate, Algerian students in Commercial Sciences can study some subjects in English which help them understand business and improve their English. Later, they will be ready to work in international companies or with people from other countries.

### **8. Challenges of CLIL Implementation**

Despite the benefits of CLIL, there are many challenges in its implementation in higher education. One of these issues is that subject teachers may not have enough language skills,

leading them to focus more on teaching content than language development (Hellekjaer, 2010). This can make students struggle to understand the content, which might affect their knowledge acquisition (Várkuti, 2010). There are also concerns about how well students can transfer knowledge from the target language to their first language, and doubts about conceptual and linguistic accuracy in CLIL (Meyer & Coyle, 2017; Reitbauer et al., 2018). Additionally, there is a lack of suitable CLIL materials, forcing teachers to spend time adapting and creating new ones (Moore & Lorenzo, 2007). Students in higher education often prefer learning as they use the language, rather than learning for future use (Costa-Rau, 2016; De la Barra et al., 2018). Finally, many institutions face pressure to offer courses in English without careful selection, which can be problematic (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2021; O'Dowd, 2018).

## **Section Two: CLIL and Intercultural Challenges**

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## **Section Two: CLIL and Intercultural Challenges**

### **1. Introduction**

In today's multicultural world, it is highly important to understand the complexities of cultural diversity. This section explores the different aspects of culture, starting by its definition from different views taking into consideration the necessity of providing some clarifications about the principal terms (intercultural awareness and intercultural competence), moving to state the difference between two components of culture which are the big c culture alongside with small c culture. Additionally, the following section highlights eight stages to integrate culture into the educational environment, this leads to elaborate more about the term intercultural awareness in a globalized world seeking to delve deeper into how crucial to integrate intercultural awareness in CLIL classes, and how challenging it is in CLIL approach. In conclusion, this section will provide educators and learners with a comprehensive overview about the above topics to help them navigate the necessary elements in their educational journey.

### **2. Definitions**

#### **2.1 Definition of Culture**

Culture is a broad concept that covers many aspects of human life, making it a subject of interest across various disciplines. The word "culture" comes from the Latin verb "colere," meaning to cultivate, culture can be divided into two categories: "Culture" with a capital 'C', which includes arts and literature, and "culture" with a small 'c', which involves everyday attitudes, values, and beliefs (Richard & Schmidt, 2002). From an anthropological perspective, culture is seen as a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals,

and habits acquired by individuals as members of society (Taylor, 1871). It is also viewed as a shared system of standards for perceiving and acting, learned through social interactions and reinforced by institutions (Kramsch, 1998). Additionally, culture is seen as a historically transmitted system of meanings encoded in symbols, such as language, which helps communicate and develop knowledge (Geertz, 1973). Culture includes both abstract features like values and norms, and concrete aspects like music, literature, and architecture (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1963).

### **2.2 Intercultural Awareness**

Intercultural awareness involves developing an understanding of both someone's own culture and others, recognizing that different perspectives exist and are valuable, it means moving beyond the belief that one's own cultural views are the only correct ones instead of that evaluating other perspectives (Yassine, 2006). Korzilius and Plank (2007) define it as the ability to consider different viewpoints, especially in communication situations where it is crucial to understand the cultural background of others. This awareness is essential for effective intercultural relations and for encouraging a more globalized community by recognizing the need for social changes and improvements in international contexts (Yassine, 2006; Korzilius & Plank, 2007).

### **2.3 Intercultural Competence**

Intercultural competence is a concept often used interchangeably with terms like multiculturalism, cross-cultural adaptation, and global citizenship (Deardoff, 2009). It involves being sensitive and self-aware, presenting one's values appropriately in interactions with others, and coping with one's own cultural background when interacting with others (Beneke, 2000, quoted in Lazar, 2001). In foreign language teaching and learning, intercultural competence is described as the ability to behave flexibly and effectively in foreign cultural contexts (Meyer, 1991, quoted in Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). It also means

entering other cultures, communicating effectively, making relationships, and performing tasks with people from those cultures (Moran, 2001, quoted in Lazar, 2003). Early definitions highlight the ability to manage psychological stress, communicate effectively, and make interpersonal relationships in different cultural settings (Hammer et al., 1978, in Deardoff, 2004).

### **3. Difference between Culture big C and culture small c**

Culture plays a vital role in educational setting as it shapes people's perceptions about the world around them. Hofstede (1994:5, as cited by Michaela Čaňková, 2007) considers culture as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another", It is divided into big C culture which refers to "the formal institutional aspects such as literature, art, history and institutions which are typically emphasized in traditional education" (Rodriguez, 2018). Conversely, on the other hand, small C culture involves "the informal everyday aspects of life, including communication style, daily routines and social norms that shape individual's lived experiences within a culture" (Sobkowiak, 2016, Othman et al, 2024).

Incorporating both Big C and Small C in the educational context is highly recommended. For instance, Big C culture helps students build a solid background about historical and cultural achievements, while small C culture offers students the opportunity to understand everyday social interactions, and making the language more practical and easier to use. In addition, both types encourage students to appreciate cultural diversity and increase intercultural awareness. They also provide learners a clear understanding of the target language, while improving their ability to interact with various cultures effectively to strengthen their intercultural competence (American & Tajabadi, 2020, Nasir et al., 2024). The integration of these components fosters a deep understanding of the language and its cultural context.

#### **4. Strategies to Integrate Culture**

The integrative language/culture learning process combines language and culture education. It involves eight stages, the first five led by the teacher. These stages focus on presenting cultural themes, discussing perceptions, and developing language skills (Crawford, 1981; Freire, 1973; Jorstad, 1981; Lange, 1979; Stern, 1983). The last three stages led by students focus on using language, understand different cultures, and show proficiency in both language and culture. These stages can be flexible and do not always follow a strict order according to Crawford-Lange & Lange (1987).

##### **4.1 Stage 1: Identifying a Cultural Theme**

A cultural theme is a topic that involves important values from either the students' own culture or the culture they learn about. The theme should be relevant and interesting to learners. For example, A teacher selects the theme “Business Ethics across Cultures”. This theme is relevant in accounting, management, and business law. Students will explore how ethical business practices differ between countries (gift-giving, bribes, transparency laws).

##### **4.2 Stage 2: Presentation of Cultural Phenomena**

When teaching about cultural themes, teachers should show students examples of how these themes appear in real life using different tools like, pictures, slides, videos, audio recordings, written texts. For example, the teacher presents case studies comparing ethical scandals in companies from different countries. They use videos, newspaper articles, and company policies to show how ethics is culturally defined and enforced in various business environments

##### **4.3 Stage 3 : Dialogue (Target/Native Cultures)**

Students describe the phenomena by explaining what they see in the examples. Teachers help by asking questions and accepting students' ideas, even if they are not correct. At the beginning of the learning process, they might discuss themes in their native language,

later on when they improve, they will use more the target language (Lange & Davis, 1985). Students discuss how whistleblowing is treated in their country vs in Western business cultures. They work in groups to analyse real company reports and discuss the differences in handling employee misconduct. Students might also reflect on how Islamic business ethics compare to Western corporate codes of conduct.

#### **4.4 Stage 4: Transition to Language Learning**

Both teachers and students work together in order to first of all identify language needs. Students learn key vocabulary such as “corporate governance,” “transparency,” “insider trading,” and “compliance. They practice using modal verbs (should, must, may) to express obligations and recommendations in business contexts. Role-plays can simulate an international meeting where business ethics are debated.

#### **4.5 Stage 5: Language Learning**

Students learn and practice the language they need to communicate effectively about the cultural theme through using textbooks. Later on, teachers assess how well students understand and use language structures during this stage. This evaluation helps ensure that students catch the language before moving on to the next stage (Heilenman & Kaplan, 1985). For example, students complete activities like writing a code of ethics for a multinational company, using conditional structures “If an employee violates the policy, the company will...”. They can do listening comprehension exercises using interviews with global CEOs discussing ethical challenges.

#### **4.6 Stage 6: Verification of Perceptions (Target/Native Cultures)**

Students use the language they have learned to explore and understand cultural themes more deeply. They examine resources and look at different materials like articles, videos, and interviews to learn more about the cultural theme. For example, students interview international students or professionals about ethical standards in their home countries. They

compare what they discover with their initial assumptions, then write a reflection on how their understanding of business ethics has evolved.

### **4.7 Stage 7: Cultural Awareness**

Students learn to understand and adapt their cultural perceptions based on new information. They become aware of how to interact effectively in different cultural situations. Students explore why cultures are different. For instance, students analyse how cultural values (individualism vs. collectivism) affect consumer behaviour or marketing strategies in different countries. Also, students can compare advertising in the U.S.A and Japan to understand how cultural norms shape persuasive techniques.

### **4.8 Stage 8: Evaluation of Language and Cultural Proficiency**

In this final stage, students' language and cultural skills are assessed together. Teachers check how well students can use language for different purposes, how accurate their language is, and how well they understand content. For instance, students present a business proposal for entering a foreign market, demonstrating appropriate cultural awareness and professional language. They can do a role-play about negotiation between two companies from different cultures, evaluated on both language fluency and cultural appropriateness in communication.

## **5. Intercultural Awareness in a Globalized World**

In today's globalized world, people from different countries and cultures are more connected and can communicate easily because of intercultural awareness as an important aspect which helps people understand one another clearly without any kind of misunderstanding. During the past years, (Triandis, 1997) defined the term intercultural awareness as a cognitive aspect of intercultural communication which focuses on the way individuals change their ways of thinking by grasping a deeper understanding of the features of their own culture and others' cultures.

