
Interactions between European Citizenship and Language Learning among Adolescent Europeans

MAIRIN HENNEBRY

*Moray House School of Education,
University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

ABSTRACT Recent enlargement of the European Union (EU) has created debate as to the suitability of current structures and policies for effectively engaging citizens and developing social cohesion. Education and specifically modern foreign language (MFL) teaching are argued by the literature to play a key role in equipping young people to interact and communicate effectively in the ever-changing European context and to exercise their rights as European citizens. However, much of the empirical research to date has focused on adult understandings of European citizenship. Furthermore, very few studies consider whether current MFL teaching is addressing issues of European citizenship or offer a comparison of provision between one member state and another. This study presents questionnaire data from four European countries to investigate young people's current understanding and awareness of European citizenship and the perceived contribution of their language learning experience to this awareness. Findings suggest that knowledge about European citizenship is patchy across the four countries. Reports on learning in MFL lessons indicate a mismatch between the role identified for the subject in the development of European citizenship and the situation in the classroom. Data gathered from English pupils suggest that these issues are more acute in England than they are in France, Spain or Ireland.

The field of European citizenship boasts a rich body of literature incorporating themes of European identity, citizenship theory, socio-cultural theory, political theory and intercultural theory, to name a few. This article stands on the shoulders of the work that has gone before and seeks to offer a new, albeit modest, perspective that blends theory with teaching practice. It seeks to provide some insight into the ways in which current discussion in the field is being played out in classrooms. In particular, the study reported here adopts its perspective from the field of language teaching, focusing specifically on classroom practice, repeatedly identified as a key player in developing active European citizenship, yet still to develop a clear voice on the issue.

The study discusses empirical data on young people's knowledge and awareness of European citizenship across four European countries. Within this broad base the nature of the data calls for a closer focus on England specifically. This focus allows for a more detailed consideration of the issue, paving the way for larger explorations of the emerging themes across European states, particularly those where popular levels of engagement with Europe are low.

The Socio-political Context

The Commission of the European Communities (2006) has declared a need to relate more closely to the European demos, and has emphasised knowledge and awareness as the basis for engaging its citizens:

The gap between the European Union and its citizens is widely recognised ... Democracy can flourish only if citizens know what is going on, and are able to participate fully. (p. 2)

The term *citizenship* has recently received considerable attention while being used in a variety of diverse contexts for different purposes. The expression 'active citizen' is in common usage, and attempts to develop 'active citizens' can be seen at all levels - from school to national and from European to global. Citizenship consists of *rights*, *access* and *belonging* (Stewart, 1995; Wiener, 1996). *Access* refers to the degree to which each citizen is able to exercise and enjoy the rights conferred on him/her. The concept of access implies the need for mechanisms and structures in place for enabling the exercise of those same rights. Of these three citizenship elements, education can most readily play a part in enabling *access* and engendering a sense of *belonging*, the conferring of rights falling rather within legal confines.

Nationals of European member states are said to belong to the European Community as well as their own nation. They also have a set of rights conferred upon them and various opportunities made available to them, such as the right to vote at European elections, the right to free movement within the European member states and the opportunity participate in study-abroad programmes. Access to these rights, however, is less certain, calling into question the status of the rights conferred - does the citizen really have a right if he or she is unable to exercise it through, for example, lack of knowledge or understanding of said right? Does an inability or unwillingness to exercise rights distinguish the citizen from the active citizen? Is a sense of belonging a prerequisite for accessing rights? If so, is this sense of belonging being engendered among citizens?

Ollikainen (2000) suggests that levels of popular support for participation in Europe are currently diminishing due to the benefits of political and economic integration going largely unperceived by individuals, leading to the 'Democratic Deficit', a situation characterised by low levels of political and social engagement and participation across the European Union (EU). Voting rates in European Parliament elections remain well below the national average in most member states (Ollikainen, 2000). Indeed, this deficit receives much attention in the literature (e.g. Moravcsik, 2004; Follesdal, 2006). The recent educational expansion, visible in the European Council's emphasis on the need for initiatives to educate member state nationals towards a more active European citizenship, also bears witness to disengagement among the European demos. Such educational expansions in world systems are frequently closely associated with a need to develop productive and loyal citizens (Hüfner et al, 1987).

