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Language Teaching: Learning from the Past

2. What does it mean to teach culture?



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HOLLT.net
History of Language Learning and Teaching

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Cover images

Left: Frontispiece facing the title-page of James Howell's *Lexicon Tetraglotton* (1660). The four women represent Spanish, French, Italian and English: the "three sisters" on the left (romance languages) are going to accept a fourth in their society. The soldier behind the tree is marked 'Br' (British, but actually represents Germanic languages). The Huntington Library, San Marino, California

Right: Cover image of *Tricolore Total 2 Student Book* by S. Honnor, H. Mascie-Taylor and M. Spencer (Oxford University Press 2009).

About these materials

This project addresses the need for a historical perspective in language teacher training, using research in the History of Language Learning and Teaching (HoLLT) to inform language teaching practice and policy. Taking five key themes of immediate relevance to teaching practice today, the project responds to evidence that teachers benefit from the framework that HoLLT gives them to reflect on and critique their own and others' practice and policy. Our materials translate research into packages tailored to the needs of practising teachers, making explicit links to their current and future roles. They are designed to be used without expert input, so that they can be widely used and embedded in training.

These materials incorporate an understanding of the history of language teachers' specialist discipline, equipping teachers to be more critically reflective in the classroom and thus more effective as teachers, as well as to be advocates for language learning and multilingualism.

Our project partners are the main language teacher associations and CPD centres in the UK. The training packages give teachers the toolkit they need to use an understanding of the past to make decisions about their current and future practice. The five themes all tackle topical concerns in language pedagogy, providing a historical perspective on each of the key themes:

1. Differentiation and diversity
2. What does it mean to teach culture?
3. Grammar: "The art of speaking well"?
4. Target language and (m)other tongue use
5. Making the case for languages: Policy and advocacy

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1. How to use this handbook

These materials form part of a series of material for languages teachers about the History of Language Learning and Teaching (HoLLT). The series aims to encourage teachers and trainees to consider current topics in MFL through a historical perspective. Each of the five packs comprises the following:

- A two-minute introductory video
- A five-minute video
- A participant booklet which includes historical examples and discussion topics
- A facilitator booklet which includes contextual information and guidance for discussions

We suggest that facilitators proceed in the following manner for a 2-hour training session:

- Familiarise yourself with the instructor booklet
- Begin the training session by watching the 2-minute video in its entirety
- Complete the 'Introductory Task' with the group
- Begin the 5-minute video and pause it at relevant points as indicated in the instructor booklet
- Guide participants to the relevant page in their booklet
- During and following each pair or group discussion, note any common threads that become apparent, guide the discussion with reference to the additional information included in the facilitator notes, and link contributions to current practice.

Use this handbook along with each of the modules in our pack. When used as part of a teacher training programme, this module is intended to supplement your existing training materials on culture. We hope that our module offers a way to extend models of adapting material toward a deeper understanding of how decisions around curriculum content and learning environment shape pupils' engagement with language learning.

Teachers are aware of the importance of bringing culture into the classroom to motivate students; exams have, over time, expected different kinds of cultural knowledge. This package explores the history of teaching about the target culture(s). It focuses especially on the questions of what kind of cultural knowledge is important, for example, 'everyday' culture vs. 'high' culture), how cultural knowledge is defined, and who it is for. It also broaches the cultural assumptions teaching materials might make about our own society and its priorities. This 'hidden curriculum' of cultural assumptions and knowledge is often not obvious to teachers looking at contemporary materials, but looking at examples from the past – with sometimes very different ideologies and priorities (e.g. educating for empire, building 'character') – can develop critical sensitivity for what pupils might be 'picking up' now and teachers' own role in influencing that.

2. Aims of this unit: ‘What does it mean to teach culture?’

The theme of this pack is culture. The objectives are:

1. To understand that how the target culture is represented reflects an underlying ideology, whether or not we are immediately aware of it
2. To understand, from historical examples, what kinds of cultural knowledge have been taught in language teaching, including high culture and everyday culture, intercultural knowledge
3. To be critically aware of what we are teaching without even realizing it, including in images, and in particular with regard to representing the diversity we find in our classrooms, in our own societies, and in the countries where the target language is spoken
4. To consider our own role as a teacher in making pupils aware of what angle the materials are taking and how, if necessary, we can compensate for that with our own input

3. Historical background

In the mid-19th century, when the first exams were set for school-leavers, the main cultural content for language learners was literature. Advocates of “modern languages” – which were very new as serious subjects in schools – wanted to work with texts that showed “their” language could teach learners as much about key moral, ethical and emotional questions of life as the prestigious Latin and Ancient Greek did. The syllabus for French and German included “set books” to read and translate: poetry, novels, dramas and, sometimes, histories by great (male, white) authors. Ideally, pupils would emerge with at least some of the appreciation of French or German culture (“Culture with a big C”) that a native speaker might have. That all suited a particular type of learner, probably from a particular social class.

Over the past century or so, notions of culture have widened out considerably, at university as well as at school. Today’s language teachers may well have learned much more in their degrees about politics, society and media than a century ago. They will probably still also have had some exposure to literature, though. At school, from the late 19th century onwards, at least some teachers were trying to bring the language to life by introducing pupils to everyday life, to “culture with a small c”, often including routines and habits around food, festivals, school, sport and leisure. That focus on the everyday now dominates language teaching “content” up to age 16 in the UK, with literary texts only recently being re-introduced, and still on the margins of curriculum content. These days, the implicit goal might be summarized as knowing something of what a native speaker of a similar age might know about daily life in the target culture. But is it still intellectually engaging?

The current focus on everyday life is a return to cultural content of the very earliest materials for language learning in Europe, aimed at travellers of various kinds. Many language manuals from the 15th to 18th centuries taught what people needed to know to get by in another country – how to book a room at an inn, how to buy food, clothes and other necessities, and how to do business successfully. There are many detailed examples of dialogues showing buyers and sellers haggling at length over prices, teaching not just words but implicitly also some of the “rules of game” for closing a deal in the cloth trade, for example.

Language teaching since the 1980s has also been powerfully influenced by the recognition that people’s encounters with a different culture can shape their response when faced with *any* other unfamiliar culture. Stereotypes have been challenged, and critical work has taken place to help learners develop intercultural sensitivity – curiosity and tolerance rather than mockery and hostility in the face of the unfamiliar, for example.

Alongside all these conscious goals for cultural knowledge and skills, language teaching has also conveyed much implicitly about society and culture (our own society, the target society or both): the idea that good writers are almost certainly male (19th century); or that mothers prepare meals while fathers smoke and/or read the newspaper (1950s); or even that the EU is definitely a good thing (to recall a chapter in a 1990s textbook of German). It is instructive to observe critically how those implicit assumptions have changed over time.

4. Introductory Task

1. Define the following terms and discuss their similarities and differences:

- a. Nation
- b. State
- c. Tradition
- d. Identity

2. Is it possible to teach languages without teaching culture?

3. Where are we now? What is the focus in language teaching? Do you think it is right?

4. Does the teaching of culture depend on what kind of learners we have?

5. How do you bring culture into your classroom, what kind, and why?

The introductory task should be completed before beginning the video.