Globalization has led to increased interaction among people across the world. According to Chen and Starosta (1996, 1997), “technology development, especially communication and transportation technology over the last decades is the main reason the world now faces intercultural communication on a daily basis”. Moreover, intercultural awareness participates positively in helping individuals to avoid cultural shocks and misunderstandings among various cultures.

The importance of intercultural awareness is embodied in the high demands of intercultural training programs. Accordingly, Scholars and experts have developed numerous intercultural training programs to help people acquire the ability of intercultural awareness (Landis& Bhagat, 1996; Yum, 1989). A common goal of intercultural training is to increase awareness about cultural differences to develop one’s communication skills while reducing the chances of misunderstandings that might occur during intercultural interactions.

### **6. Importance of Intercultural Awareness in CLIL Classes**

Intercultural awareness is considered as an important component to be integrated in the CLL framework where students not only learn the target language, but also explore the culture which is related to that language. In addition, intercultural awareness offers a unique opportunity for CLIL students to learn both content and language, while ensuring an effective way to deliver the content knowledge within different cultural contexts.

Language, content and culture should be taught together as they are all part of students’ everyday reality. (Elisa Pérez Gracia p. 1). And In CLIL classes, when students are aware of cultural diversity, they will have the capacity to view the world from several angles and perspectives. As a result, their cultural awareness helps them raise their curiosity about different social norms, values and world views of other communities which are essential for effective communication across cultures. Moreover, such cultural exposure helps learners to challenge stereotypes, broaden their perspectives, and become more empathetic towards other

cultures, thereby promoting a more inclusive and globally minded outlook (Syarif & Mulyono, 2023).

Additionally, intercultural awareness is a crucial aspect of clinical approach as it promotes intercultural interactions, enabling learners to be not only proficient in the language but also effective communicators in the globalized world, far away from the classroom setting. For instance, in a CLIL classroom when students learn about business in different countries, they do not only improve their language and content skills but also understand the cultural differences of the topic being discussed, which will help learners communicate better internationally.

### **7. Intercultural Challenges in CLIL Classes**

As many researchers stated before content and language integrated learning (CLIL) has emerged as a powerful approach that combines subject content with language instruction. However, implementing CLIL in higher education has intercultural challenges that affect both teaching and learning processes. This title explores key aspects of interculturality in CLIL, it begins with the role of culture in the 4Cs framework and moves toward the development of intercultural communicative skills. It further examines specific intercultural challenges such as the recognition of cultural differences, the level of communication across cultures, stereotypes making, and the understand diverse educational systems.

#### **7.1 CLIL and Interculturality**

##### **7.1.1 The Role of Culture in the 4Cs Framework**

The 4Cs Framework is designed to guide learning by emphasizing not just language and content, but also cognition and culture. The fourth ‘C’, Culture, connects cultural and intercultural understanding to learning in multilingual contexts. Culture’ is a complex phenomenon open to wide interpretation (Eagleton, 2000); so, the cultural component is crucial for developing intercultural awareness and global citizenship. This framework

emphasizes the interconnection between subject matter, language use, learning processes, and intercultural understanding (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). It recognizes that language learning is not just about mastering vocabulary and grammar but also about understanding the cultural context in which language is used.

### **7.1.2 Intercultural Communicative Skills**

CLIL aims to provide learners with the skills needed to communicate effectively. This involves expressing ideas to people from diverse backgrounds, which is essential in today's globalized world. It helps learners become competent and fluent speakers within professional contexts, without necessarily focusing on specific national or regional varieties of a language (Graddol, 2006). For example, a student of Commercial Sciences may be required to work on a group project with international classmates or to present a business plan to an audience that includes people from different cultural backgrounds. In such situations, the student has to be able to explain economic or financial concepts clearly and respectfully, taking into account that not everyone may share the same cultural assumptions or communication styles.

### **7.2 Intercultural Challenges:**

According to what it was mentioned in previous subtitles the main intercultural challenge in CLIL classes is the ability to communicate effectively across cultures (Intercultural Communication skill). The University of La Sabana in Chía, Colombia, offers an Intercultural Studies minor degree program through the Department of Languages and Cultures. This program includes two key undergraduate courses: “Introduction to Intercultural Studies” and “Intercultural Studies”. It aims to strengthening learners’ intercultural competencies, which confirms the existence of intercultural communication competence challenges. According to them the two courses also contain more specific objectives which are parts of the intercultural communication skill. So, based on this there are many aspects of intercultural challenges stated as the following:

### **7.2.1 Awareness of Cultural Differences**

The courses provide a deeper understanding by engaging with people from different cultures and analysing cultural differences through various media, such as movies (Spies, 2012). Thus, one of the challenges is that students may face problems in recognizing cultural differences in today's world even though many of them are aware that cultural differences exist. For instance, in a marketing course a student from Algeria may not initially understand why a product advertisement that works well in the United States might not be effective in Japan. This difference can lead to misunderstandings when students are asked to design international marketing strategies.

### **7.2.2 Level of Intercultural Communication Skills**

As Baraldi (2009) notes, understanding these differences is crucial for effective communication, but it can also lead to challenges in interactions. Students may not be aware about different communication strategies used by people from various cultural backgrounds. For instance, during a group presentation in a business communication class, a student from France may prefer a formal and structured discussion style, while a student from Brazil may use more expressive body language and informal expressions. Without understanding each other's communication styles, they might misinterpret each other's intentions which lead to ineffective collaboration.

### **7.2.3 Stereotypes and Cultural Awareness**

Moreover, they mention as an example the movie "Crash" (Cheadle & Haggis, 2004) is used to discuss how cultural misunderstandings and prejudices can create problems in real-life situations. Stereotypes can interrupt intercultural understanding. Both negative and positive stereotypes can cause confusion in intercultural encounters. The challenge is to minimize stereotyping. To illustrate, in a discussion about leadership styles in international companies, a student might assume that all Asian managers are strict and unemotional, based

on media or personal bias. This stereotype can prevent the student from seeing individual differences and appreciating diverse leadership approaches in global business.

### **7.2.4 Exploring Educational Systems**

Furthermore, according to Spies (2012) the mentioned courses provide insights into different educational systems all over the world. Students find it challenging to read articles and debate about school systems in various countries around the world which affect the reflection on their own educational system. To exemplify, in a finance class, a student may find it difficult to understand why students in other countries learn the same lecture in a different way. For example, students in Europe may follow different rules than students in Algeria. This can make it hard to compare what they learn and how they solve problems.

## **8. Conclusion**

In general, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is an effective educational approach that integrates both language and subject matter learning at one time. By using a foreign language as a medium of instruction to teach subjects, CLIL not only enhances communication skills, but also encourages critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. Another key element is the integration of intercultural awareness in CLIL classes which helps students to clearly understand the world around them with its cultural background, although this integration might cause some challenges, it is still beneficial because it prepares learners to face various real difficulties related to cultural diversity. Therefore, they are able to effectively understand content from different perspectives, and it gives them the best opportunity to become successful communicators who are linguistically and culturally competent in a globalized world.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE FIELD WORK**

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8. Limitation of the Study

General

Conclusion

### **1. Introduction**

Chapter two presents the methodological framework of the current study and how the research is conducted. Initially, it tells about the research design including the research methodology used to conduct this study which is descriptive. Subsequently, it introduces the research setting and key participants in this study who are commercial sciences teachers and students also it justifies the choice of the participants which are commercial sciences students and teachers. Then, it specifies the sample and justifies the sampling design. Moreover, it describes in details the research instruments used to collect data which are: students' questionnaire, teachers' interview, classroom observation. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on data analysis, interpretation and discussion of results. It also discusses the limitations of the study that have disrupted this investigation and have affected the final results. Finally, it provides suggestions for pedagogical implications based on findings.

### **2. Research Methodology**

As it was mentioned previously, this study aims to explore the intercultural challenges experienced in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) commercial sciences classes at M'sila university. The researchers adopt a descriptive method as research methodology. It is seen as the appropriate method for this study because it brings general insights about the challenges related to intercultural awareness faced by commercial sciences students without investigating in depth the reasons behind these challenges. Moreover, the descriptive method supports the study's goal of discovering students' and teachers' main intercultural difficulties that might take place in CLIL context.

### **3. Research Design**

In order to explore the intercultural challenges experienced in CLIL classes in higher education, the researchers rely on a specific research design which includes the setting and population, the sample and sampling techniques used, the research instruments employed to gather the required data and the procedures followed for data analysis to identify the main findings.

#### **3.1 Research Setting and Population**

This study took place at the commercial sciences department at M'sila University, during the second semester of the academic year 2024/ 2025. The targeted population for this study is commercial sciences teachers and master one students with total of 38 students and 5 CLIL teachers. The reason behind choosing commercial sciences as a case of this study is that it deals with global topics like business, finance, and marketing, which may require understanding of international examples and many key concepts and materials in commercial sciences are in English which may make the CLIL approach more relevant and more challenging for both students and teachers. Moreover, students in commercial sciences have to understand multicultural environments which may make intercultural awareness essential for their academic and future professional success. Furthermore, complex commercial content taught and learned in a foreign language may create more opportunities for cultural misunderstandings and learning difficulties. Therefore, due to these reasons, the selection of commercial sciences is the suitable case that fall in with the aim of the current research.

#### **3.2 Sample and Sampling Design**

The total number of population for this study is 38 students from Master one digital marketing specialty in commercial sciences department at M'sila University. A sample of 24 participants from digital marketing specialty classes is chosen randomly based on using a simple random sampling technique. This method enables everyone from the population to

have an equal chance to be selected for this research (Taposh Ghoshal et al 2006, p.45, as cited by Bill Taylor et al, 2006) and to avoid any sort of bias to ensure a representativeness sample group.

