

Learners' Perception About and Development of Inter/multi-cultural Awareness Through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) of English Fiction in Bangladesh

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Abstract

To teach literature in a second or foreign language classroom, different models are used worldwide—such as the Cultural Model, Language Model, and Personal Growth Model. Among these, the Cultural Model is commonly used in Bangladesh. However, it is usually taught through lecture-based methods, leaving little room for students to respond or show their cultural awareness. The Cultural Model connects with the "culture" aspect of the 4Cs framework (content, cognition, communication, and culture) in the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. Applying CLIL in fiction teaching can create opportunities for active communication, cultural awareness, and appreciation of cultural diversity. This study used the 4Cs framework of CLIL and applied a mixed-method approach, collecting both quantitative data accrued through a questionnaire survey responded by 40 learners and qualitative data collected through interviews with 10 participants from undergraduate fiction classes, and secondary sources. The findings show that using CLIL in teaching fiction improved cultural awareness and communication among students. A task-based approach helped learners engage in classroom activities, which allowed them to practice awareness, tolerance, and acceptance of cultural diversity. Results indicate a clear improvement in students' intercultural knowledge and their ability to respond empathetically and positively to cultural differences.

Keywords: CLIL, cultural awareness, communication, English literature, teaching fiction, undergraduate classes, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Cultural awareness and tolerance to diversity have become dire needs in today's world of chaos and intolerance where people suffer from a corrosive ideology of self-supremacy and megalomania which ultimately creates conflict among people in different parts of the world. Therefore, the development of cross-cultural awareness, tolerance, and acceptance of cultural diversity and pluralism with appropriate empathy seem to be important humane aspects to embed among students' sensibility, formally through their curriculum. Cultural or cross-cultural awareness refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate the differences that exist between cultures. For example, a common practice of arranged marriages in 19 C England as found in the novel *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austin can make a Bangladeshi student of literature class aware of cross-cultural practices and differences because they can identify the same cultural practice found common in Bangladesh. Next, if we talk about tolerance, and acceptance of cultural diversity it cannot but be mentioned that through the encounter of newer cultural context, the student shows tolerance by not judging the other culture, acceptance by valuing the differences, and empathy by understanding the feelings and experiences of people from another culture. However, the question is how can these elements be implanted among students? In this context, the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach appears to be a significant pathway to serve and satisfy this need for integrating cultural awareness among the learners.

In fact, CLIL is an approach with dual goals of teaching the language and the content or subject simultaneously with emphasis on both. The cultural dimension is central to the CLIL framework. This approach incorporates the 4Cs framework where the C's refer to Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture. These are the four basic pillars on which the CLIL framework is constructed. Here, *context* is another aspect that helps maintain the "symbiotic relationship that exists among these elements" (Coyle et al, 2010, p.41). Culture as the fourth dimension of the 4Cs framework, promotes exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, which deepens awareness of otherness and self (Darn, 2018).

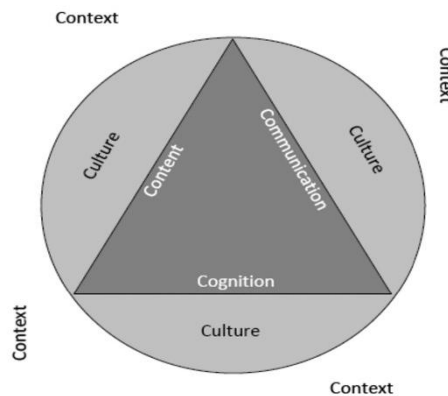


Figure 1. 4Cs framework (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010)

This cultural awareness, which may also be termed as cultural sensitivity or cross-cultural/ intercultural awareness, refers to the awareness of one's own cultural identity, values, ethics, and beliefs and understanding as well as acknowledgement of others' cultures, values, ethics, and beliefs. Literature courses that abound with intercultural content by default provide learners with fertile ground and opportunities to develop cultural awareness and acknowledge cultural differences as normal.