In referring to the concept of active citizenship, the Commission's policy statements and directives relating to the promotion of European citizenship speak of the principle of member states working towards shared understanding between cultures, seemingly implying the development of effective communication and cooperation between them, while not losing their individual cultural heritage. Programmes and initiatives aimed at European citizens urge nation states to promote the importance of cultivating these values at individual level also. Therefore, the implication is that exercise of rights, participation in democratic processes such as European elections, and taking hold of opportunities for intercultural communication and understanding are key characteristics of the 'active European citizen', underpinned by knowledge and understanding of the processes that take place at European level. Participation in this sense requires a sense of belonging and an ability to access the rights that underpin and enable participation as outlined above. In other words, active European citizenship, as distinct from European citizenship, requires a sense of belonging that will result in a desire to access the rights and opportunities conferred, in turn deepening the sense of belonging. This article focuses on the role of education, specifically modern foreign language (MFL) teaching, in developing a sense of belonging and enabling access to rights and opportunities.

The Role of Education in Developing Active European Citizenship

In outlining its strategic plans for European cooperation on education and training, the European Commission (2005) highlights its view of education as playing an instrumental role in cultivating responsible citizenship and openness towards other cultures and addressing the need for citizens to better understand and participate in European democratic processes. The literature offers some support for this, proposing education as the primary means of socialisation and of creating

citizenship, specifically in promoting *active* citizenship (Kamens, 1988). The European Commission had previously offered the following indication of the role it visualised formal education playing in contributing to active European citizenship:

School has a fundamental role to play allowing everyone to be informed and understand the meaning of European integration ... [E]ducation systems should ensure that their pupils have by the end of their secondary education the knowledge and competences they need to prepare them for their role as a future citizen in Europe. (Council of the European Union, 2004. p. 42)

An analysis of the main education-policy statements published by the EU bodies from 1970 up to 1995 identifies two primary strands that are seen to contribute to education for citizenship: (a) political interest leading to political expression; and (b) participation within the community (Ollikainen, 2000). Both are affected by self-perception and self-efficacy; if an individual considers him or herself to be an important agent effecting change within the community, this is likely to motivate deeper participation and engagement, suggesting that the reverse may also be true (Marshall, 1950; Crick, 2000). It might be argued that, in turn, citizens are more likely to consider themselves agents of change in the community if they feel adequately equipped for the task with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Increased interest in education for citizenship has motivated the development of a plethora of civic societies, volunteering schemes and educational programmes and policies. The European Commission has also developed programmes such as Erasmus, Lingua and Comenius, intended to promote communication and positive relations between member states through education. Further examination of the approach to European citizenship through education, however, raises the question as to whether this level of energy and enthusiasm is reflected in the attitudes and perceptions of the individual European citizens within each nation. The 2005 Eurydice report indicated that in the UK, for instance, the National Curriculum makes reference to the international or global dimension rather than the European one, while across the member states it is difficult to find structured educational frameworks in place for addressing the unique nature of European citizenship (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Eurydice, 2005).

This gap between citizenship education at national level and the directives at European level creates the need to investigate the extent to which education is addressing European citizenship.

Modern Languages as a Medium for European Citizenship Education

Within the context outlined so far, discussions about the possible form European citizenship education might take have led to an increasing drive, both in the literature and in European directives, for MFL teaching to adopt a key role. As discussed above, this role can most feasibly be understood in reference to enabling *access* and engendering a sense of *belonging*. This study focuses on the extent to which MFL teaching does enable access, as a first step towards investigating the contribution of language teaching to European citizenship. Arguably, for citizens to engage more actively with Europe they need to know how to do so, but even before that point they need to know what it is they are engaging with.

The Commission's White Paper on Education and Training promoted languages as a key element for building up 'the feeling of being European', stating that 'multilingualism is part and parcel of both European identity/citizenship and the learning society' (European Commission, 1995, p. 47). This view continues to be sustained, with language learning being cited as a key competence, contributing to the learning society by providing a necessary tool for mediating between and understanding other cultures and taking hold of European rights and opportunities (European Commission, 2008).