### **3.3 Research Instruments**

In order to collect data on intercultural challenges in commercial sciences CLIL classes, a triangulation of methods is applied, it involves the use of students' questionnaire, teachers' interview, and classroom observations. First, an interview is conducted with a purposive sample of five CLIL teachers to answer the first research question, what are the intercultural challenges encountered by teachers when teaching content in CLIL classes? This also helps achieve the first objective of the study, which is to explore the intercultural challenges encountered by teachers in CLIL classrooms. Second, the researchers distributed a questionnaire to commercial sciences students using random sampling to gather data contribute in answering the second research question, what are the intercultural challenges faced by commercial sciences students when dealing with content in CLIL classes? This supports the second objective, which is to investigate the intercultural challenges faced by commercial sciences students when learning content through CLIL. Finally, classroom observation is carried out to support and confirm the data gathered from both the interview and the questionnaire. The researchers attended four sessions with the same group of students to observe teachers' and students' attitudes while teaching and learning subject matter through English. This combination of tools ensures an accurate understanding of the intercultural challenges experienced in CLIL classrooms.

### **4. Data Analysis**

The gathered data from questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations are analysed in separate sections. Questionnaire's outcomes are presented in tables and bar charts. The thematic analysis of teachers' interview is divided into themes based on teachers'

answers and presented in a form of paragraphs. Finally, classroom observation findings are presented through paragraphs.

### **4.1 Description and Procedure of the Research Instruments**

This part of the study explains the three research instruments used, the students' questionnaire, the teachers' interview and the classroom observation. Each instrument has its own objective, structure and procedures.

#### **4.1.1 Students' Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this study is designed by the researchers and it is not adapted from any previous research questionnaires. It is made to answer the research questions and fulfil its objective of exploring intercultural challenges faced by students when dealing with content in CLIL classes. This questionnaire aims to gather data about students' perspectives regarding the intercultural issues they face in CLIL setting.

##### **4.1.1.1 Description and Objectives of the Students' Questionnaire**

The main aim of students' questionnaire is to identify the intercultural difficulties students are facing during CLIL courses. The questionnaire contains a combination of both close-ended and open-ended questions; nineteen close-ended questions and only one open-ended question where students were asked to justify their choice. This research tool includes 20 questions divided into four sections.

The first section with three questions collects some pieces of information about students' profile (gender, age, and English level proficiency). Generally, this type of questions enables researchers to have a clear understanding of respondents' background.

The second section includes four questions related to the first variable (CLIL). The questions aim to identify the medium of instruction used in CLIL classes, the balance between content and language focus and the type of materials used in the classroom.

The third section consists of three items related to the second variable (Intercultural awareness). They intend to explore how students perceive the connection between intercultural awareness and the effective use of language in international settings, and how the lack of such awareness lead to learning problems.

The last section incorporates ten items about the intercultural challenges found in CLIL context. The questions emphasize on exploring the various problems and difficulties students encounter when studying the content through a foreign language, how CLIL enhances critical thinking and cultural understanding. The last questions seek to assess how CLIL prepare students develop the needed skills for international multicultural environments.

After completing the design of students' questionnaire, researchers distributed the questionnaire to 7 students in commercial sciences department who are not part of the study's sample to ensure validity of the collected data. The piloting phase helped researchers to modify and reformulate certain items. Then the questionnaire was delivered to students from the sample population during their regular sessions in the second semester.

### **4.1.1.2 Data Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

#### **Section One: Student Profile**

This section aims to provide a general overview of the students who participated in the study by gathering essential demographic and information about language. It includes questions about the students' gender, age, and their level of English proficiency.

#### **Gender and Age of the Participants**

According to the results gathered in the first item which is related to Participants' gender, it is found that out of the 24 students who responded to the questionnaire, 14 students are female which represents (58%) of the sample, while 10 students are male which accounts for (42%). This distribution indicates a slightly higher participation of female students compared to male students. In addition, from 24 students there are 22 students who fall within

the age range of 18 to 25 years old, representing (92%) of the total sample. While just 2 students are above 26 years old, representing (8%).

**Students' Levels of English**

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Beginner	12	50%
Intermediate	11	46%
Advanced	1	4%

**Table 01: Level of English**

The data collected from the 24 students' answers show that 12 participants classify themselves as beginners which constitutes (50%) of the sample. Meanwhile, 11 students consider their English level to be intermediate which represents (46%). Only one student (4%) identifies as having an advanced level of English. These results highlight that the majority of students involved in the study are either at the beginner or intermediate level of English proficiency. This distribution may suggest that most students are still in the process of developing their language skills which can influence their experience of intercultural challenges in CLIL classes. The small number of advanced students may indicate limited exposure or confidence in using English at a higher proficiency level within this group.

**Section two: The Medium of Instruction in CLIL Classes**

This section explores the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the classroom. It seeks to know the medium of instruction used inside the classroom, the number of modules taught in a foreign or second language, and whether the focus is on content or language or even both. Finally, it investigates the type of materials used (authentic or non-authentic).

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Language	Frequency	Percentage
English	24	100%

**Table 02: Medium of Instruction**

According to the data collected, all students (100%) respond that English is the medium of instruction used in their CLIL classes. This data indicates that digital marketing specialty adopts only the foreign language English to deliver the content, which confirms that content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach exist in Commercial sciences department.

Number of Modules Studied in English

Number of Modules	Frequency	Percentage
5 Modules	24	100%

**Table 03: Number of Modules Studied in English**

All the 24 students who participated in the questionnaire (100%) reported that they study five modules in English. These similar responses confirm that the participants are indeed involved in courses delivered through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach where both content and language are integrated in the learning process. This finding indicates a consistent exposure to English language in multiple modules which supports the relevance of investigating intercultural challenges within the CLIL context.

Focus Areas in CLIL Classes

Focus	Frequency	Percentage
Content and Language	24	100%

**Table 04: Focus Areas in CLIL Classes**

All respondents (100%) report that in their CLIL classes they focus on developing both Content and Language, which means that commercial sciences students give equal importance to both aspects. This supports the dual-focus principle of CLIL approach where students focus on learning the language and the subject matter simultaneously.

**Types of Materials Used in CLIL Classes (Texts, Articles, Videos)**

<b>Material Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Authentic	24	100%

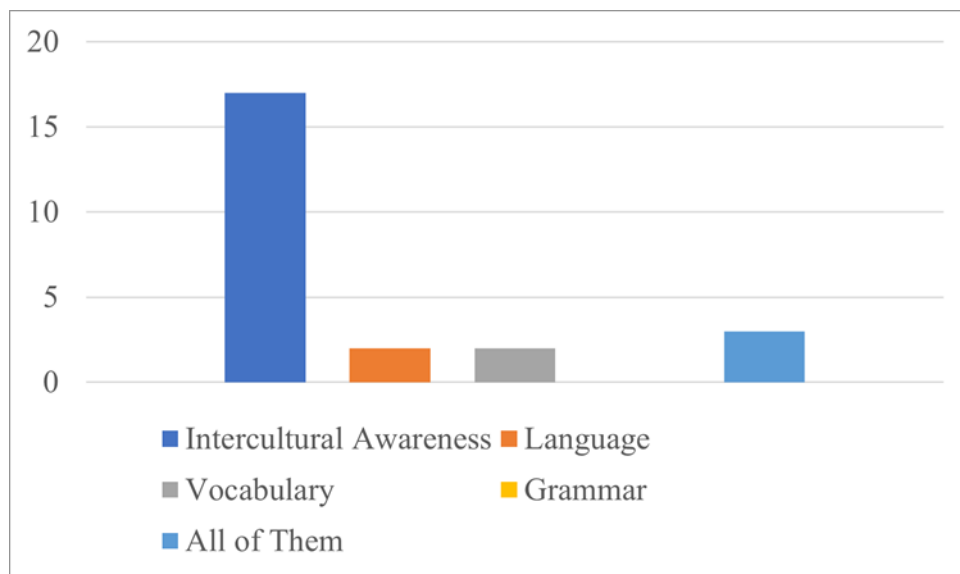
**Table 05: Types of Materials**

The whole number of students 24 (100%) reported that the materials used in their CLIL classes, such as texts, articles, and videos, are authentic materials. None of the students (0%) selected non-authentic materials as the type used in their classes. This unified response indicates a high level of awareness among the learners regarding the nature of the instructional content provided in their courses. It reflects that students are not only exposed to real-life, context resources, but they also recognize and understand the value of these materials as authentic tools in supporting both their language development and subject comprehension.