However, CLIL is a very significant approach to nourish cultural awareness among learners is seldom seen to be used in Bangladesh. Moreover, except for a few CLIL training sessions conducted by the British Council for 12 Cadet Colleges in Bangladesh in 2016, the formal use of CLIL in the undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh has not been traced. Hence, there remains a significant gap in the existing literature regarding the use of CLIL in undergraduate English literature class contexts in Bangladesh. Therefore, the objective of the study is to find how using lessons through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in English literature classes has contributed:

- to develop the knowledge of intercultural awareness. (Knowledge).
- to develop the skills of intercultural awareness (skill).
- to the development of certain attitude towards intercultural awareness (attitude).

The following research questions were used to conduct the research and find their answers:

General research question

How does CLIL help to enhance cultural awareness and global citizenship among undergraduate learners through English literature courses in Bangladesh?

Specific research questions

1. How does CLIL help to increase the knowledge related to cultural awareness in undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh?
2. How does CLIL develop the skills related to cultural awareness in undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh?
3. In what ways can CLIL be used to instill a certain attitude related to cultural awareness in undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh?
4. How can local culture of the learners be promoted implementing CLIL in undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh?

2. Literature Review

Earlier studies reveal that the use of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in English literature classes tend to give rise to mixed feelings from the students of English literature in a heterogeneous class context of Bangladesh (Kamal, 2021). It is also found that CLIL can be effective in exploiting all the four elements (content, communication, cognition, and culture) of 4Cs framework based on learners' attitude towards and acceptance of this approach (Kamal, 2022). Though CLIL is not very visibly found to be used on a large scale in undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh, its infrequent uses in Bangladesh are identified by Kamal (2021, 2022), Rafi and Morgan (2022). Rafi and Morgan (2022) employed though not exclusively CLIL but a blended approach of translanguaging pedagogy and CLIL in an Anthropology class of a Bangladeshi public university and identified a mixed response towards using translanguaging and CLIL from the students and teachers. Any study on the exclusive use of CLIL in undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh appears to be a rare case. Within its limited use in Bangladesh the implication of CLIL, with its dual goals of developing language skills and enhancing the content knowledge, appears to be enormous because students admitted in undergraduate English classes lack the required level of language skills (Alam, 2018; Hasan, 2016; Yeasmin, 2011). Additionally, since intercultural awareness is a significant concern in today's pedagogy and culture happens to be a significant component of CLIL approach by default, there remains a significant relevance of CLIL and intercultural awareness. The current study attempts to explore the use of CLIL in fiction classes

to address the learners' development of cultural awareness as culture appears to be one of key elements of 4Cs framework of CLIL.

This is emphasized that learning a language should "not just involve linguistic competence but also include intercultural competence" (Rodríguez & Puyal, 2012, p. 105). Besides, language acquisition and intercultural education are closely linked. (Dervin et al., 2023) Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: "first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people which is inter-psychological and then inside the child which is intra-psychological" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57). Along with its development through social and familial intervention, a learner's cultural awareness can be potentially developed through content lessons at the institutional levels. Lessons on cultural sensitivity can be integrated into the lessons of any subject irrespective of discipline. In this case, literature provides us with a strong cultural element as it embodies "written texts which have a certain aesthetic value and some perceived status in the culture of which they are artifacts" (Edmondson, 1997, p. 45).

Researchers advocate Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a holistic approach in language education which engages students intellectually and cognitively in both language and content and which may, therefore, have an impact on mental (affective hence attitude) activities (Cenoz, 2014; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Lorenzo, 2011; Marsh, 2008; Martyniuk 2008). Also, CLIL is claimed to promote cultural literacy and fluency in the target language while students apply prior knowledge and use cognitive skills (Rodríguez & Puyal, 2012; Zakarneh & Mahmoud, 2021; Pérez Gracia et al., 2017)