The discussion might include all or some of the following:

1. Nation: Formed on the basis of shared language, customs, history and/or ethnicity
State: A political territory; an organised community with a government
Some languages (e.g. English, French, German, Spanish) are polycentric languages: several standard forms of them exist as they are spoken in several countries. Consider how polycentric languages are taught.
2. Consider, for example, the use of 'tu' and 'vous' in French or 'tú' and 'usted' in Spanish (formal and informal 'you'). Can this grammatical point be taught without making reference to culture? What about when you show an everyday interaction in a home, place of work, or school?
3. Consider the curriculum, participants' schools/departments and their own teaching approaches.
4. Do the school type and pupils' age and socio-economic backgrounds influence your teaching of culture? How?
5. Share current practice and views.

5. Definitions of Culture



1. With a partner or group, brainstorm definitions of culture.
2. What kinds of cultural knowledge or representations do we find in our materials at school?
3. What kinds of cultural knowledge or representations are taught at university?

5.1 Definitions of Culture



- Pause the video after “The extent to which the teaching of language involves, or should involve, culture, has been debated for a long time.”

- Invite participants to draw on their own experiences and their knowledge of language learning materials and conventions.
- Organise points raised by participants into salient themes if these arise
- Summarise the discussion and paraphrase important points

Some researchers distinguish between ‘capital C’ Culture (high culture, e.g. literature, art) and ‘small c’ culture (everyday culture, e.g. everyday habits and interactions between people).

6. Teaching Culture



Culture is everything people learn to do.

Culture includes all aspects of life, from folktales to carved whales.

Culture consists of literature, theatre, music and art.

A cultured person is well-educated, travels to different countries, and has in-depth knowledge of literature, theatre, music and art.

1. Read these definitions and compare them with your own.
2. What kind of cultural knowledge receives most attention now at school and at university? Why do you think that is? What about in the past, do you think/ know?
3. Do you feel comfortable with the current prioritization? Why or why not?

6.1 Teaching Culture



- Pause the video after “It’s likely to change again in future, too.”

This slide and definitions show different kinds of culture; pause the video here to allow participants to discuss the definitions and images.

Some views on high culture and low culture might emerge in the discussion. Ask participants to define what these encompass.

7. Culture as Pragmatic Competence

Culture as Pragmatic Competence



Schachzabelbuch des
Konrad von Ammenhausen,
1467
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The following dialogue (translated here) is from a German-Italian bilingual manual for European cloth merchants. In the original, the dialogue appears in both languages, in parallel columns.

- Show me the ‘barchent’ [a type of mixed cotton-linen cloth produced in Nuremberg] with the crown on it.
- I won’t show you any bad one, so help me God. I’ll show them all to you and you take the one which pleases you best of all. And the one which will be of most use to you to carry.
- You speak well, you cannot speak better. Do you have good ‘falessi’ and good ‘bochasin’?
- Haven’t I said so? I have the very best there is in this town.
- Bring it here! Let me see it! [...]
- You are offering it at too high a price. I can surely get it more easily elsewhere.
- That’s fine by me if it is as good as this here.
- I think it is better still at two [ducats] per hundredweight.

After much haggling, the two agree a price. Now the cloth needs to be weighed out fairly. A new character is introduced to the Italian learners of German, the *unterkäufer* or ‘middleman’, a German official in the Italian-German cloth trade.

- Who should weigh it?
- I am the *unterkäufer*. You can rely on me to make sure that both of you are done by right. I won’t take what is due to you, nor to him. I will give to each what he should have.

(Extracts taken from two related manuscripts: Cod. it. 261, cited in Höybye 1974: 174ff., and Pal. Ger. 657, edited by Blusch 1992: 123; full references in the bibliography of McLelland 2015)

1. When do you think these dialogues are from?
2. Who are these materials for?
3. What are learners learning here, apart from the language itself?
4. What do the Italian learners of German learn about the importance of the *unterkäufer* in negotiations with Germans?

7.1 Culture as Pragmatic Competence



Pause the video after “They gave a lot of attention to the unwritten rules of situations like these, what we today call pragmatics.”

By pragmatics we mean language use in context: the unwritten rules of how people speak to each other in a specific situation.

The image in section 7. shows cloth merchants in the 15th century.

This dialogue is from a bilingual manual. European language manuals from the late-Middle Ages onwards consistently included dialogues on agreeing a price. These dialogues do not just model the correct forms for the learner to copy, but also the correct use of those forms in context.

Older than the arguments for the cultural riches of studying a language were the practical requirements. Some of the oldest materials for language learning come from the medieval German-Italian cloth trade, so that German merchants could haggle with their northern Italian counterparts. What’s interesting here is how much focus is on the pragmatics – the unwritten rules of interacting. One recurrent theme is how to haggle.

There is no explicit teaching of grammar, but might this dialogue be drawing attention to particular structures (adjectives, comparatives and superlatives)?

8. The Grand Tour

The Grand Tour

216	Is London bigger than Paris?	217	There are soldiers, that fight for Prices with all the manner of Weapons.
Is it longer a great deal?	Es ist viel länger.	How many fine Cities have you in England?	Wie viel schöne Städte sind in England?
Is England a wholesome Country?	Es ist ein gesundes Land.	Twenty five, and six hundred forty one great Market Towns; and there are nine thousand, seven hundred and twenty five Parishes.	Funf und zwanzig, und sechs hundert, ein und vierzig. Dörfer sind neun tausent sieben hundert und fünf und zwanzig.
Not very wholesome, it is too much, and the Air is somewhat foggy, because the Sea surrounds it.	Es ist zu sehr, und die nebelichte Luft darin, wegen des Meers, so das Land umringt.	Are Strangers much esteemed in England?	Werden die fremden viel geachtet in England?
I believe the Scurvy is very common there.	Ich glaube die Schrotbock ist sehr gemein da.	Not very much of the Rabble, they take every Stranger for a Frenchman.	Nicht viel vom gemeinen Volk, sie sehen alle fremde für Franzosen an.
So it is, for they feed much there upon Meat, and view much exercise, and take the Air continually.	So ist wahr; dazu essen sie viel Fleisch, und haben nicht viel Bewegung, und setzen sich sehr viel vom Luft.	Who convenes the Parliament?	Wer beruht das Parlament?
Do they divert themselves well in England?	Dar man große Lust und Zeitvertreib in England?	The King, and he adjourns, Prologues, resolves, and dissolves it, of his own will and pleasure.	Der König, und er setzt ihn ein, er schließt es auf, und auflöst es von seinem Willen und Vergnügen.
Very well.	Sehr große.	Has the King a fine Court?	Hat der König eine schöne Hofhaltung?
There's Tennis, Bowling, Nine-pins, Billiards, Tables, Cards, and Dice.	Es sind alda Tennis, Kugel spielen, Biegen spielen, Vier Spiel, Karten, und Würfel spielen.	These are no questions; Guards on Horse-back, Grenadiers and Foot-Soldiers, well entertained	Das sind keine Fragen; Wachen zu Pferd, Grenadiere, und Fußknechte zu Fuß wohl gehalten.
There are Stage-plays, Bear, and Bull-baiting, Cock-fighting, wrestling, Racing, &c.	Es sind alda Schach, Spiel, Wehen und Ochsen kämpfen, Bahren kämpfen, Ringen, Fechten, und das Rennlaufen.		