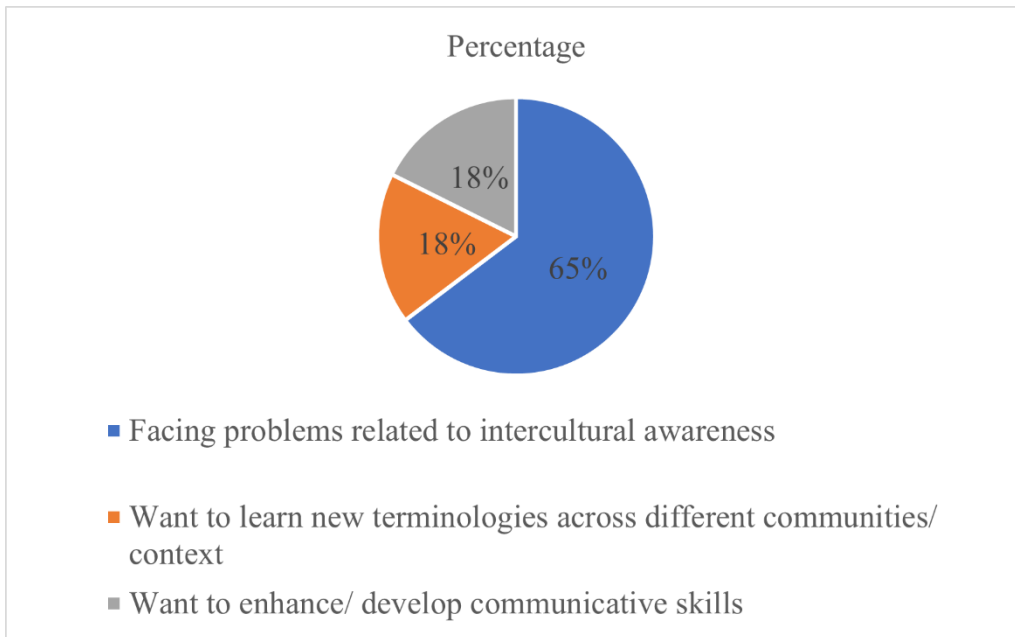
**Section Three: Intercultural Awareness**

This section emphasizes on the role of intercultural awareness in language learning. It investigates teachers' views on the importance of developing intercultural awareness alongside language skills such as grammar and vocabulary. Also, it explores students' perspectives about how their engagement with other cultures impacts their learning experiences, in term of avoiding or facing learning problems.

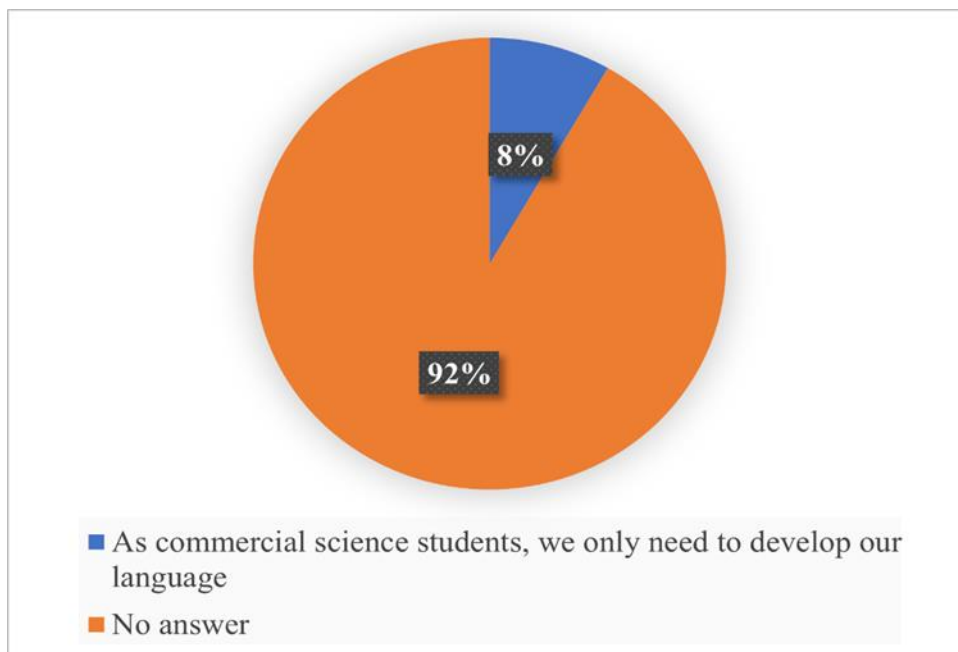
**Requirements for Effective International Language User**



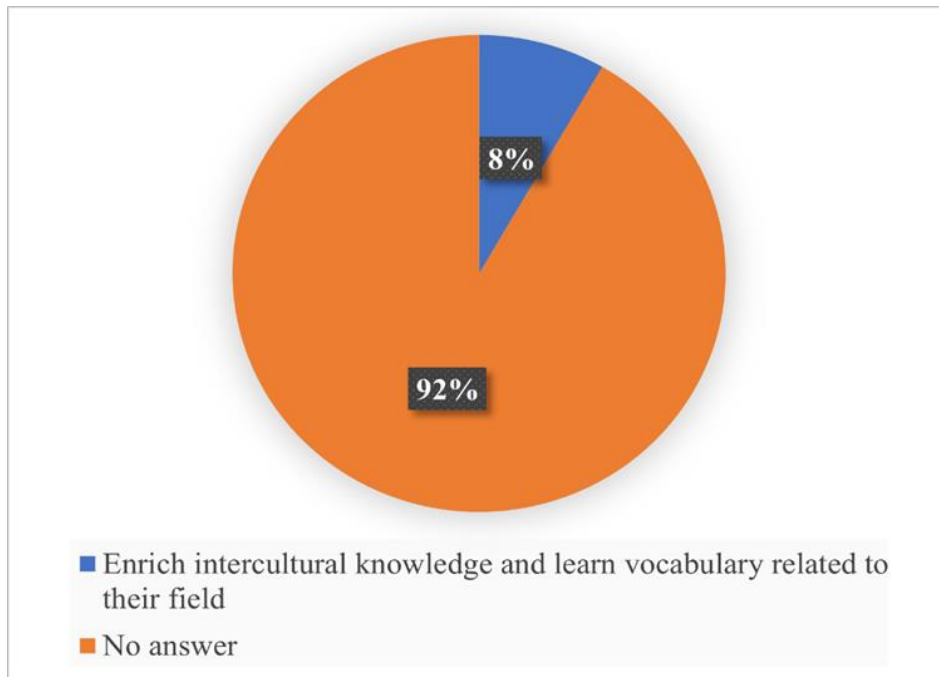
**Graph 01: Students' Choices Regarding the Development Needed for Effective International Language Use**



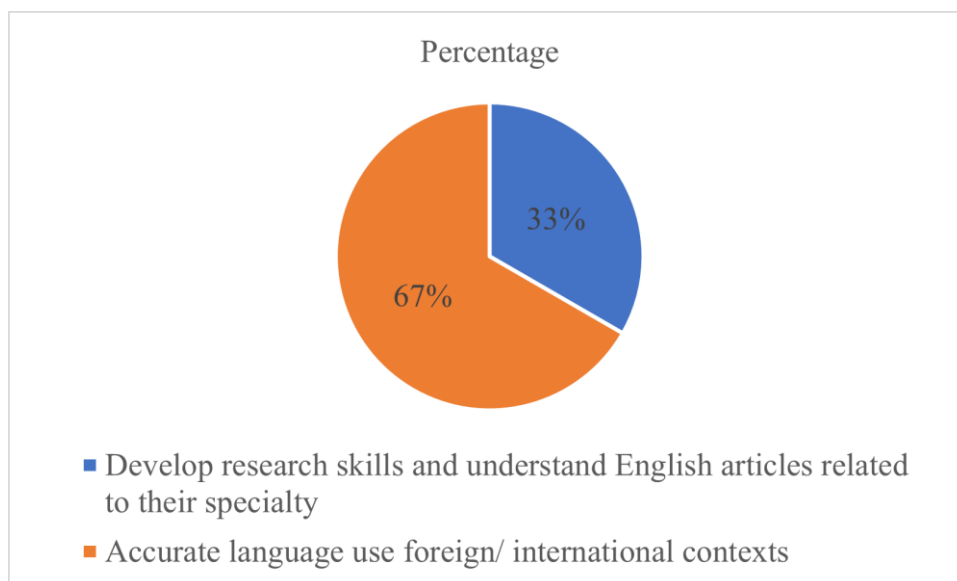
**Graph 02: Justification for Intercultural Awareness**



**Graph 03: Justifications for Language**



**Graph 04: Justifications for Vocabulary**



**Graph 05: Justifications for All of Them**

The findings reveal students' opinions about the essential aspects to become an effective international language user. Most students (71%) see that intercultural awareness is the most needed skill to become an effective language user in international settings, among these 17 learners eleven students (65%) justified saying that they often face intercultural

awareness problems when dealing with different cultures. Another three students (18%) linked their choice to the idea that certain terminologies differ across various contexts. The last three (18%) justified by the need to enhance their communicative skills. Additionally (13%) of students believe that all skills are needed, among the 3 students one respondent (33%) justified by highlighting the positive contribution of these elements in the development of their research skills, another two respondents (67%) justified by mentioning their need to develop the use of English language in international settings. Moreover, language and vocabulary options were each selected by few students (8%), two students chose language and both justified it by saying that developing only language is enough for them while two other students selected vocabulary and justified with their eager to enrich vocabulary background in their field. Notably that no one (0%) chose grammar as an option which means that learners may consider grammar as a traditional way in language learning. The results indicate that the choices made by students might reflect their areas of weakness.

**Developing Intercultural Awareness Helps to Avoid Learning Problems**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	18	75%
Neutral	6	25%
Disagree	0	0%

**Table 06: The Importance of Intercultural Awareness in Learning**

The majority of the students (75%) agreed that developing intercultural awareness helps to avoid learning problems while (25%) remained neutral. Notably, none of the students disagreed with this statement. This result clearly highlights the students' recognition of the importance of intercultural awareness in their academic experience. A large portion of the respondents see intercultural awareness as a key factor that contributes to overcome

challenges they might face in CLIL classrooms, such as miscommunication, misunderstanding of culturally influenced content, or difficulty in grasping unfamiliar perspectives founded in the subject matter. The absence of disagreement reinforces the idea that intercultural awareness is perceived not only as a soft skill, but also as an essential support mechanism that enhances both comprehension and classroom interaction.