In fact, foreign language education should include literature studies and intercultural education, which should be taught by instructors trained in identity, human rights, and citizenship education (Fleming, 2006). "In terms of the acquisition of intercultural skills, such as independent exploration of cultures or the ability to mediate successfully in intercultural situations" (Sercu, 2005, p. 120), culture learning through English literature portraying different cultural backgrounds, appears to be significantly effective. With possibilities of stepping into diverse perspectives, cross-cultural analytical studies, fiction plays a crucial role in creating critical cultural awareness and empathetic sensitivity. (Dervin et al., 2023) Moreover, intercultural communicative competence can be greatly enhanced through fiction texts in comparison to nonfiction ones, if applied through student-centered dialogic multimodal approaches. (Heggernes, 2021) Exposure to authentic, diverse and complex linguistic structures and stylistic choices found in literature, enhances discourse competence and awareness of language nuances, which is key in intercultural awareness. (Bobkina & Stefanova, 2016)

A CLIL lesson is neither a language lesson; nor is it a subject lesson transmitted in a foreign language. To reiterate, according to the 4Cs curriculum of Coyle (1999), a successful CLIL lesson should combine elements of the following four components: The first is Content which relates to the progression in knowledge, skills and understanding connected to the specific elements of a defined curriculum. The second is Communication, which indicates the use of a foreign language to learn whilst learning to use the language itself. The third is Cognition which underlines the development of thinking skills which ultimately link concept formation (abstract and concrete), understanding and language. The last one is Culture which promotes exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, which deepens awareness of otherness and self (Darn, 2018). Among them, raising awareness of citizenship among the learners appears to be a significantly important aspect of educating learners.

In fact, for smooth interaction between the content, communication and cognition a suitable context of culture is obvious. Also, literature may prove to be of value to teachers who are interested in regaining access to the rich resources which literary texts offer (Maley, 2007). Literary texts can also be exploited to teach both on a cognitive and an affective level. That is, literature can increase knowledge as well as affect the moral behavior and attitude of the learners, which can positively be exploited to develop moral characters. It also provides a good cultural background which is an important component of the 4Cs framework of CLIL learning. Specific focus on the culture aspect in the CLIL framework promotes intercultural understanding and global citizenship which impacts on all the other Cs by providing a background for interaction. This brief review of existing literature leads to the assessment of the following research gap in the field CLIL education in English literature classes: There is a lack of concrete research findings on the Bangladeshi learners' perception of cultural awareness and its development through the existing BA English curriculum saturated with literature courses in Bangladesh.

3. Methodology

A mixed method approach is used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Interviews and secondary research materials are used for qualitative data and quantitative data; a questionnaire is conducted on 40 CLIL learners in undergraduate English literature classes. The questionnaire was adapted from Antequera (2016) which aimed at collecting data about learners' perspectives on the development of knowledge about, skills of and attitude towards cultural awareness among the Bangladeshi learners studying in CLIL context of undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants before collecting the data. The validity and reliability of the adapted questionnaire were ensured by consulting subject-matter experts and reviewing the instrument for consistency with the original version.

The sampling method used was purposive sampling, targeting students actively enrolled in undergraduate English literature classes. Participant demographics were collected: ages ranged from 18 to 22 years. There were 28 females and 12 males participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 CLIL learners and secondary research materials such as published journal articles, book chapters and CLIL materials. The qualitative findings are presented separately to provide deeper insights into learners' experiences, perspectives, and attitudes regarding cultural awareness, as well as supporting the quantitative results.

Data Collection

The questionnaire developed using the Google Form was distributed among 50 participants over MS Teams class groups and in some cases over email and other communication platforms such as WhatsApp and Messenger. However, 40 responses were submitted. The participants were informed that the data collected from this study will be used for research purposes only. The participants were provided with the statement that “submitting this google form means you give your consent to use this survey data for only research purposes; with a condition that your identity will not be disclosed”. The participants read this statement and then submitted their responses which can be considered as their formal consent to use their responses for this research purpose only. After the closing date of the responses, the data collected from the survey was downloaded from Google Forms into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. The survey responses were organized in Excel, with each participant's answers corresponding to individual questions were organized in Excel represented in rows and columns.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The qualitative data collected were thematically analyzed, on the following themes: developing the knowledge of intercultural awareness, the demonstration of the skills of intercultural awareness, learners’ attitude towards intercultural awareness. These themes aided to find answers to the research questions (RQ#1, RQ#2, RQ#3 & RQ#4) of this paper. On the other hand, the quantitative data were analyzed using an Excel spreadsheet software for descriptive analysis. The Excel spreadsheet was used for a graphical and percentile presentation of data.