In 2001 member state education ministers agreed on a ten-year work programme to improve education and training systems within the EU. A key area highlighted for improvement was language learning. The Barcelona European Council of 2002 then recommended the teaching of two foreign languages from a very early age. The Commission's report (Commission of the European Communities, 2008) on progress towards the Lisbon objectives shows varying levels of commitment to this goal among the member states and highlights a lack of coherence between decisions made in Brussels and the implementation of these decisions across the nation states. In

2006, for instance, French pupils at lower-secondary level were learning an average of 1.5 languages, and at upper secondary this rose to 2 languages. In Spain young people were learning an average of 1.4 languages at lower secondary and 1.2 at upper secondary. Ireland showed lower levels of language learning, at an average of 1 and 0.9 respectively, and in the UK the figures stood at 0.6 and 0.1 respectively. Whether this will change with the introduction of the English Baccalaureate remains to be seen.

These particularly low levels of language learning in England are acknowledged in, and run counter to, official government documentation, which has linked the United Kingdom's weakened language-learning capacity to the limitations placed on the ability of the British to take full advantage of new EU programmes (House of Lords European Union Select Committee, 2005). The Nuffield Language Inquiry (Nuffield Foundation, 2000) also supported the promotion of language learning as a means of fostering tolerance and respect:

It is widely accepted that learning a new language can give the learner insights into how other people think, and engender respect for other cultures and ways of life. It can lead to more tolerant attitudes on a broader front, and to respect for other institutions and values ... (p. 30)

Indeed, the UK-based report argued that more effective language learning could help to combat an insular outlook, which has been repeatedly linked to limited participation in EU directives and initiatives.

The proposal of MFL as an appropriate vehicle for the development of European citizenship also finds support in academic research. MFL departments are considered by some to be well placed for promoting the European dimension since the necessary use of authentic materials provides a natural inroad for the discussion of cultural aspects of the target culture and other associated topics (Convery et al, 1997). Osler & Starkey (2005) also present MFL as an ideal medium for the development of citizenship, since citizenship and language learning share the common goals of addressing learners' identities and promoting and developing skills for communication and participation. This might therefore be extrapolated and applied also to concepts of European citizenship that share those communicative and participatory principles.

If arguments proposing a relationship between European citizenship education and language teaching are to find a listening audience among language practitioners they need to be grounded in language theory. There is some theoretical underpinning that can be drawn from theory of language-learning motivation. Williams & Burden define motivation as:

... a state of cognitive and emotional arousal, which leads to a conscious decision to act and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain a previously set goal. (1997, p. 120)

Understandings of motivation converge around the importance of goal-setting, and Gardner's language learning motivation theory (1985) offers some understanding of what might constitute these goals. Gardner's theory proposes a socio-educational model consisting of integrative and instrumental motivations for learning a second language. Integrative motivation involves an interest in learning a second language because of 'a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by another language group' (Lambert, 1974, p. 98) and suggests an interest in becoming somehow a part of the target culture. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, concerns 'the practical value and advantages of learning a new language' (Lambert, 1974, p. 98).

Although this is not a comprehensive model of language-learning motivation, it does provide a basis for understanding the importance of the social context in language learning and supports arguments for a stronger educational association between MFL and European citizenship. Indeed, the promotion of active European citizenship rests to a large degree on, on the one hand, developing intercultural communication and a sense of belonging to a community (integrative motivation) and, on the other hand, citizens participating in social and political processes (instrumental motivation).

Furthermore, the context of the EU offers ready stimulators of both integrative motivation (through open access to diverse cultural groups and societies) and instrumental motivation (through opportunities to work in countries across the EU) to benefit from financial incentives provided by European initiatives to participate in projects and initiatives emanating from Europe.

Although few studies have specifically considered associations between language learning and European citizenship per se, there has been research carried out into factors affecting motivation. A study in which 300 secondary school pupils in Rome were surveyed as part of an investigation of motivational orientation supports this conceptualisation of motivation (Creanza, 1997). The most frequently cited reasons for why it was important to learn a foreign language were prospects of employment, cultural enrichment, and overseas travel - in other words, instrumental and integrative factors.