“

– Do they divert themselves well in England?

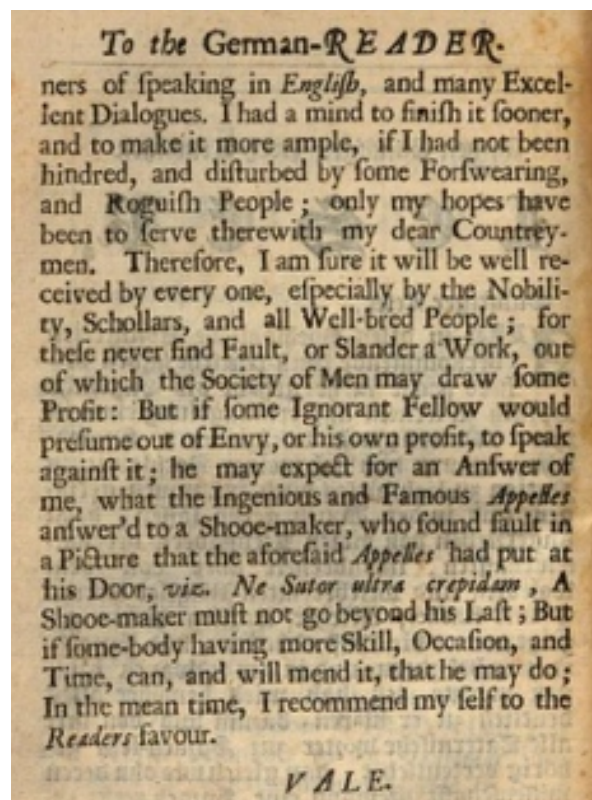
– Very well.

– There is Tennis, Bowling, Nine-pins, Billiards, Tables, Cards, and Dice.

”

Heinrich Offelen: *Double Grammar for Germans to learn English, and for English-men to learn the German-tongue* (1687)

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“I am sure [the grammar] will be well received by every one, especially by the nobility, scholars, and all well-bred people; for these never find fault, or slander a work, out of which the society of men may draw some profit.”

Heinrich Offelen: *Double Grammar* (1687), Preface ‘To the German Reader’

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1. What type of people are Offelen’s expected language learners?

2. What are learners learning here, apart from the language itself?

8.1 The Grand Tour



Pause the video after “Language manuals still provided useful phrases ... conduct small talk in polite society.”

Encourage participants to consider the position of those who completed a ‘Grand Tour’. They would have needed most of the following:

- Wealth
- Lack of consistent responsibilities at home
- Young age
- Good health
- Social connections
- Someone to guide them in gaining knowledge of classical art, architecture, European institutions and landmarks

9. Pragmatic Competence: Talking about the Weather

192	<i>Englische und Hochdeutsche</i>
Who has told you that Story?	<i>Wer hat euch die Lügen vorge- schwätzt?</i>
With your Permission! it is very false.	<i>Das ist Augenscheinlich falsch, mit eurer Erlaubnuß.</i>
They lay so every where.	<i>Man sagt allenthälben</i>
Who must have spread this News abroad?	<i>Wer muß dieses Gerüchte aus- gestreuet haben?</i>
They are disaffected People.	<i>Es sind übelgesinnete Leute?</i>
You may believe of it what you please.	<i>Ihr mögt davon glauben was euch beliebt.</i>
The III. Dialogue.	<i>Das III. Gespräche.</i>
What Weather is it to Day?	<i>Was ist heute für Wetter?</i>
It is the finest Weather in the World.	<i>Es ist das aller schönste Wet- ter von der Welt.</i>
The Sun shines.	<i>Die Sonne scheint.</i>
Is it windy abroad?	<i>Ist es windig?</i>
No! it is very calm Weather.	<i>Nein, es ist ein sehr stilles Wet- ter. Es ist sehr stille.</i>
It will be very hot then this afternoon.	<i>So wird es Nachmittag sehr warm werden.</i>
I believe so; for the Sun is at the highest now.	<i>Ich glaube es, dann die Sonne ist am höchsten nun.</i>
I am afraid we shall have a Storm.	<i>Ich fürchte wir mögten ein Un- gewitter haben</i>
It doth not look so.	<i>Es siehet nicht darnach aus;</i>
I beg your Pardon, look those Clouds!	<i>Verzeihet mir; sehet ihr dieses Gewölck?</i>
Well, what signifies that?	<i>Nun gut, was hat das zusagen.</i>
That signifies Thunder.	<i>Das bedeuß Donner.</i>
I doubt at least it will rain.	<i>Zum wenigsten glaube ich es wird regnen.</i>
Do you observe, how it lightens.	<i>Werdet ihr gewahr, daß es Wetter leuchtet.</i>
Yes, it frightens me.	<i>Fa das ärgert mich.</i>
What are you afraid?	<i>Was befürchtet ihr?</i>
I am afraid of the Thunder-Clapp.	<i>Ich fürchte den Donner-Schlag.</i>
They say it did freeze this Night.	<i>Man sagt es habe diese Nacht gefrohren.</i>
Is it possible?	<i>War dies wohl möglich?</i>

(Johann König: *Royal Compleat Grammar*, 1715)

This dialogue models talking about the weather.

1. How is this type of learner different from the learner suggested in section 7?
2. The gap year and the year abroad are obvious modern equivalents of the 'Grand Tour'. Who is able to participate in these activities? What barriers might some of your students encounter?

9.1 Pragmatic Competence: Talking about the Weather



This is additional material not included in the video.

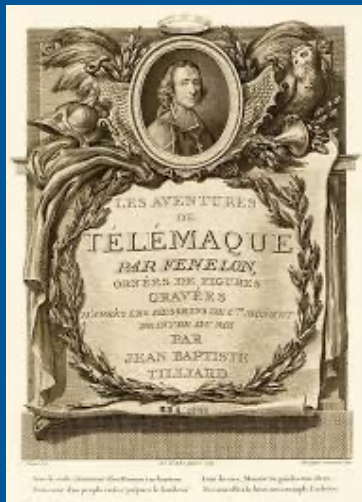
Books were produced specifically for people on their Grand Tour. They model linguistic tasks such as paying a call, making small talk, taking one's leave, refusing or accepting invitations, and recommending reputable tradesmen. These books contained dialogues such as those shown here as well as word lists, phrases, and general rules.

While section 7 shows an example of materials aimed at merchants, König's grammar and similar works were aimed at the leisured elite.

Learners are not only learning linguistic tools, but also general rules about how to interact with privileged foreign acquaintances.

10. High Culture as Cultural Capital

High culture as cultural capital



François Fénelon:
Les aventures de Télémaque, fils d'Ulysse (1699)

“ The guiding principle was only to discuss what a German of a good, average education must know and indeed does know. ”

Richard Kron:
The small German: a Handbook for learning the refined Modes of Expression of the German colloquial Language which sets out the Customs, Habits and Institutions, cultural Relationships etc. in the German Realms (1916)
University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections



“I think it will be obvious to every reader, that an acquaintance with the German language must be of great utility; in order to peruse the works of German writers in the original; to have, as it were, free and unconstrained access to the treasures of knowledge, which the industry of the German has successfully been accumulating for a considerable time.”