**Students’ Views on The Impact of the Lack of Intercultural Engagement on Learning**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	18	75%
Neutral	5	21%
Disagree	1	4%

**Table 07: The Impact of the Lack of Intercultural Engagement on Learning**

The table above reveals a significant portion (75%) of respondents agreed that the lack of engagement with other cultures leads to more learning problems. Meanwhile, a smaller portion of respondents (21%) were neutral, and only one student (4%) disagreed with the statement. This indicates that most of students might be aware of the impact of intercultural interactions on their learning process. The data suggests the importance of intercultural awareness in CLIL environment.

**Section Four: Content and Language Integrated Learning and Intercultural Awareness**

This section of the questionnaire explores the students’ perceptions and experiences regarding Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and its relation to intercultural awareness. The aim is to investigate whether the integration of language and subject content influences their academic performance, their intercultural understanding, and their overall learning process. The items designed collectively aim to provide insight into the interplay

between language, content, and intercultural awareness within the CLIL framework at M'sila University.

**CLIL as a Supportive Learning Environment in Commercial Sciences Department**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	16	67%
Neutral	7	29%
Disagree	1	4%

**Table 08: The Role of CLIL in Learning for Commercial Sciences Students**

Based on students' responses, a significant portion (67%) of commercial sciences students were agree that CLIL encourages a supportive learning environment for them, a smaller portion (29%) were neutral and only one respondent disagreed with this sentence. The final results indicates that the majority of students may view CLIL classroom as a positive environment which encourages both language and content learning, while the smaller number of neutrality and disagreement responses may indicate students' differences in the learning experiences.

**Content and Language Integrated Learning helps you develop both English language skills and commercial sciences subject knowledge effectively**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	19	79%
Neutral	4	17%
Disagree	1	4%

**Table 09: The Effective Role of CLIL in the Development of Both English Language and Commercial Sciences Subject Knowledge**

A substantial majority of the students (79%) acknowledged the dual benefit of the CLIL approach in enhancing both their English language skills and their understanding of commercial sciences. This strong level of agreement suggests that most students perceive CLIL as an effective pedagogical strategy that contributes meaningfully to their academic progress in both linguistic and disciplinary domains. The presence of four neutral responses (17%) may reflect a degree of hesitation or limited personal experience with fully integrated CLIL instruction. However, the minimal disagreement (only one student) further supports the effectiveness of this approach in meeting the dual learning objectives. These findings align with the overall aim of CLIL to simultaneously promote content mastery and language acquisition which indicates that the students are indeed benefiting from this educational approach in a practical and measurable way.

**The Role of Authentic Materials in Enhancing Intercultural Awareness in CLIL Classrooms**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree	19	79%
Neutral	3	13%
Disagree	2	8%

**Table 10: The Importance of Authentic Materials in Increasing Students' Exposure to Intercultural Content**

The findings presented in the table reveal that most of students (79%) agreed that authentic materials use helps in increasing their exposure to intercultural awareness in CLIL classroom, a smaller group (13%) was neither agree nor disagree, and only (8%) of students

disagreed with the idea. The high agreement suggests that most of students may recognize the crucial role of using authentic materials to learn more about different cultures inside the CLIL context. However, neutrality means that students may have limited understanding about authentic materials' benefit on students' intercultural awareness in their CLIL classroom.

**CLIL’s Role in Enhancing Intercultural Awareness**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	20	83%
Neutral	4	17%
Disagree	0	0%

**Table 11: The Role of CLIL in Enhancing Intercultural Awareness and Cultural Differences Understanding**

Table 11 clearly shows a high number of students (83%) agreed that CLIL enhances their intercultural awareness and understanding of various cultures, while few students (17%) were neutral they did not express a preference towards the statement, and remarkably no one disagreed with the idea. The findings may suggest the strong benefit of CLIL in understanding different cultures.

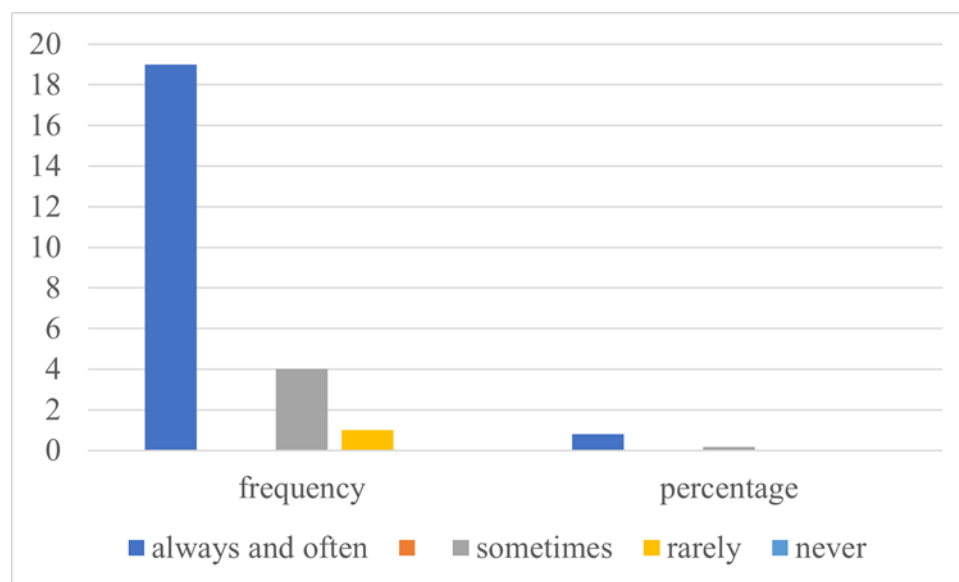
**Knowing the cultural differences and similarities of different communities helps you better understand commercial content**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	16	67%
Neutral	5	21%
Disagree	3	13%

**Table 12: The Importance of Knowing Cultural Differences Comparison between Different Communities in Commercial Content**

The responses show that the majority of students (67%) recognize the value of understanding cultural differences and similarities in enhancing their grasp of commercial content. This finding supports the assumption that intercultural awareness plays a significant role in students' academic comprehension within CLIL settings. The presence of 5 neutral responses (21%) may indicate a portion of students who are uncertain about the impact of cultural knowledge on their subject learning or have not yet had enough exposure to draw such conclusion. Meanwhile, the relatively small percentage (13%) who disagreed suggests that while a minority may not see this connection, the dominant perception remains that intercultural understanding is beneficial. These results reinforce the relevance of integrating cultural dimensions in CLIL classrooms to deepen students' engagement with commercial topics and promote more meaningful learning experiences.

### The Existence of Difficulties in Understanding Content in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Classes



**Graph 07: The Frequency of Content Understanding Difficulties according to Students**

## CHAPTER TWO: THE FIELD WORK

The data indicates that a substantial majority of students (19 out of 24), account for (79%) experience content comprehension difficulties either always or often in their CLIL classes. This result strongly suggests that understanding subject matter delivered in a foreign language, in this case English presents a notable challenge for many learners. The fact that no students selected never and only a single respondent chose rarely, indicates the consistency of this challenge among the student group.

### Students' Perceived Areas of Difficulty in CLIL Classes

Language	3	13%
Content	0	0%
Intercultural Awareness	17	71%
Vocabulary	2	8%
Grammar	2	8%

**Table 13: The Type of Difficulties Faced by Students**

The table shows a clear view about the difficult areas for students in their CLIL classes, the majority of students (71%) reported that they face difficulties related to intercultural aspects, a smaller portion (13%) consider language as a challenge, while smaller groups (8%) in each found difficulties in vocabulary or grammar, notably none of the students indicated content as a source of difficulty. This suggests that students may lack both knowledge and practice in each area.

**The use of English language in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classes makes it more difficult for you to understand complex commercial sciences concepts**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	12	50%

Neutral	7	29%
Disagree	5	21%

**Table 14: The Effect of English Language Integration on Commercial Sciences Complex Concepts Understanding**

Half of the surveyed students (50%) expressed that the use of English in CLIL classes complicates their understanding of complex commercial sciences concepts. This indicates that language proficiency, particularly for beginners, remains a central challenge in content comprehension within a CLIL setting. (29%) of students opted for a neutral choice which possibly reflects mixed experiences or an inability to determine the extent to which language hinders their understanding. On the other hand, a smaller portion (21%) disagreed, it suggests that for some learners, language use in instruction does not significantly impact their grasp of complex topics.

**Your developed critical thinking due to the integration of language and content helps you understand the intercultural knowledge**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	21	88%
Neutral	2	8%
Disagree	1	4%

**Table 15: The Role of Critical Thinking in Intercultural Understanding**

A strong majority of students (88%) believe that the integration of language and content through the CLIL approach has contributed to the development of their critical thinking, which may help their understanding of intercultural knowledge. This high level of agreement may suggest that learners are not only benefiting linguistically and academically

but they also experience cognitive and intercultural growth. Only a minimal number of students (8%) remained neutral which possibly indicates uncertainty or limited reflection on the relationship between critical thinking and intercultural understanding. The single student (4%) who disagreed may not have perceived a direct link between CLIL and their cognitive or intercultural development.

**CLIL’s Preparations for Multicultural Environments**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	20	83%
Neutral	4	17%
Disagree	0	0%

**Table 16: The Importance of CLIL in Multicultural and International Environments**

The results in this item provide insights into students' perceptions about the value of CLIL in international settings. The majority of respondents (83%) agreed that CLIL prepares them well for working in intercultural and international environments, a smaller portion (17%) stayed neutral and no one disagreed. The high level of agreement means that most of commercial sciences students have a clear understanding about how CLIL will benefit their future careers as international workers. Moreover, the absence of disagreement strongly shows that CLIL is seen as a helpful approach to prepare students for diverse professional contexts.