In summary, it would appear that the available literature indicates a level of disengagement among European citizens and a need to consider the role of formal education in developing active European citizenship. The role of MFL teaching as a vehicle for nurturing inter-cultural cooperation and multicultural understanding, and for equipping young people with the tools necessary for active European citizenship, represents field of increasing interest. The literature discussed above indicates that young people want to know more about their rights and opportunities as European citizens, whilst also questioning the suitability of current educational structures for addressing this. However, there is a severe lack of research considering whether current MFL teaching in the classroom is addressing education for active European citizenship and what this might look like.

Empirical Research in the Field

Few large-scale investigations exist into adolescents' understanding and perceptions of European citizenship or their attitudes towards the EU. Some empirical research, albeit scant, has explored perceived knowledge of Europe and the EU within various population groups, including their desire to 'know more' about EU institutions; however, the majority of these centre on adult populations, leaving a gap in our understanding of adolescents' attitudes and perceptions and their preparedness for participation within the EU. The emphasis of previous studies has by and large been on European identity rather than citizenship.

To date, one of the most significant studies of adolescents, Convery et al (1997), investigated numerous variables relating to school pupils' perceptions of Europe, using a sample of 1300 12-18-year-olds across six countries. The study revealed that, while English pupils showed the weakest sense of European identity, evidence of learning about Europe was scarce across all six countries. The work begun by Convery et al constitutes an important underpinning for the present study, which considers similar variables, in the context of MFL teaching, more than ten years on.

This weak sense of European identity among the British compared with other European counterparts finds support in the broader literature and is repeatedly attributed to a sense that a European identity is a threat to British identity (Hewstone, 1986; Cinnirella, 1997). This conflict of identities is not restricted solely to British citizens. Philippou (2005) investigated European identity as perceived by Greek Cypriot school pupils and found that these pupils also perceived European identity as a threat to their national identity. However, Philippou also considered a variety of different identities, including those of gender, religion, age and geographical location, and found that pupils were likely to identify themselves as belonging to any of those identities, rather than as Europeans. Children's perception of geographical space was shown to be a significant factor. Pupils perceived Europe as a distant geographical space and therefore as a more distant identity. Philippou's conclusions reflect Barrett's (1996) findings that British children's European identity was primarily based on their perception of Britain's geographical location.

Studies of European identity are essential to understanding European citizenship. If there is no sense of European identity then it is unlikely that people will experience a sense of belonging to the EU or to Europe, and they will thus lack one of the three pillars of citizenship identified by Stewart (1995) and Wiener (1996). Indeed, if there is no sense of belonging then motivation to participate is also called into question.

The studies considered thus far report particularly weak European identity among British young people and low levels of learning or awareness of what it means to be European. Jamieson (2005) associated these two factors more strongly, finding that, among young men and women across six European countries, a stronger sense of European identity was more likely among participants who possessed an understanding of the impact of the EU on a particular country and

on the individual. The overwhelming majority of British respondents claimed the EU had little or no impact on them personally or on their country and were far more likely than others to report learning little or nothing about the European Community (EC) or the EU at school. Bordas & Giles Jones (1993) conducted a cross-national study and found that over half the participants felt they did not have much knowledge about Europe, while over 80% said they would wish to know more. This variable was also looked at in the large-scale study by Convery et al (1997), who found that 42% of respondents felt they knew little or nothing about Europe and over two thirds wanted to know more.

In light of the numerous initiatives and directives aimed at better communication with European citizens, it is perhaps surprising that British young people appear to have a markedly weak sense of European identity and that the literature reports a lack of knowledge and understanding about what the European Union is, what it does, and what being a European citizen really means. There is a need, therefore, to understand whether and how the discussions and decision made in Brussels filter into the classroom context.