- William Render, private teacher of school-age children and German language teacher at the University of Cambridge, 1799.

“Your first object is to discipline the mind; your second to give a knowledge of French or German.”

- Henry Weston Eve, Headmaster of University College School, 1879

Learning German provides “the key to a vast treasure-house with many beautiful and precious things which great and good men and women have been gathering for hundreds of years, that each of us may take thereof as much as he pleases, and rejoice.”

- Walter Rippmann, teacher and lecturer in German at the University of Cambridge; author of several language learning books, 1917. This extract is taken from the preface to one of his books in which he addresses his readers.

The Leathes Committee considered “[...] the requirements of a liberal education, including an appreciation of the history, literature and civilization of other countries, and [...] the interests of commerce and public service.”

- The Leathes report on the Position of Modern Languages in the Educational System of Great Britain, 1918

1. To what extent do you share the views expressed in these quotations?
2. How much do students need to know compared to inhabitants of the target language country/countries?

10.1 High Culture as Cultural Capital



Pause the video after “It was still assumed that teaching should cover the cultural knowledge that a “well-educated” native speaker would have.”

The screen should show the following images:

High culture as cultural capital



François Fénelon:
Les aventures de
Télémaque, fils
d'Ulysse (1699)

“ The guiding principle was only to discuss what a German of a good, average education must know and indeed does know. ”

Richard Kron:
The small German: a
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refined Modes of Expression
of the German colloquial
Language which sets out the
Customs, Habits and
Institutions, cultural
Relationships etc. in the
German Realm (1916)
University of Nottingham
Manuscripts and Special
Collections

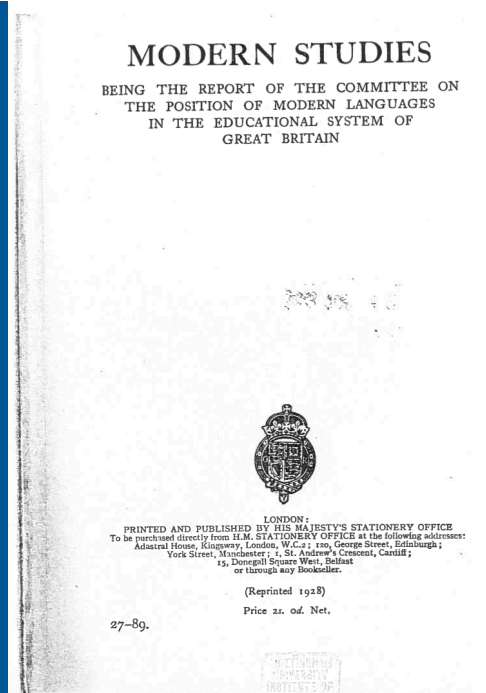


Der kleine Deutsche

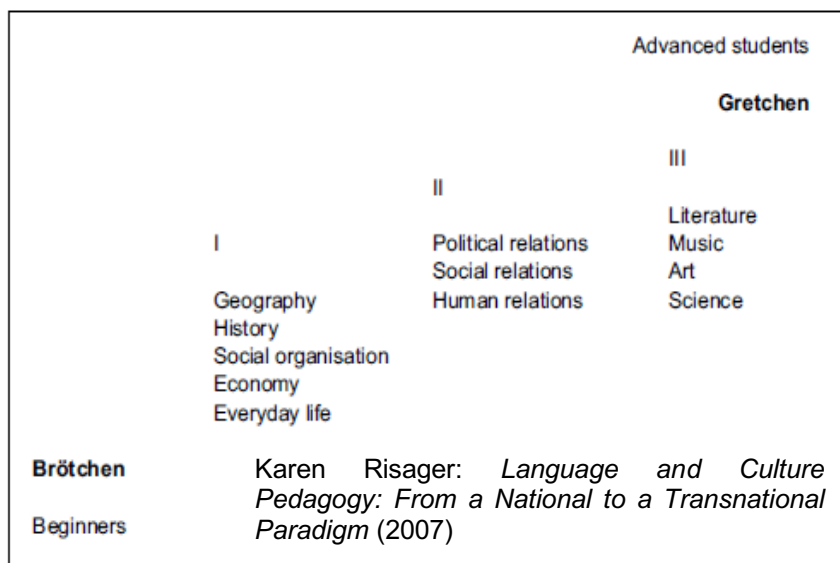
Richard Kron's book was republished into the 1930s.

11. High Culture

High culture



The Leathes Report
1918



Risager's 'Brötchen-Gretchen model':

This model – developed by Risager – is a handy summary of approaches to teaching both everyday culture (Brötchen [bread rolls]) and high cultures (Gretchen [Gretel, from Goethe's *Faust*]).

The model suggests progression from everyday life (assumed to be simple in content) to literature (seen as more complex).

"The highest purpose in the teaching of languages may perhaps be said to be the access to the best thoughts and institutions of a foreign nation, its literature, culture – in short, the spirit of the nation in the widest sense of the word. But at the same time we must remember that we cannot reach the goal with one bound, and that there are many other things on the way which are also worth taking in. We do not learn our native tongue merely so as to be able to read Shakespeare and Browning, and neither do we learn it for the sake of giving orders to the shoemaker or making out the washerwoman's bill."

(O. Jespersen, 1904: 9, Danish original edition 1901)

1. Does the treatment of culture in the materials you use suggest a hierarchy?
2. What is the reason for a hierarchy of 'high' and 'low' culture?
3. Whose culture is considered to confer cultural capital now?

11.1 High Culture



- Pause the video after “The opportunity to encounter the “best thoughts” of another culture seemed to be highlighted as the report’s first priority.”

Risager’s ‘Brötchen-Gretchen model’

The ‘Brötchen-Gretchen model’ is also known as the ‘Uppsala quadrant’ as it was possibly developed at a conference in Uppsala in 1971. The model has been used by teachers of German in Denmark to analyse the image of Germany as represented in textbooks. Everyday life is understood as simple in content; it precedes progression to literature which holds multiple meanings and is therefore more complex.

It might be useful to ask participants about their views on starting points for language learning: does language learning necessarily have to begin with everyday situations and vocabulary?

Jespersen considers the purpose of language learning: what do learners really need to learn? Participants can contrast Risager’s model with Jespersen’s pronouncement.

The Ofsted inspection framework makes reference to cultural capital: school leaders are expected to “construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners [...] the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life”. It is useful to consider what type or elements of culture are thought to confer cultural capital: what needs to be included in a ‘culturally rich’ curriculum’?

12. Realia in Language Teaching

Realia in language teaching



G. T. Ungood:
*A First German Book on the
Direct Method* (1912)

Mary Brebner, a graduate of the Cambridge Training College for Women Teachers, observed the use of realia in language teaching in Germany in 1897:

“On another occasion he [the teacher] showed the class different English coins, asking various questions about their value, appearance, etc. The difference between the old and new “pennies” led to the description of Britannia and the Union Jack, and the different flags that had been united to form the latter. Questions were asked, in this connection, about the dates of the union of England with Ireland and Scotland respectively. [...] The students were interested and animated throughout.”