The factors investigated in this study are related both to the issues concerning learners and the subjects they learn. This investigation was done to explore and examine responses, issues and challenges regarding culture or the cultural awareness, the fourth important aspect related to the implementation of 4Cs CLIL framework (4Cs representing Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture) in English literature classes.

Developing the knowledge of intercultural awareness (RQ 1)

Learners’ knowledge of intercultural awareness in CLIL context of undergraduate literature classes was attempted to assess through this survey and interviews. Though scholars have identified that assessing intercultural awareness is the most crucial aspect of any CLIL lessons (Byram, 1997; Belz, 2003), it can be easier to assess learners’ intercultural awareness through CLIL lessons in literature classes since literature simulates cultural contexts and can impact reader or learners’ sensibilities. Table 1 demonstrates learners’ opinions regarding how using lessons through CLIL approach in English literature classes has contributed to developing the knowledge of intercultural awareness among them. It is found that around 88.5% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can identify the cultural differences regarding people’s taste in food and clothing through CLIL lessons in literature classes. The data corresponds to Logioio’s (2010) assertion that storytelling raises learners’ interest and curiosity for other countries and cultures as well as facilitates reflection on one’s own. This also endorses Darn’s (2018) claim that the culture aspect of CLIL promotes exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, which deepens awareness of otherness and self.

Table 1. Learners’ knowledge of intercultural awareness in CLIL context of undergraduate literature classes

Sl.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I can identify everyday objects (e.g., clothes- e.g. kilt, sarang, lungi, dishes, food-e.g. idli, etc.) characteristic of own and certain other countries or communities after getting Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lessons in English literature classes.	65.4	23.1	7.7	3.8	0
2	I know how to write and pronounce words in other languages different from my own language (e.g., Maharaja, Anna, Idli, Jutka, Darshan, Moksha, Pyol)	38.6	26.9	3.8	7.7	23.1
3	I know legends or tales or religions from other cultures (Buddha, Nataraja, Shiva etc.)	42.2	38.5	7.7	7.7	3.8
4	I recognize the different physical characteristics of people from other cultures such as Indian, American, European, Chakma, Tripura etc. (e.g. height, skin color, facial features).	57.7	30.8	11.5	0	0
5	I know the games of my classmates from other countries or communities.	23.1	30.8	23.1	15.4	7.7
6	I identify instruments (e.g. gong), songs or musical rhythms from other cultures	19.2	26.9	34.6	15.4	3.8
7	After encountering diverse cultural contexts in literary texts through CLIL lessons I now better understand the ways of greetings, salutation, conversation, and practice of showing respects to elders	34.6	34.6	26.9	0	3.8
8	The belief that one's own norms, values and culture are the best in the world ultimately undermines other's norms, values and culture.	34.6	30.8	23.1	7.7	3.8

*Strongly Agree = SA, Agree =A, Neutral=N, Disagree = D, Strongly Disagree= SD

Most of the learners (65.4% = SA 34.6% + A 30.8%) also believe that the idea of one's own norms, values and culture as the best in the world ultimately undermines other's norms, values and culture (Table 1). Interview responses also resonated with the same regarding their knowledge of cultural difference, issues of tolerance and acceptance. When asked whether the use of literary text through CLIL context accelerates their understanding of other cultures and stimulates them to respond with tolerance and acceptance, one of the interviewees responded:

“When we study literature, we automatically learn different cultures and cultural contexts, but CLIL lessons help us to practically identify different cultural scenarios and their problems.” (interviewee# 1)

Though they studied the literary texts in English, they had the opportunities to encounter the socio-cultural contexts of the United Kingdom, North America, Latin America, India, Bangladesh, and Australia as the curriculum of the Bachelor program in Bangladesh incorporated literary texts from different countries through the courses titled *British Literature, American Literature, Latin American literature in English, Contemporary South Asian Literature in English* etc.