**4.1.2 Teachers’ Interview**

The researchers applied the same procedure when designing the teachers’ interview as students’ questionnaire. They began by identifying the main purpose of the interview, then selected a suitable format and decided on the types of questions to include. In addition, they

organized the questions in a logical order in which the questions would be asked to the teachers to make the interview easier to follow.

### **4.1.2.1 Description and Objectives of the Teachers' Interview**

The interview is designed to explore the intercultural challenges encountered by teachers in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) within commercial sciences classrooms. Each item is structured to understand the pedagogical practices, challenges, and solutions employed by teachers in CLIL classes. The first item asks if the modules taught contains cultural aspects. This item aims to confirm whether the course content contain cultural aspects so it justifies the choice of the case commercial sciences department. Then, the following item seeks to understand the foundational structure of CLIL lessons. It aims to explain how teachers balance language acquisition with subject-specific content delivery. This item serves in understanding the way teachers plan and deliver CLIL lessons by integrating subject content with English language instruction. The subsequent two items are about the intercultural challenges. They aim to identify specific obstacles related to cultural diversity in CLIL classrooms as well as to see teachers' perspectives toward the cultural misunderstandings or communication issues that may arise and to find out how teachers recognize signs of students' intercultural understanding in subject learning through English. The next item is designed to support students facing linguistic or cultural barriers, it focuses on practical interventions. The goal is to identify the way teachers help students deal with difficulties related to using English or understanding culturally unfamiliar content. The following item highlights the importance of authentic materials in enhancing intercultural awareness. This item aims to understand how teachers include real-world content to build intercultural awareness and to confirm the use of one of the important features of CLIL which is authenticity. Moreover, the seventh item is about giving an example of a CLIL activity that did not work well with the students. The aim is to confirm the existence of intercultural

challenges through a real experience that happened in classroom. Finally, the last item is about suggesting solutions in order to improve to improve CLIL implementation in higher education. To gather practical suggestions for improving CLIL methods in a culturally uniform higher education setting. This interview was piloted to a researcher in order to confirm that its items are clear and serve to realize the objectives behind this study. After the piloting phase, the researchers interviewed five teachers.

### **4.1.2.2 Data Analysis of the Teachers' Interview**

In addition to the student questionnaire, the researchers conducted a structured interview with a sample of 5 teachers to check the findings regarding intercultural challenges in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) settings. The interview was specifically designed to gather qualitative insights from teachers of Commercial Sciences at M'sila University, who are responsible for delivering subject content and English language instruction. The primary aim of the interview was to explore teachers' experiences, perceptions, and strategies related to intercultural issues that may arise in CLIL classrooms. The interview also seeks to understand how teachers integrate intercultural awareness and authentic learning materials into their lessons, support students facing linguistic and cultural barriers, and evaluate the cultural responsibility of their modules. The structured format of the interview ensured consistency in responses across the eight items asked.

#### **Is the module you are teaching taking into consideration the cultural differences?**

All teachers confirmed "Yes" the modules they teach do take into consideration cultural differences. Their responses imply that culture is embedded in the content of Commercial Sciences, whether explicitly (in topics such as marketing strategies, international business, or consumer behaviours) or implicitly (through the use of authentic materials, examples from global markets, or culturally loaded terms and practices).

**Could you please describe a typical content and language integrated learning lesson you teach in Commercial Sciences modules, and how you integrate language and content learning?**

All teachers interviewed reported that their CLIL lessons in the Commercial Sciences field follow a model established by the Ministry of Higher Education. The Ministry provides the course content, which was initially delivered in Arabic but has now been adapted for instruction in English. As these teachers had previously taught the material in Arabic, their familiarity with the subject helped them move to CLIL instruction. However, they emphasized the need to adjust their methods based on students' different levels of English proficiency which means that while some students are good in language, others face significant difficulties. Some teachers explained that they integrate language and content through repetition, gradual exposure to subject-specific terminology, and consistent classroom practice. In each lecture, students are introduced to between 10 to 15 new technical concepts, which are reinforced through repeated explanation and use. Teachers make an effort to clarify these concepts both in English and Arabic which helps learners to learn new knowledge. Additionally, exercises are provided either during class or as homework.

These include tasks such as titling texts, interpreting vocabulary, answering comprehension questions, and translating passages from English to Arabic. According to one teacher, students retain about (10%) of the content with each cycle of lectures, assignments, and exams. Teachers expressed that they aim to help students move from simply reading and writing in English to becoming competent users of the language within their academic field. Other teachers begin their lessons by introducing an authentic text, which is either read aloud by them, read by the students, or processed using AI tools to aid comprehension. They place strong emphasis on listening and repeating the core concepts of the lecture to build language

familiarity. At the end of the session, if time permits, they assign follow-up activities either in class or as homework.

**What are the intercultural challenges you encounter when teaching CLIL classes, and how do you address them?**

The answers in this item highlight the main intercultural challenges experienced by teachers in CLIL classes and how do they deal with these issues. Some teachers reported that students struggle with understanding cultural nuances. For example, when discussing examples related to global marketing topics, students assume that strategies that work in their culture will work universally as well. While some other teachers shed light on the issue of cultural sensitivity in verbal and non-verbal communication where in some practical activities students fail to communicate their content by using inappropriate colours, symbols and terminologies for certain international audience. Teachers address these challenges by comparing global examples with local ones in order to encourage students think beyond their own cultural norms.

**How do you know that in your Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classes your students are struggling with intercultural awareness and cultural differences when dealing with the subject matter?**

Some teachers expressed uncertainty about their students' intercultural awareness. They stated that it is difficult to determine with certainty whether students are struggling with intercultural elements. Their primary focus tends to be on ensuring students grasp subject-specific concepts and language usage rather than monitoring cultural understanding. These teachers said that culture is a complex component, and while content itself is culturally embedded, they believe that students may gradually be good in it over time through continued exposure and practice. While other teachers offered a more detailed and reflective response. They reported that through class activities, group projects, homework, and exam corrections,

they are able to observe how students deal with cultural aspects of the content. They mentioned that most students seem distant from foreign cultures, especially American culture, which is often embedded in the subject matter. However, they cited an example of a student who demonstrates strong intercultural awareness. This student, according to the teachers, communicates and reasons in ways comparable to a native speaker from New York, this suggests high language proficiency paired with deep intercultural awareness.

**What strategies do you use to support students who may struggle with language barriers or cultural differences in CLIL classes?**

For this item, all teachers give their students extra resources outside the classroom to read articles in English and examples on topics related to commercial sciences content around the world so that they improve both language skills and content knowledge. Additionally, teachers said that they raise specific discussions on cultural comparison to help learners understand cultural differences and raise cultural awareness.

**How do you incorporate authentic materials into your content and language-integrated learning lessons to enhance intercultural awareness?**

All teachers affirmed that they regularly use authentic materials in their CLIL lessons. They cited different materials, such as unedited texts, newspapers (they mention the example The Washington Post and The New York Times), news articles, advertisements, and international reports. However, Videos, interviews, and podcasts were used occasionally and AI tools, used by one teacher to assist with summarizing, pronunciation, and language learning. Teachers noted that these materials help students connect course content to real-world situations. Only one teacher gave a detailed, concrete example of how he uses these materials in business practices, such as different marketing strategies across cultures in a printed paper in order to keep the students in touch with the culture so they can go back to it later when they need it.

### **Can you share an example of a failed classroom activity or project that promoted intercultural understanding among your students?**

The gathered data from this item shows that majority of teachers cannot hold practical activities in the classroom due to time management. Only one teacher tried a project where students were asked to analyse and compare marketing strategies across different countries. The challenge came when the majority of students could not grasp cultural nuances and struggled with some concepts, so they misinterpreted them and failed in the project analysis. However, few students succeeded during the project because they were aware of the diversity of marketing strategies across countries.

### **What suggestions do you have for improving the implementation of CLIL in higher education to better address intercultural challenges and enhance students' outcomes?**

Teachers of commercial sciences offer insightful suggestions for improvement. Some of them proposed the integration of different cultures' approaches to curricula's content in order to help students be more exposed to a variety of cultural perspectives within their subject matter. Moreover, other teachers recommended the availability of onsite or online exchange programs that combine both language learning with cultural immersion to help students understand better the cultural nuances behind language. Additionally, another teacher emphasized the idea of theatre in English as a powerful tool to enhance students' linguistic and cultural skills. He mentioned that the theatre allows learners to practice English in real life situations, explore cultural values and behaviours through acting, and understand how different cultures communicate and interact.

#### **4.1.3 Classroom Observation**

Researchers attended multiple sessions with commercial sciences teachers at the department of M'sila University. They utilized a checklist as a guiding tool to observe the behaviours of both teachers and students in CLIL classes.

### 4.1.3.1 Description and Objective of Classroom Observation

In this research, a structured classroom observation is used as a third research instrument to double check and support the findings collected from students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews. The main purpose of the observation was to collect real CLIL class data where both students and teachers behave in a natural way.

A classroom observation checklist of nine statements was designed by researchers to guide them from any external distractive ideas. This checklist was seen and approved by a supervisor to make sure that it matched research goals. The main objective of the observation is to understand how teachers and students deal with the content and language in CLIL sessions and how cultural elements may cause challenges for them. Moreover, to see how teachers support their students linguistically and culturally. A total of four observation sessions took place during the second semester of the academic year 2024-2025, exactly on the following dates: 07/04/2025, 14/04/2025, 21/04/2025, and 28/04/2025.