(M. Brebner 1898: 35)

“Pity the antisocial, unsporty child, I always think, as I flick through *Tricolore*. The characters are forever going to the cinéma, the discothèque, the piscine, the club des jeunes, or for a promenade with their copains. Things are sympa, super, OK or nul. They keep asking each other which sport they enjoy most (jouer au foot, faire la natation, faire du ski or going out on their vélo tout terrain). It’s exhausting.”

(Y. Maxtone-Graham, *The Spectator* 11 October 2011)

1. What do you identify as culture-specific in the materials you use?

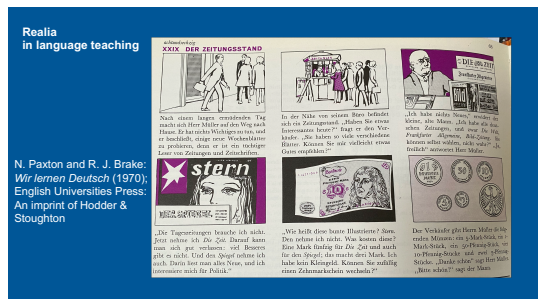
2. Focus on the materials you use to teach a specific grammatical point (e.g. reflexive verbs, the language of debate/contestation): what do students learn about the target culture as a result of the depiction of the topic (e.g. images)?

12.1 Realia in Language Teaching



- Pause the video after “The distinction between language skills and the cultural canon ... languages as a humanities subject.”

The screen should show the following image:



Communicative language teaching is rooted in students' realities, and using 'realia', authentic resources, has been popular since the late 19th century. Illustrations began to become affordable at this time, and teachers began to use pictures and everyday objects to help learners connect words in the language they were learning with the objects they represented.

Using realia enabled pupils to become more aware of the language as a living language – whether by talking about real objects in the classroom, or by learning about the culture of those who spoke the target language.

Although realia are useful, they can, on occasion, impart only very superficial and fragmentary cultural knowledge.

It might be useful to consider both the portrayal of the target culture (how accurate or complete is it?) and how inclusive this approach is: the “unsporty antisocial child” described by Maxtone-Graham might have fared better with the 19th-century reading of set books.

It might be useful to encourage discussion between participants from different schools and/or languages.

13. The Hidden Curriculum

The Hidden Curriculum



Coggle & Schenke (2003)



Romanian version of the same textbook
Coggle & Schenke, transl. Dumitru (2009)

A focus on national characteristics has been constant throughout different approaches to teaching culture. Students might already enter the classroom with stereotypical views of other cultures.

1. What are 'typical' behaviours, foods, celebrations, customs?
2. What are teachers privileging as most important?
3. How can we challenge or question stereotypical views in our attempt to teach the most salient aspects of another culture? How can we show the dangers of stereotypes?

13.1 The Hidden Curriculum



- Pause the video after “These two front covers are for the English and Romanian versions of the same German textbook, *Teach Yourself German*. They send quite different signals about what Germany is like, though.”

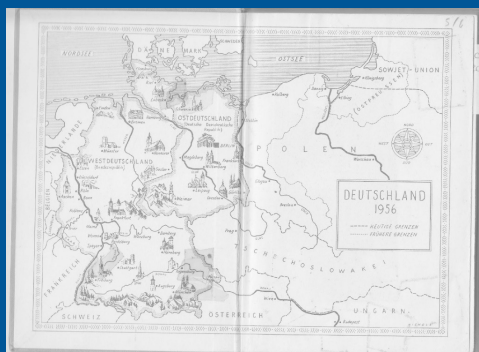
The book cover on the left shows the German *Reichstag* (central government building). The 1884 building fell into disrepair after the Second World War and was restored by Norman Foster. The transparent dome, above the debating chamber and open to the public, can be seen to symbolise transparent democracy.

The book on the right is the Romanian translation of the book on the left.

There is always a risk of reducing representations of culture to stereotypes. The hidden curriculum – and wider social assumptions – can perpetuate stereotypes. After World War II, the value of language learning was in part in contributing to intercultural understanding, and so, ultimately, promoting peace. There was more focus on actually being able to communicate with speakers of other languages and to be sensitive to cultural differences.

14. World View

World view



A. S. Macpherson and P. Strömer:
Deutsches Leben
(1956). Frontispiece map showing the past
and present borders
'University of Nottingham Manuscripts and
Special Collections



R. J. Hares, D. Hood et al.:
Durchblick
(2000)

These maps show places of interest to tourists, current and previous borders (left) and Germany at the heart of Europe (right).

1. Why might maps such as these be included in language textbooks?
2. What contrasting impressions might these two depictions of Germany achieve?
3. How would you describe the portrayal of the target language country/countries in the materials you use? How are students' perceptions influenced?

14.1 World View



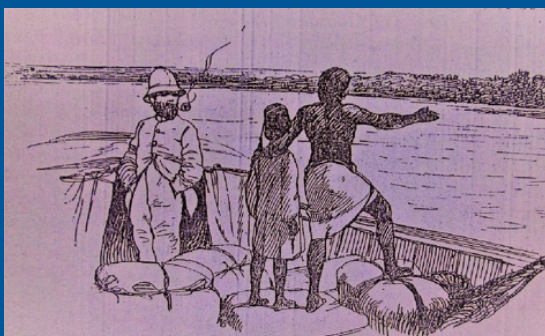
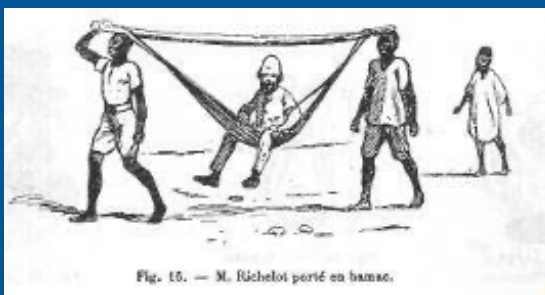
- Pause the video after “There are also different ways of presenting a state and its place in Europe, as these maps of Germany show.”

The 1956 map shows places of interest (churches, the Brandenburg Gate). Although it shows past and present borders, it is thus not a political map as such and indicates a movement towards a focus on tourism in language learning.

The map on the right shows Germany at the heart of Europe. It is thus no longer presented as a dangerous enemy, but rather as a key supporter and member of the European Union. Highlighted is Thuringia, one of the German federal states.

15. Empire, Colonialism and Power Relationships

Empire, Colonialism and Power Relationships



Moussa et Gi-gla: Histoire de deux petits Noirs, 1916

1. These images were shown in textbooks in the early 20th century, but they are shocking to us now. What makes these images shocking?
2. How are different power relationships represented in modern textbooks and language learning materials?
3. Think of different ways in which you can integrate analysis of power relationships into your teaching of different age groups.

15.1 Empire, Colonialism and Power Relationships



- Pause the video after “Critical reflection on power relationships was absent.”

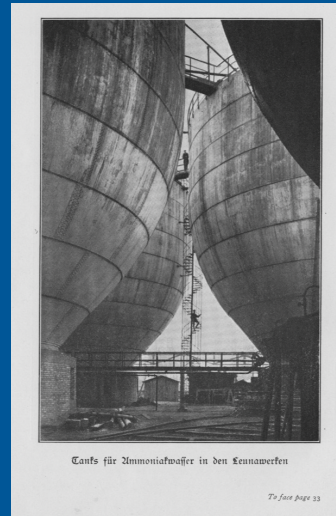
These images were shown in textbooks in the early 20th century. They are shocking. Discuss with participants why they are shocking to us now.