Demonstration of the skills of intercultural awareness (RQ 2)

Learners demonstrated the skill of intercultural awareness in the CLIL context of undergraduate literature classes as they acted with responsibility towards the different cultures alien to them. The majority of respondents (Strongly Agreed 53.8% + Agreed 15.4% = 69.2%) reported having had the opportunity to study alongside peers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including groups such as the Chakma, Tripura, and Marma communities of Bangladesh. Additionally, a significant proportion (68.5%) expressed critical views regarding racist behaviors exhibited by certain individuals, such as disparaging those with different skin tones. When asked about their respect for other cultures, 96.2% (Strongly Agreed 73.1 % + Agreed 23.1 %) (Table 2) of the literature learners of the class endorsed that when they encounter classmate/peer/friend/people from another culture, they respect their customs, and they believe that studying literature through CLIL approach with specific focus on cultural aspects have fostered respect for others belonging to different other cultures which fosters intercultural competence (Rodríguez & Puyal, 2012) among the learners.

Table 2. Learners’ skill of intercultural awareness in CLIL context of undergraduate literature classes

Sl.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I have the opportunity to study with peers from other cultures (e.g. Chakma, Tripura, Marma)	53.8	15.4	11.5	11.5	7.7
2	I have friends from other countries and cultures different from mine.	53.8	23.1	19.2	0	3.8
3	I do teamwork with students from other cultures.	53.8	30.8	7.7	3.8	3.8
4	I try to interact with people from other cultures.	50	23.1	23.1	0	3.8
5	I share the knowledge of my own culture I know with my classmates/ friends/ acquaintances from other cultures.	53.8	30.8	11.5	0	3.8
6	I often ridicule cultural behaviour that is different from mine (e.g., the way of pronouncing some consonants).	19.2	7.7	23.1	7.7	42.3
7	I solve conflicts that arise between my classmates/peers from one culture and another (e.g., becoming a mediator or arbitrator).	15.4	30.8	38.5	3.8	11.5
8	I share the concerns of immigrant children.	19.2	26.8	38.5	7.7	7.7
9	After literature lessons in CLIL classes I now better understand the problems of cross-cultural assimilation in diasporic context after encountering characters facing these problems.	38.5	46.2	11.5	3.8	0
10	I criticize racist behavior in certain people (e.g., belittling people of different skin colors).	42.3	19.2	15.4	7.7	15.4
11	When I encounter classmates/peers/friends/people from another culture, I respect their customs.	73.1	23.1	3.8	0	0
12	I try to make anyone from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds comfortable and help them mix with the mainstream.	50	42.3	7.7	0	0

*Strongly Agree = SA, Agree=A, Neutral=N, Disagree= D, Strongly Disagree= SD

The CLIL lessons were developed in a way so that the learners have the opportunities to do tasks focused on cultural experiences such as interacting with classmates with different linguistic or cultural backgrounds and working together on groupworks or group assignments as studies emphasize the significant role of class interactions and group work in fostering intercultural awareness among undergraduate learners (Hagley, 2020; Leone, 2016). Moreover, integrating intercultural communication into group activities and class discussions provides students with real-world experiences that promote empathy, respect for diversity, and the ability to navigate global contexts (Kohn, 2018; Miguela, 2007). The learners were inspired to integrate into the minorities. Most of the participants (92.3% = Strongly Agreed 50% + Agreed 42.3%) claimed that they tried to make anyone from a different cultural or linguistic background comfortable and help them mix with the mainstream. Almost similar response was traced in interview responses as well, such as one of the interviewees commented: *“I try not to discriminate between Chakma or Hindu or any other religious background and I am always careful to utter any culturally or religiously sensitive words before them”* (Interviewee# 6)

Learners’ attitude towards intercultural awareness (RQ 3)