### 4.1.3.2 Data Analysis Classroom Observation

The statements of the checklist are discussed in form of paragraphs as following:

In the classroom the teacher creates an inclusive environment by allowing students sometimes to respond in Arabic while he delivers the content in English to help them feel more comfortable and valued in terms of language proficiency level, it means that he fit everyone's language proficiency. The teacher also ensures cultural sensitivity through the use of examples and activities that reflect diverse cultures and perspectives.

While the teacher applied CLIL approach effectively, students' engagement varied. The majority of students were able to follow with the teacher due to his simplified way of explanation and his way of introducing the concepts gradually from the easiest to the most difficult. However, few students used the language effectively while others were somehow

struggling when expressing ideas in English language because of their beginner to intermediate language proficiency levels.

The observation indicates that the teacher balanced content delivery with language support successfully when he started introducing basic vocabulary before moving to more complex ones. And giving students activities linked to both subject matter and language learning. Additionally, the teacher used multimodal support through the presentation of videos and pictures that make both content and language easy to understand. Scaffolding was clearly provided by the teacher; he was explaining step by step the new terms related to digital marketing. This might allow students to develop content knowledge and language proficiency at the same time.

The materials used in the classroom contains authentic texts and examples of applications, websites and platforms that students can use to enhance marketing practices across different cultures, for instance the British AI marketing platform. Another example was the practical activity of developing a marketing strategy for Algerian dates in UK; it helped students to understand real-world intercultural marketing strategies.

In digital marketing sessions cultural references were integrated through examples and assignments. During the discussion the teacher talked about marketing across various cultures and emphasized on cultural nuances when making campaigns for international audiences. Some students failed to apply during the classroom activity which suggests the necessity of providing deeper cultural guidance during these activities to avoid intercultural challenges.

During the observed sessions, students showed different levels of engagement and confidence when participating in discussions, particularly those involving intercultural themes. While some students actively contributed and presented their ideas clearly, many others participated only at a basic level and appeared unsure when expressing themselves.

This suggests that although group tasks encouraged involvement, not all students were fully prepared or confident to engage deeply with culturally complex topics.

The observations revealed that students often faced difficulties in understanding the content due to limited intercultural awareness. These challenges were not just related to language but reflected a deeper misunderstanding of cultural concepts. Students sometimes misinterpreted key ideas or made inaccurate assumptions, which affected the quality of their contributions. This indicates a need for better support in developing intercultural understanding as part of the learning process.

Class activities were designed to promote critical thinking by encouraging students to apply marketing concepts in international and intercultural contexts. Tasks such as developing campaigns for different cultural markets required students to analyse and adapt their ideas. While some students responded well and demonstrated thoughtful analysis, others relied on generalizations, showing that not all learners were equipped to handle the complexity of intercultural problem-solving.

The teacher made consistent efforts to avoid stereotypes and to present cultures. However, many students still used simplified or stereotypical views when discussing other cultures. These generalizations appeared in their presentations, often revealing a lack of deeper knowledge. This highlights the gap between teacher instruction and student understanding when it comes to representing cultural diversity accurately.

Student reliance on cultural stereotypes had a noticeable impact on the quality of their academic work. In tasks that required cultural analysis, such as marketing projects, these oversimplified views led to weak performance. Although the teacher encouraged critical thinking, stereotypes were not always directly addressed. This affected students' ability to apply cultural knowledge meaningfully.

A lack of intercultural awareness among students limited their ability to connect academic content with real-world contexts. Many students approached culturally diverse topics in a general or inappropriate way, which weakened their performance in tasks like designing marketing strategies for international markets. This shows that intercultural awareness is important for success in disciplines like business and marketing.

### **5. Discussion of the Results**

This title is devoted to the discussion of the results collected from the three main research instruments used to collect data in this investigation. This study explored the intercultural challenges experienced in CLIL classes among Commercial Sciences students and their teachers at M'sila University. The findings reveal that while English is consistently used as the medium of instruction and students recognize the dual focus on both content and language, but they did not develop the intercultural component of CLIL. One of the key findings is that students demonstrate limited intercultural awareness, often relying on stereotypes and struggling to engage with cultural content beyond generalizations which aligns with what it was mention in the literature review. Teachers, on the other hand, face challenges in addressing these issues due to lack of training, insufficient resources, and time limitations.

The study also showed that although students recognize the importance of intercultural awareness for their academic and professional futures, many reported that intercultural issues were the main difficulty they face in CLIL classes. These results directly answer the main research question by confirming that both students and teachers experience concrete intercultural challenges in CLIL environments. The first sub-question is addressed by revealing that teachers feel unprepared to deal with intercultural issues and lack institutional support. The second sub-question is answered through student responses and classroom

observations that highlight confusion, discomfort, and misunderstanding when dealing with culturally diverse content.

The use of authentic materials and well-structured tasks was shown to enhance intercultural engagement, yet these are not consistently used. These patterns suggest that while motivation and awareness exist, effective intercultural learning requires more systematic support. Questionnaire data revealed general attitudes and difficulties, while interviews with teachers provided detailed insight into their constraints and efforts. Classroom observations validated both by showing how students struggled with cultural topics and how teachers attempted to manage these challenges in practice.

Taken together, the data from the three instruments show a clear and consistent picture, intercultural learning remains the most challenging aspect of CLIL, despite being recognized as essential by both students and teachers. This highlights the need for stronger institutional commitment to training, resources, and curriculum development to fully realize the intercultural goals of CLIL in higher education.

### **6. Conclusion**

The second chapter focused on the analysis of the data gathered from three research instruments including students' questionnaire, teachers' interview, and classroom observation. Therefore, the data analysis shows several results regarding the two variables intercultural awareness and CLIL. These results helped in answering research questions and reveal the fact that both teachers and students face challenges related to cultural differences in CLIL context. That is to say CLIL helps students to learn content and language together, but the cultural side is still not fully developed as both teachers and students need to pay more attention to intercultural aspects in order to overcome such challenges.

### **7. Recommendations for Pedagogical Implications**

It is important to integrate intercultural objectives into the curriculum in order to enhance the effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in higher education. Teachers should design lessons that include intercultural goals alongside content and language outcomes to support students' balanced development in all areas. The use of authentic and culturally diverse materials, such as real-world texts, videos, and case studies from different cultures, can make lessons more engaging and meaningful for students. In addition, they can add extra session where they promote task-based and interactive learning through activities like role-plays, debates, and simulations based on intercultural situations helps students develop deeper understanding and reduce their dependence on stereotypes. Moreover, teacher training on intercultural awareness is also essential, because it equips teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to incorporate intercultural elements into their CLIL practices effectively. Furthermore, teachers should encourage reflective thinking and open discussion about cultural differences because it allows students to examine their own assumptions and gain a global perspective. Finally, universities should support these efforts by developing institutional support systems by giving access to intercultural teaching resources, professional development workshops, and dedicated time for intercultural lesson planning.

### **8. Limitations of the Study**

This study faced certain limitations that may have influenced the generalizability of the findings and the total strength of the study. Time constraints limited the research design to an exploratory approach rather than explanatory one, which means that the study focused on just exploring and gathering initial insights rather than giving deep explanations. Also, the limited time restricted the number of classroom observation that was conducted during this study, which reduced the quantity of real classroom data. In addition, this investigation was hindered by the small number of teachers available in CLIL context within commercial sciences

department where only 5 teachers met the criteria of participation, so it was difficult to collect more data of perspectives and experiences. Moreover, the findings of this research may not be generalized across different universities due to contextual differences.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study explored the intercultural challenges experienced in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classes in higher education the case of commercial sciences students and their teachers at M'sila University. The main objectives were to identify the intercultural difficulties encountered in CLIL classrooms, investigate the specific challenges faced by students, and examine the issues teachers face when delivering content through a foreign language. To achieve these aims, the researchers adopted a descriptive methodology where they used three data collection tools, teachers' interview, students' questionnaire and classroom observation.

The findings revealed that although CLIL classes successfully integrate English as the medium of instruction and maintain a balance between language and subject content, intercultural awareness remains a major challenge. Students showed limited understanding of cultural differences and often relied on stereotypes, while teachers expressed a lack of training and resources to address intercultural aspects effectively.

The study is important because it highlights the need to strengthen the intercultural dimension of CLIL, which is essential for preparing students for global professional environments, especially in fields like Commercial Sciences. Pedagogically, the study suggests the integration of intercultural objectives into the curriculum, the use of authentic materials, more interactive classroom practices, and better institutional support for teacher training.

Generally speaking, while CLIL offers many benefits, its full potential cannot be realized unless the intercultural component is given equal attention. Further research is encouraged to explore this topic in more depth, especially across other academic disciplines, and to examine how intercultural awareness can be more effectively developed in higher education settings.

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## **APPENDECIES**

## Appendix A : Students' Questionnaire

### Students' questionnaire

We would be so appreciative if you could answer the following questionnaire, it aims to explore the intercultural challenges you face in content and language integrated learning in commercial sciences department. Please answer the questions based on your experiences. Your responses are confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

سنكون شاكرين للغاية لو أجبتم على الاستبيان التالي، الذي يهدف إلى استكشاف التحديات الثقافية التي تواجهونها في التعليم المتكامل للغة والمحتوى في قسم العلوم التجارية. يُرجى الإجابة على الأسئلة بناءً على تجاربكم. إجاباتكم سرية ولن تُستخدم إلا لأغراض البحث.