16. National Character: France and Germany

National Character



F. Bertaux and E. Lepointe: 'The Germanic Beliefs in Gods', 1925



A. S. Macpherson and P. Strömer: *deutsches Leben. Dritter Teil*, 1939

Germany as seen by France in the 20th century

The Germanic tribes were not a single people, but were separated into clans which either fought against each other or against the Romans. For apart from hunting, war was their favourite occupation, their main pleasure. [...] The women were also quarrelsome and belligerent. They accompanied the men to battles, brought them food and drink, and encouraged them with their screaming.

(M. Bouchez: *Wer will, der kann* [Those who want to can do it, a book for French learners of German in the fourth year of secondary school], 1934)

French regions explained to German learners of French in the 20th century

"Brittany is an almost triangular peninsula that separates the English Channel from the Atlantic Ocean. (...) The inhabitants of this country have always loved the sea. Three quarters of all French sailors come from here. The brave Breton fishermen carry out their work as far as in the waters of Iceland and Newfoundland. But at home, Brittany is also a harsh and dismal country, even savage, with heathland where the little Breton cows search for their meagre nourishment. (...) The small towns and villages present – mostly in the west of Brittany – a different picture. Life is very simple; the residents still wear the regional costume on Sundays. At home they still mostly speak Breton, which is an old celtic language. Numerous legends and popular poems have been preserved here since the middle ages."

"The Normans have always been an adventurous and courageous people. (...) Today's Norman works hard, but is cautious and thrifty. This is why he is said to be distrustful and miserly."

(H.-W. Klein, F. Strohmeier : *Etudes Françaises*, 1972, p.45 and 28) The text (originally in French and translated here) remained unchanged from the first edition in 1972 until the 18th edition in 1981)

1. Why are these descriptions of regions and people problematic?
2. What assumptions do we make about the people who speak the languages we teach? What are they like? (E.g. class, ethnicity, gender ...)

16.1 National Character: France and Germany



- Pause the video after “Yet during the same period, German teaching in Great Britain seemed more interested in emphasizing the country’s economic growth.”

The differences in how national character were portrayed continued from the Franco-Prussian War until the Second World War.

It might be helpful to know that when this description of Brittany was published, 75% of French sailors really were Breton. This was the case because opportunities for employment in the region were scarce, and the primary choices were going to sea or seeking employment in large industrial cities. However, the text glosses over this aspect of life in Brittany to suggest instead a region with a quaint, nostalgic and slightly otherworldly character.

17. Beyond Europe: Postcolonial Legacy

A



Theodor DeBry: 'Columbus landing in the Americas', 1594

B



Market trader in Guatemala

1. Whose culture is taught? Consider the curriculum and materials you use.
2. What viewpoints are available to students in the materials you use? (E.g. observer, participant, consumer, advocate, judge, superior, inferior, insider, outsider ...)

17.1 Beyond Europe: Postcolonial Legacy



This is additional material not included in the video.

Images such as these are common in units on Latin America in Spanish textbooks in England, Europe and the US. Representations of Latin America tend to be Eurocentric.

Some Spanish textbooks reproduce colonial narratives: many of them include materials on the Spanish Conquest (see example A). Images of indigenous Latin American people are few and tend to present them as pan-American and exotic (see example B). When they are shown in photographs interacting with Europeans, this is often a market trader-tourist transaction.

18. Shared social challenges: Migration

Shared social challenges: Migration



J. McNeill et al.:
*Neue Aussichten
 Etappen* (2000) –
 'Germany – a
 multicultural country'
 Hodder & Stoughton

A: Germany – a multicultural country

Question: Which of these people and scenes are typically German?

Answer: All of them!

Top left to right:

A Greek wedding; The school day is about to start; Turkish specialties are popular, Berlin-Kreuzberg

Bottom left to right:

A Turkish band in Hamburg-Altona; Fun at the Oktoberfest, Munich; Golf production at VW, Dresden

B: What is your occupation?


Veterinarian, Police Officer, Businessman, Nurse, Lorry Driver, Doctor, Mechanic, Engineer, Lawyer, Teacher

Please also refer to example C on the next page.


Where are we now? How are minorities represented in your language teaching materials?

C


LA FAMILLE BERTILLON




1. Voici la famille Bertillon—papa, maman et les trois enfants, Philippe, Marie-Claude et Alain.




2. Monsieur et Madame sont les parents. Le père s'appelle Jean et la mère s'appelle Annette.




3. Voici les deux garçons. Le grand garçon s'appelle Philippe et le petit garçon s'appelle Alain. Philippe et Alain sont les fils de Monsieur et de Madame Bertillon et les frères de Marie-Claude.



4. La fille de Monsieur et de Madame Bertillon s'appelle Marie-Claude. Marie-Claude est la sœur de Philippe et d'Alain.



5. Et qui est-ce? C'est Miquet, le chat.



6. Voici la maison de la famille Bertillon à Villeneuve en France. Regardez le jardin, la porte, les fenêtres, la cheminée, les arbres et l'allée.

le chat <i>cat</i>	l'allée <i>path</i>	grand <i>big</i>	est <i>is</i>	à <i>at</i>	maman <i>'Mummy'</i>
l'enfant <i>child</i>	la cheminée <i>chimney</i>	petit <i>small</i>	regardez <i>look at</i>	c'est <i>it is</i>	papa <i>'Daddy'</i>
la fille <i>son</i>	la famille <i>family</i>		s'appelle <i>is called</i>	de <i>of (d' before vowel)</i>	qui est-ce? <i>who is it?</i>
la fratrie <i>brother</i>	la fenêtre <i>window</i>		sont <i>are</i>	deux <i>two</i>	trois <i>three</i>
le garçon <i>boy</i>	la fille <i>daughter</i>			en France <i>in France</i>	voilà <i>here it, here are</i>
le jardin <i>garden</i>	la maison <i>house</i>			et <i>and</i>	
le parent <i>parent</i>	la mère <i>mother</i>				
le père <i>father</i>	la porte <i>door</i>				
	la sœur <i>sister</i>				

P.J.Downes et al.: *Le français d'aujourd'hui*, 1966. English Universities Press: An imprint of Hodder & Stoughton

C: The Bertillon family

- Here is the Bertillon family: daddy, mummy and the three children, Philippe, Marie-Claude and Alain.
- Monsieur* and *Madame* are the parents. The father is called Jean and the mother is called Annette.
- Here are the two boys. The big boy is called Philippe and the little boy is called Alain. Philippe and Alain are the sons of Mr and Mrs Bertillon and the brothers of Marie-Claude.
- The daughter of Mr and Mrs Bertillon is called Marie-Claude. Marie-Claude is the sister of Philippe and Alain.
- And who is this? This is Miguel, the cat.
- Here is the house of the Bertillon family in Villeneuve in France. Look at the garden, the door, the windows, the chimney, the trees and the path.