Recent studies have explored learners' attitudes toward intercultural awareness, highlighting the importance of culturally responsive teaching and global citizenship education (Byrd, 2016; Jabbar & Hardaker, 2020; McNair, 2011; Young et al., 2019). Learners’ positive attitude towards CLIL lessons as a way of intercultural awareness building in undergraduate literature classes is articulated since the majority of them (88.4% = Strongly Agreed 53.8 % + Agreed 34.6 %) claimed that they like the idea of global citizenship. Global citizenship refers to the concept that individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local and international networks with an acknowledgement that everyone has rights and responsibilities that come with being a member of the world with a global philosophy and

responsiveness (United Nations Academic Impact, n.d.). One of the participants also claimed in the interview,

After the CLIL lessons in English literature classes my philosophy and perspective have changed. I am now more tolerant towards the cultures of others. Previously I used to always think that my culture is the best culture in the whole world (Interviewee # 2).

Table 3. Learners’ attitude towards intercultural awareness in CLIL context of undergraduate literature classes

Sl.	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1	I like learning words in the mother tongue/ dialect of other classmates/friends.	65.4	19.4	11.5	0	3.8
2	I do not laugh at the pronunciation of words in the mother tongue/ dialect of other classmates/ friends/ people which is peculiar/funny to my own language.	61.5	19.2	3.8	11.5	3.8
3	I like legends, myths and tales/stories from other cultures.	65.4	11.5	15.4	3.8	3.8
4	I like songs or musical rhythms from other cultures from within or outside the country.	50	38.5	11.5	0	0
5	I don't mind sharing spaces with classmates/ colleagues/ peers from a culture different from mine (e.g., patio, gym, classrooms).	42.3	34.6	11.5	3.8	77.7
6	I try to sit close to classmates/colleagues/peers from other cultures.	30.8	34.6	26.9	0	7.7
7	It enriches me to have friends from other cultures.	42.3	30.8	19.2	3.8	3.8
8	I am lucky to have been born in my country and I am respectful of my own norms, values and culture.	65.4	23.1	7.7	0	3.8
9	I like the idea of global citizenship which refers to the belief that individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local and non-local networks with an acknowledgement that we have rights and responsibilities that come with being a member of the world — with a global philosophy and responsiveness	53.8	34.6	11.5	0	0
10	After Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lessons in English literature classes I am more aware of the issues related to global citizenship	42.3	46.2	3.8	3.8	3.8
11	I consider the opinion, social practice, behavior of children and young people from other cultures.	42.3	38.5	7.7	3.8	7.7
12	I accept my classmates regardless of their cultural background.	50	26.9	19.2	0	3.8
13	I dislike that my fellow immigrants are treated badly just for being from a different culture than the one of mine.	65.4	11.5	18.2	0	3.8
14	CLIL lessons in literature classes help increase my awareness of my rights and responsibilities as global citizen	53.3	26.9	19.2	7.7	3.8
15	I believe that my own norms, values and culture are the best in the world.	53.8	3.8	26.9	11.5	3.8
16	I am more aware of the rights and responsibilities of Rohingyas from Myanmar and Biharis from India residing in Bangladesh as global citizens.	34.6	34.6	11.5	7.7	11.5
17	My family accepts that I associate with peers from other cultures.	61.5	23.1	11.5	0	3.8

*Strongly Agree = SA, Agree=A, Neutral=N, Disagree= D, Strongly Disagree= SD

Also, 69.2% (34.6% Strongly Agreed + 34.6% Agreed) of the respondents claimed that after CLIL lessons taught in literature classes about the issues of diaspora and migration they are now more aware of the rights and responsibilities of Rohingyas from Myanmar and Biharis from India residing in Bangladesh as global citizens.

Development of local cultures (RQ 4)

CLIL powerfully promotes the development of local culture among undergraduate English literature learners by fostering a dual appreciation for both global and indigenous heritage. The study shows that 88.5% of learners agreed that CLIL lessons helped them identify cultural differences in areas like local food (e.g., idli) and clothing (e.g., lungi, sarong), directly raising the visibility and status of these local elements within the academic context. Furthermore, by integrating local words (e.g., Maharaja, Moksha), legends (e.g., of Nataraja), and music into the curriculum, CLIL validates and celebrates local culture as a worthy subject of academic study. This approach not only preserves cultural knowledge but also empowers students to become its ambassadors, with 84.6% reporting they share knowledge of their own culture with peers from other backgrounds, thus actively promoting and sustaining their local heritage.