### Section one : students' profile

1. Gender: الجنس
 

Male: ذكر		<input type="checkbox"/>
Female: أنثى		<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Age: العمر
 

18-25		<input type="checkbox"/>
26 or above فما أكثر		<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Level of English : مستوى اللغة
 

Beginner: مبتدى		<input type="checkbox"/>
Intermediate: متوسط		<input type="checkbox"/>
Advanced: متقدم		<input type="checkbox"/>

### Section Two: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

#### 4. What is the medium of instruction used in your CLIL classes?

ماهي لغة التدريس المستخدمة داخل القسم؟

- |                          |  |                          |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| English: اللغة الإنجليزي |  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| French: اللغة الفرنسية   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other: أخرى              |  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### 5. How many modules do you study in this foreign/second language?

كم عدد المقاييس التي تدرسها بهذه اللغة الأجنبية؟

.....

6. In your CLIL classes, do you focus on developing:

في التعليم المتكامل للمحتوى واللغة، هل تركز على تطوير:

- Content: المحتوى
- Language: اللغة
- Both: كلاهما

7. The materials (texts, articles, videos....) used in your CLIL classes are:

الوسائل التعليمية (النصوص والمقالات ومقاطع الفيديو....) المستخدمة داخل القسم هي:

- Authentic Materials: وسائل تعليمية أصلية
- Non-authentic Materials: وسائل تعليمية غير أصلية

(Authentic materials: real and original materials from real life situation made by native speakers)

(وسائل تعليمية أصلية مأخوذة من الحياة الواقعية أنجزه المتحدثين الأصليين للغة)

Section three: Intercultural awareness

8. Being an effective international language user requires the development of:

أن تكون مستخدما فعالا للغة على الصعيد الدولي يتطلب منك تطوير:

- Language اللغة
- Grammar قواعد اللغة
- Intercultural awareness الوعي الثقافي
- Vocabulary المفردات
- All of them كلهم
- Justify: علل

.....

.....

.....

9. Developing intercultural awareness helps you avoid learning problems.

يساعدك تطوير الوعي الثقافي على تجنب مشاكل المتعلقة بالتعلم.

- Agree أتفق
- Neutral محايد
- Disagree لا أتفق

**10. The lack of engagement with interculture leads you to face more learning**

إن عدم التفاعل مع الثقافات المختلفة يؤدي إلى مواجهة المزيد من المشاكل المتعلقة بالتعلم

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

**Section four: CLIL and Intercultural awareness**

**11. CLIL encourages a supportive learning environment for you as commercial sciences students.**

يوفر التعليم المتكامل للغة والمحتوى بيئة تعلم داعمة لك كطالب علوم تجارية.

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

**12. CLIL helps you develop both English language skills and commercial sciences subject knowledge effectively.**

يساعد التعليم المتكامل للغة والمحتوى على تطوير مهاراتك اللغوية ومعرفتك بمحتوى المواد المدرسة في العلوم التجارية بشكل فعال.

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

**13. Authentic materials use helps in increasing the exposure of students to intercultural content.**

يسهم استخدام الوسائل التعليمية الأصلية في زيادة تعرض الطلاب للمحتوى الثقافي بين الأجيال.

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

**14. CLIL enhances your intercultural awareness and different culture understanding.**

يعزز التعليم المتكامل للغة والمحتوى الوعي الثقافي والفهم لمختلف الثقافات.

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

**15. Knowing the cultural differences and similarities of different communities helps you in better understand commercial content.**

يساعدك فهم الفروق والتشابهات الثقافية للمجتمعات المختلفة على تحسين فهمك للمحتوى التجاري.

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

**16. You find difficulties in understanding content in CLIL class.**

هل تجد صعوبات في فهم المحتوى عند دراسته باللغة الأجنبية؟

Always دائما

Often غالبا

Sometimes أحيانا

Rarely نادرا

Never أبدا

**17. Do you find difficulties in relation to:**

هل تجد صعوبات متعلقة ب:

Language

Content

Intercultural awareness

Vocabulary

Grammar

**18. The use of English language in CLIL classes makes it more difficult for you to understand complex commercial sciences concepts.**

يجعل استخدام اللغة الأجنبية من الصعب عليك فهم مفاهيم العلوم التجارية المعقدة

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

19. **Your developed critical thinking due to the integration of language and content helps you understand the intercultural knowledge.**

تُساعدك مهارات التفكير النقدي التي طورتها من خلال دمج اللغة والمحتوى على فهم المعرفة الثقافية.

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

20. **CLIL prepares you well for working in multicultural and international environments.**

يجهزك التعليم المتكامل للغة والمحتوى جيدًا للعمل في بيئات متعددة الثقافات ودولية.

Agree أتفق

Neutral محايد

Disagree لا أتفق

## Appendix B: Teachers' Interview

1. Does the content you teach in your module take in consideration the cultural differences?

.....  
 .....

2. Could you please describe a typical CLIL lesson you teach in commercial sciences modules, and how you integrate language and content learning?

.....  
 .....

3. What are intercultural challenges you encounter when teaching CLIL classes, and how do you address them?

.....  
 .....

4. How do you know that in CLIL classes your students are aware of cultural differences when dealing with the subject matter?

.....  
 .....

5. What strategies do you use to support students who may struggle with language barriers or cultural differences in CLIL class?

.....  
 .....

6. How do you incorporate authentic materials and real-life scenarios into your CLIL lessons to enhance intercultural awareness?

.....  
 .....

7. Could you share an example of a failed CLIL activity or project that reflected the intercultural understanding among your students?

.....  
.....

8. What suggestions do you have for improving the implementation of CLIL in higher education to better address intercultural challenges and enhance student outcomes?

.....  
.....

### Appendix C: Classroom Observation Checklist

Observation statements	Yes	No
1. The classroom environment encourages inclusivity and cultural sensitivity.		
2. The effective use of English language as medium of instruction. Are students able to follow and engage with the content, or do they struggle with language barriers.		
3. Teachers balance content delivery with language support. They provide scaffolding to make them understand.		
4. The materials used in class reflect diverse cultural perspectives and real-world contexts.		
5. The cultural references are integrated into the lesson. Teachers address or explain cultural differences that may arise during discussions.		
6. Students appear engaged and confident when participating in discussions, especially intercultural topics.		
7. Students' lack of intercultural awareness can lead to a failure in understanding and practicing the content.		
8. Class activities encourage students to apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills in an intercultural topic.		
9. Teachers or students make cultural references or stereotypes.		
10. These stereotypes cause problems, the avoidance these stereotypes will facilitate learning.		
11. Lack of intercultural awareness causes problems.		

## Résumé

La présente recherche vise à explorer les défis interculturels rencontrés dans les classes d'Apprentissage Intégré du Contenu et de La langue (AICL) dans l'enseignement supérieur. Cette étude adopte une approche descriptive pour décrire un phénomène significatif. Elle utilise une triangulation de trois instruments de recherche, notamment un questionnaire, des entretiens et des observations en classe qui ont eu lieu à l'université de M'sila pendant l'année universitaire 2024-2025. En outre, l'étude a ciblé un échantillon d'étudiants en master 1 de marketing digital au département des sciences commerciales de l'université de M'sila. Le questionnaire a été distribué à vingt-quatre étudiants du totale de 38, et des entretiens ont été menés avec cinq enseignants du même département. Des séances d'observation en classe ont été organisées avec les mêmes étudiants de l'échantillon ciblé et leur enseignant dans le cadre des cours AICL. Les données collectées à partir du questionnaire des étudiants ont été analysées quantitativement à l'aide de chiffres et présentées sous forme de tableaux et de graphiques, tandis que les entretiens avec les enseignants et les données d'observation en classe ont été analysés qualitativement sous forme de mots et présentés sous forme de paragraphes. Enfin, les résultats de la recherche montrent que les enseignants et les étudiants sont confrontés à des défis liés à la sensibilisation interculturelle au cours de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage d'une matière qui contient diverses normes culturelles de pays étrangers dans les cours AICL.

**Les Mots Clés: Les Défis Interculturels, Apprentissage Intégré du Contenu et de la Langue (AICL), Département des Science Commerciales, La sensibilisation Interculturelle.**

## ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف التحديات الثقافية التي تواجهها أقسام التعليم المتكامل للمحتوى واللغة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي. تعتمد هذه الدراسة منهجاً وصفيّاً من أجل الكشف عن ظاهرة مهمة مستعينة بثلاث أدوات بحثية متكاملة، وهي الاستبيان والمقابلات والملاحظة الصفية. وقد تم إجراء الدراسة في جامعة المسيلة خلال السنة الجامعية 2024-2025، حيث تم اختيار العينة ضمن طلبة السنة الأولى ماستر في تخصص التسويق الرقمي بقسم العلوم التجارية. وقد تم توزيع الاستبيان على 24 طالباً من أصل 38. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أجرى الباحثان مقابلات مع خمسة أساتذة من نفس القسم. كما تمت ملاحظة نفس مجموعة الطلبة أثناء تلقيهم للدروس مع أساتذهم. أما بالنسبة إلى تحليل البيانات فقد قام الباحثان بتحليل بيانات الاستبيان كمياً وعرضها في جداول و رسوم بيانية، في حين تم تحليل بيانات المقابلات والملاحظات الصفية نوعياً وعرضها بشكل وصفي في فقرات. أظهرت نتائج البحث أن كل من الأساتذة والطلبة يواجهون تحديات تتعلق بالوعي الثقافي أثناء تعلم و تعليم المحتوى العلمي الذي يتضمن معايير ثقافية متنوعة في أقسام التعليم المتكامل للمحتوى واللغة .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تحديات ثقافية، التعليم المتكامل للمحتوى و اللغة، قسم العلوم التجارية، الوعي الثقافي.