18.1 Diversity



- Pause the video after “...shared human challenges more than differences between cultures, such as the environment, social conflicts, or problems in the developing world.”

In the 1990s there was a lot of focus on emphasizing common or shared challenges. Teaching focused on topics such as the environment, women’s rights, unemployment, generational conflict and consumerism rather than on information specific to any country.

Examples A and B

It might be useful to consider what these examples do well, and what could be improved based on current knowledge and attitudes.

Encourage trainees to consider how disabilities are represented.

Example C

Draw attention to

- The family: have participants encountered language learning materials that diverge from heteronormative representations?
- The house: this is a generic house, not necessarily one that is representative of many French people’s dwellings.

Consider

- what students learn from this example about French families
- what type of learner is addressed by examples such as this one
- how the same linguistic content could be taught through different illustrations

Example C is not shown in the video and is additional material for discussion.

19. Intercultural Communicative Competence

Intercultural Communicative Competence



1. Which of these topics tend to be or should be included in language teaching? Which of these topics contribute to the creation of a 'within-country' viewpoint, and which ones encourage a view of the target language country as 'over there'?

Family life
Tourism/consumer culture: shopping, holidays
Trade unions
Socio-political institutions
European organisations
The arts
Regionalism
The health system
The role of the church
National history
Unemployment
Immigration
Reflection on a common heritage
Historical and contemporary origins of stereotypes and national identity

2. What are the differences between teaching students *about* culture and teaching intercultural competence?

How would your teaching approach differ according to these two aims?

List 3-5 activities you would use for each of these two aims.

19.1 Intercultural Communicative Competence



- Pause the video after “The shift of focus ... a sympathetic and open-minded way.”

‘Capital C’ culture, synonymous with a general knowledge of literature and the arts, was part of language teaching until the 1940s. From then on, communicative language teaching treated culture as a way of life: ‘small c’ culture means the everyday life of native speakers.

The term ‘intercultural’ has been used since the 1980s. The notion of intercultural competence is not specific to any one language, but developed by learning about differences between learners’ own culture and the target language.

The aim for the discussion here is to consider what it means to be interculturally competent.

It might also be useful to consider the social and political purposes of language teaching. Solicit participants’ views on whether or how these might differ in different schools and areas, or among different age groups.

20. Culture in the National Curriculum

Culture in the National Curriculum

- read literary texts in the language [such as stories, songs, poems and letters], to stimulate ideas, develop creative expression and expand understanding of the language and culture

The 2014 revised National Curriculum in England for Key Stage 3 requires pupils to:

“read literary texts in the languages [such as stories, songs, poems and letters] to stimulate ideas, develop creative expression and expand understanding of the language and culture”.

At AS- and A-Level, teaching should:

“engage critically with intellectually stimulating texts, films and other materials in the original language, developing an appreciation of sophisticated and creative uses of the language and understanding them within their cultural and social context”

“develop knowledge about matters central to the society and culture, past and present, of the country or countries where the language is spoken”

1. What do you see as essential cultural knowledge?

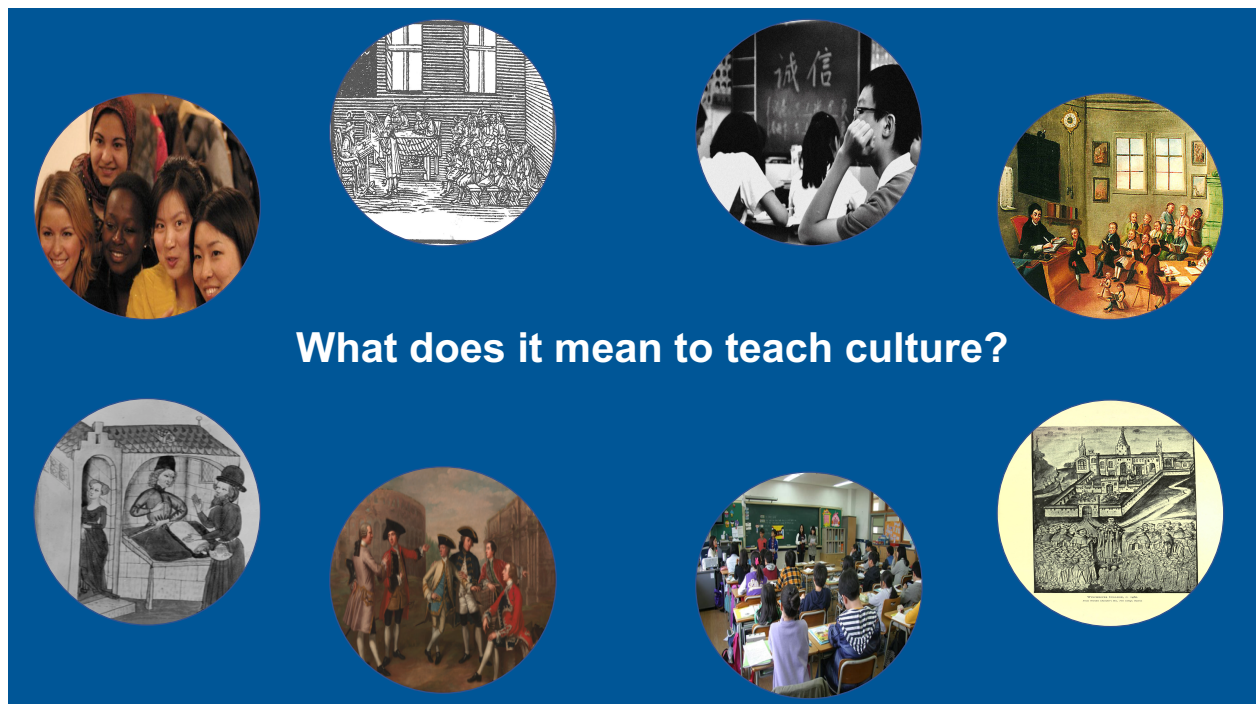
2. How do you update your own knowledge of the target language culture(s)?

20.1 Culture in the National Curriculum

‘Capital C’ culture, synonymous with a general knowledge of literature and the arts, was part of language teaching until the 1940s. From then on, communicative language teaching treated culture as a way of life: ‘small c’ culture means the everyday life of native speakers.

It might be useful to encourage participants to tell each other about useful sources of information they have found, or any artists, books or films that are particularly useful for teaching different age groups.

21. Reflection on historical and current practices



1. List three things you have learnt about historical approaches to culture.
2. In what way do socio-political developments influence approaches to language teaching?
3. What can we learn from historical approaches to evaluate our own approach and to plan future practice?

21.1 Plenary

These were the aims for this session:

1. To understand that how the target culture is represented reflects an underlying ideology, whether or not we are immediately aware of it
2. To understand, from historical examples, what kinds of cultural knowledge have been taught in language teaching, including high culture and everyday culture, intercultural knowledge
3. To be critically aware of what we are teaching without even realizing it, including in images, and in particular with regard to representing the diversity we find in our classrooms, in our own societies, and in the countries where the target language is spoken
4. To consider your own role as a teacher in making pupils aware of what angle the materials are taking and how, if necessary, you can compensate for that with your own input

It might be useful to ask participants to consider the questions individually before discussing their thoughts in pairs or small groups.