Promoting the development of local culture using CLIL among undergraduate English literature learners can be achieved by intentionally designing the curriculum around the "Culture" component of the 4Cs framework. This involves selecting literary texts from diverse local and regional authors (e.g., from contemporary South Asian literature courses) and creating CLIL lessons that explicitly analyze local cultural artifacts, traditions, and socio-cultural contexts found within those texts. Educators can develop tasks that require students to identify, research, and present on local elements, such as traditional clothing like the lungi or sari, dishes like idli, or philosophical concepts like *Moksha*, thereby validating and institutionalizing local heritage. Furthermore, promoting collaborative group work that brings together students from different cultural backgrounds within the country (e.g., Chakma, Tripura, and Bengali students) encourages the sharing and appreciation of local cultures peer-to-peer. This method transforms the classroom into a space where local culture is not just a topic of study

but is actively used for communication and content, fostering pride and ensuring its transmission to a new generation.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research reveals that Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), when implemented in undergraduate English literature classes at a university in Bangladesh, enhances intercultural understanding and appreciation of the students for cultural diversity. With the help of the 4Cs framework (Content, Cognition, Communication, and Culture), this task-oriented approach to teaching literature has been more effective than conformist lecture-based methods in ensuring active participation and engagement among learners. The researchers employed quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, and secondary sources to provide strong insights. The quantitative data offered convincing evidence of students' cultural awareness, while interviews delivered robust narratives that supported these findings. High survey scores on "global citizenship" were reinforced by interview responses detailing lessons designed to foster empathy. By cross-referencing these sources with existing literature, the study conclusions were validated, demonstrating how Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) significantly improves cultural awareness.

The results suggest a positive relationship between CLIL-based teaching and the enhancement of students' abilities to appreciate and value cultures different from their own. This is reinforced by both qualitative and quantitative evidence, which reveal that students are more inclined to consider the perspectives and social practices of people from other cultures. The research also accentuates the significance of a task-driven methodology, which provides participants with structured opportunities to enhance communication and improve their understanding of different cultures. Future studies should explore the long-term impact of CLIL on students' cultural competence and its application across different disciplines and educational levels in Bangladesh. A larger-scale study, incorporating a more diverse range of universities and regions, would provide important insights into the range, usefulness, and appropriateness of this model. Universities should consider incorporating the CLIL approach into their curricula, moving beyond traditional lecture formats to adopt more task-based methodologies. This will provide students with structured opportunities to practice communication and improve their cultural understanding. Further research is necessary to track the long-term effects of CLIL on students' academic performance and their roles as global citizens. This could involve longitudinal studies that assess changes in students' attitudes, behaviour, and career paths over time.

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Authors' contributions

Md. Asif Kamal was responsible for collecting data, performing data analysis, drafting the first version of the manuscript, and contributing to the discussion. Mohammed Shamsul Hoque revised the abstract and the manuscript by addressing flaws in the methodology, discussion, and conclusion. Fatema Begum revised the paper for language correction, addressing grammatical errors and improving overall readability. Shihab Saqib drafted and revised the literature review. Nuzhat Fatima addressed the review responses related to citation and formatting of tables and figures. Farjana Yesmin addressed the review responses concerning typographical errors and language issues. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire on Learners' knowledge, skills and attitude towards intercultural awareness in CLIL context of undergraduate English literature classes in Bangladesh

Submitting this form means you give your consent to use this survey data for only research purposes; with a condition that your identity will not be disclosed.

Likert Scale:

1 = Strongly Agree; or, 1= Excellent

2 = Agree; or, 2= Good

3 = Neutral; or, 3= Average

4 = Disagree; or, 4= Poor

NB: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach works with dual goals: (1) content knowledge improvement and (2) language skills development. This approach works using 4Cs framework where the Cs refer to content, communication, cognition and culture. Hence, CLIL lessons also works on cultural awareness building and citizenship as one of the Cs in 4Cs framework.