The terminology used in relation to the teaching of culture has changed as teaching approaches have changed. While materials at one point referred to *cultural understanding* and then *intercultural understanding*, a focus on competences drew teachers' attention to *intercultural communicative competence*. In recent years, the need for pupils' *understanding* of culture has been highlighted along with recognition of the role of culture as part of an individual's *identity*. Most recently, language education at secondary school level has introduced students to the idea of (inter-) cultural citizenship.

22. Key timeline

15th to 17th century	Language learning manuals aimed at merchants: focus on buying and selling, negotiating
16th century	Italian became a popular language to learn during the Renaissance English as a second language taught to Huguenot refugees
17th century	Spanish became popular when Spain became a political and commercial power
17th and 18th century	Young British noblemen embark on a 'Grand Tour' of European countries
From late 18th century	Literature and history became the focus of language teaching
1770s	German gained in cultural prestige after George I from the House of Hanover ascended the British throne in 1714
Early 1800s	German literature became very popular in England
From 1880s	Use of pictures and realia; one of the first books with illustrations was J. J. Trotter's <i>Object Lessons in German</i> in 1898
Ca. 1880 to 1920	Reform movement: pedagogical innovations; emphasis on spoken language
1945 onwards	Democratisation of culture post-WWII with languages for all 'Small c' culture (everyday lives of native speakers) focus in communicative language teaching
1950s onwards	The 'scientific period': use of language laboratories; audiovisual methods; interactional approaches; language teaching underpinned by applied linguistics
1980s	Examination of cultural stereotypes and breaking them down
1990s	Focus on social responsibility, citizenship (A-level topics on 'social issues of our time')
1990s onwards	Integration of intercultural awareness as a language skill
2000 onwards	Inclusion of non-dominant varieties and their cultural contexts in the teaching of polycentric languages
2018	Mandarin A-Level candidates outnumber German for the first time (3300:3050)

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24. Appendix: Video Transcripts

Introductory video

It is impossible to teach a language without also teaching something about culture. Even a curriculum without any explicit cultural content suggests a particular view, perhaps that learners' existing knowledge of their own culture and societies is sufficient and can be applied to other cultural contexts without adjustment.

In this unit, we will use some examples from the past to help us reflect on the choices teachers have made and the choices we still make today about teaching cultural knowledge and skills in different contexts and some of the reasons for those decisions. We hope it will make you become critically aware of what we are saying to learners about the world through their language learning experiences, even when we don't think we're particularly saying anything.

We'll consider the place of high culture, like literature, in language learning, but we'll also look at the teaching of everyday information and how to manage exchanges in different languages – how to be polite, how to be rude, how to bargain are really common themes through the centuries. We'll also look at the ideologies that underpin representations of the target culture – how inclusive, how equal, or how diverse are the societies we show our learners? What assumptions do we – or the resources we're using – make about who has power and how society works?

Over the past several hundred years, teachers have included a taste of the cultures whose languages they are teaching in different ways and have made different decisions to do it. Teaching of specific cultural details which often reflected events in the world at the time and also perhaps a particular world view. More recently, there has been a big shift towards an appreciation of teaching intercultural awareness and understanding, and we will look at the place of that in language teaching, too.

We'll be suggesting to you that the decisions or the assumptions that are made about the teaching of culture can reflect very deep-seated ideologies about society, about the world, but also about what language learning itself is actually for.

Main video

The extent to which the teaching of language involves, or should involve, culture, has been debated for a long time.

Definitions of what we mean by culture – and ideas about which aspects of culture students need to encounter – have changed as our society has. What seemed “obviously” important in the past is not necessarily a priority now, and vice versa. It's likely to change again in future, too.

Some of the oldest surviving language learning materials in Europe, from the 14th and 15th centuries, show people learning what they needed for the practical purposes of travel and trade. Many were aimed at cloth merchants who travelled between Germany and Italy, or between Flanders, England and France. Model dialogues in these manuals often taught learners how to bargain and haggle over prices, for example. They gave a lot of attention to the unwritten rules of situations like these, what we today call pragmatics.

Later, in the 17th and 18th centuries, it became fashionable for the elite to travel through Europe as part of a Grand Tour, and learning languages became a sign of prestige. Languages were now being learned by people who didn't just NEED to travel but who had the wealth and leisure to choose to do so. Language manuals still provided useful phrases for encountering speakers of other languages, but now they might also show how to "pay a call" and conduct small talk in polite society.

Increasingly, language teachers also made sure that their privileged learners learned about the great literature and culture that polite society in France, Germany or other countries would know about.

In the 19th century, when languages first became established in British schools, teaching French and German followed the example of Latin and Greek, by concentrating on teaching literature, drama and history.

Teaching these prestigious French and German works helped legitimize modern languages as a 'discipline' that deserved to stand alongside Latin and Greek that had been taught for centuries.

It was still assumed that teaching should cover the cultural knowledge that a "well-educated" native speaker would have.

The 1918 Leathes report on the state of language education in Britain identified several reasons for learning languages. The opportunity to encounter the "best thoughts" of another culture seemed to be highlighted as the report's first priority.

However, change had already begun with the Language Teaching Reform movement in the late 19th century. This movement advocated more practical language teaching, where learners could encounter *everyday* culture and situations and that related to their own experience.

Showing pupils real objects such as coins – or even just pictures of them – was one common technique.

In the second half of the 20th century, teaching also began to include more everyday texts such as newspapers, magazines, menus, signs, and tickets. High culture became marginalized in language teaching, and everyday culture took the upper hand.

The tension between focus on language skills and focus on a cultural canon remains visible in the continuing tension today between different views of teaching languages for communication or teaching languages as a humanities subject.

Whatever we think we are trying to teach about culture, it is also worth reflecting on the "hidden curriculum" that we may be teaching without necessarily noticing it. These two front covers are for the English and Romanian versions of the same German textbook, *Teach yourself German*. They send quite different signals about what Germany is like.

There are also different ways of presenting a state and its place in Europe, as these maps of Germany show.

The selection of pictures and text has an impact on the world-view that learners are encouraged to construct. It's often easiest to see this when we look at the past.

We shudder now at the way textbooks presented British or French colonialism, for example, how they represented Australian Aborigines or Indian people. Critical reflection on power relationships was absent.

Language learning materials can tell us not just about the target language country, but also about the national interests of the learners' own country of origin. For example, after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 to 1871, Germany was presented in textbooks for French learners as an enemy. Germans were shown as aggressive and militant, but also culturally inferior to the French.

Yet during the same period, German teaching in Great Britain presented a less threatening picture of Germany, and seemed more interested in emphasizing Germany's economic growth.

After 1945, language teaching was often seen as a way to encourage international understanding, friendship and peace. One way of doing this, at higher levels at least, was to focus on themes that emphasized shared human challenges more than differences between cultures, so pupils studied themes such as the environment, social conflicts, or problems in the developing world.

The shift of focus from 'culture' to 'intercultural competence' in the late 20th century emphasized less the *details* of a specific culture, and more the *process* of learning to think about similarities and differences between cultures in a sympathetic and open-minded way.

In England, the curriculum for learners up to 16 now once again includes "great literature".
So where are we now? What really matters?