[Participants were asked to rate the following statements on Lycart scale (1-5)]

Knowledge

Objective: To find how using lessons through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in English literature classes has contributed to develop the following knowledge of intercultural awareness.

1. I can identify everyday objects (e.g., clothes: kilt, sarang, lungi etc., and dishes/ food: idli, etc.) characteristic of own and certain other countries or communities after getting Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lessons in English literature classes.
2. I know how to write and pronounce words in other languages different from my own language (e.g., Maharaja, Anna, Idli, Jutka, Darshan, Moksha, Pyol)
3. I know legends or tales or religions from other cultures (Buddha, nataraja, shiva etc.).
4. I recognize the different physical characteristics of people from other cultures such as Indian, American, European, Chakma, Tripura etc. (e.g. height, skin color, facial features).
5. I know the games of my classmates from other countries.
6. I identify instruments (e.g. gong), songs or musical rhythms from other cultures
7. After encountering diverse cultural contexts in literary texts through CLIL lessons I now better understand the ways of greetings, salutation, conversation and practice of showing respects to elders.
8. The believe that one's own norms, values and culture are the best in the world ultimately undermines other's norms, values and culture.
9. I have opportunity to study with peers from other cultures (e.g. Chakma, Tripura, marma)

Skills

Objective: To find how using lessons through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in English literature classes has contributed to develop the following skills of intercultural awareness.

10. I have friends from other countries and cultures different from mine.
11. I do teamwork with students from other cultures.
12. I try to interact with people from other cultures.
13. I share the knowledge of my own culture I know with my classmates/ friends/ acquaintances from other cultures.
14. I often ridicule cultural behavior that are different from mine (e.g., the way of pronouncing some consonants).
15. I solve conflicts that arise between my classmates/peers from one culture and another (e.g., becoming a mediator or arbitrator).
16. I share the concerns of immigrant children.
17. After literature lessons in CLIL classes I now better understand the problems of cross-cultural assimilation in diasporic context after encountering characters facing these problems.
18. I criticize racist behavior in certain people (e.g., belittling people of different skin colors).
19. When I encounter classmate/peer/friend/people from another culture, I respect their customs.
20. I try to make anyone from different cultural or linguistic background comfortable and help them mix with the mainstream.

Attitude

Objective: To find how using lessons through Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach in English literature classes has contributed to the development of the following attitude towards intercultural awareness.

21. I like learning words in the mother tongue/ dialect of other classmates/friends.
22. I do not laugh at the pronunciation of words in the mother tongue/ dialect of other classmates/friends/ people which is peculiar/funny to my own language.
23. I like legends, myths and tales/stories from other cultures.
24. I like songs or musical rhythms from other cultures from within or outside country.
25. I don't mind sharing spaces with classmates/colleagues/peers from a culture different from mine (e.g., patio, gym, classrooms).
26. I try to sit close to classmates/colleagues/peers from other cultures.
27. It enriches me to have friends from other cultures.
28. I am lucky to have been born in my country and I am respectful to my own norms, values and culture.
29. I like the idea of global citizenship which refers to the belief that individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local and non-local networks with an acknowledgement that we have rights and responsibilities that come with being a member of the world — with a global philosophy and responsiveness
30. After Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lessons in English literature classes I am more aware of the issues related to global citizenship
31. I consider the opinion, social practice, behaviour of children and young people from other cultures.
32. I accept my classmates regardless of their cultural background.
33. I dislike that my fellow immigrants are treated badly just for being from a different culture than the one of mine.
34. CLIL lessons in literature classes help increase my awareness of my rights and responsibilities as global citizen
35. I believe that my own norms, values and culture are the best in the world.
36. I am more aware of the rights and responsibilities of Rohingyas from Myanmar and Biharis from India residing in Bangladesh as global citizens.
37. My family accepts that I associate with peers from other cultures.

Appendix 2: CLIL lesson prepared on *The Interpreter of Maladies* and used in class

Module: Contemporary South Asian Writing in English

Lesson 1 Session 1

“The Interpreter of Maladies”

JhumpaLahiri

[Complete CLIL lesson material is available on Request]