A number of studies have considered the teaching of intercultural competence through MFL (Phillips & Ertl, 2003; Sercu et al, 2005; Starkey, 2007). However, there is a severe scarcity of literature that specifically considers the teaching of European citizenship through MFL. One exception to this is a study conducted by Byram & Risager (1999) that surveyed English and Danish teachers' views on the introduction of a European dimension in MFL teaching. While teachers in both countries were enthusiastic about the idea, teachers in England expressed concerns about the lack of training they felt they had with which to address the task, arguing that the initial teacher training they had received had also not provided them with any help for teaching the cultural dimension of foreign language learning. There is a need for empirical research to feed into the ongoing argument for a key role for MFL in the teaching of European citizenship, and in this regard, this article seeks to provide some initial groundwork to be further developed and taken forward.

In short, a number of key themes emerge in the studies considered above. First, despite acknowledged low levels of knowledge and awareness, there is, among adolescents and young people, evidence of a level of interest and enthusiasm to know more about Europe and about their European citizenship. Second, British young people repeatedly emerge as a particularly vulnerable group in that they are the most likely to manifest a weak sense of European identity and to feel threatened by the concept of a dual identity. This may be associated with findings of particularly low levels of knowledge among young British people and a perception of the EU as irrelevant. Consequently, studies such as that by Byram & Risager (1999) provide essential inroads for understanding this issue by bringing to light British teachers' sense of unpreparedness for the task of teaching intercultural competence, a named key competence for the development of active European citizenship.

It is in the context of the need for empirical research that investigates both adolescents' preparedness for exercising active European citizenship and the role of MFL teaching to that end that this study was conducted and is reported here.

The Present Study

This article is derived from a parent study, further findings of which are available in other publications (Hennebry, 2011, 2012). The findings presented here focus on the following research questions:

- To what extent are adolescents aware of their status as European citizens and, consequently, of the rights and opportunities available within the European Union?
- What evidence is there that Modern Foreign Language teaching is contributing towards making pupils aware of both their status as European citizens and the practical implications thereof?

Methodology

The sample. The sample was drawn from four European countries - England, Ireland, France and Spain, chosen to reflect, respectively, the lowest (England), highest (Ireland) and middle (France

and Spain) points of Eurobarometer responses to items relating to attitudes towards EU membership. Furthermore, Ireland's inclusion provides data that allow a comparison of two English-speaking countries. England's attitude towards the EU, other cultures and language learning has often been explained as a result of the globalisation of the English language removing the motivation for learning other languages. Ireland, also an English-speaking country, offers a point of comparison.

An inner-city school and a rural school were selected from each country, allowing for a wider variety of socio-economic backgrounds and varying degrees of exposure and access to information about the EU. The MFL teachers of the student participants constituted a sub-sample of the study, but those data are reported in another article (Hennebry, 2012). The student sample is summarised in Table I.

Country	n	Inner city	n (of students)	Rural	n (of students)
England	463	Nottingham	278	Oxfordshire	185
France	114	Paris	55	Boulogne-sur-mer	59
Spain	139	Madrid	98	nr Salamanca	41
Ireland	150	Cork	71	County Cork	79
Total	866	Total	502	Total	364

Table I. Summary and breakdown of the student sample

A note on the use of self-report. This study uses self-report as a primary means of data collection. Cohen (1976) argues that people's view of themselves and the world can be crucial in directing their behaviour, attitudes and responses to others. It is upon this premise that self-perceptions are considered of great importance in this study, although they have also been considered in the context of other sources of data.

The tools. Data were gathered through a two-part questionnaire (see appendix), based on the work of Gardner (1985) and Convery et al (1997), and combining closed and open-ended questions. A Cronbach's Alpha test found all scales to be reliable. The questionnaire was administered at the start and again at the end of the school year to all students who were in their third year of secondary school, since this is the last school year of compulsory MFL study in England.

Part 1 of the questionnaire considered attitudes towards other European cultures and the EU, the perception of self as a European citizen, and a true/false test of awareness of the rights and opportunities available to European citizens. Part 2 addressed integrative and instrumental motivations for language learning, interest in foreign languages, attitudes towards foreign language learning and parental encouragement for foreign language learning. Participants were also asked to attribute their own main source of learning about Europe and the EU, and to report on their learning in MFL lessons as regards other European cultures and on the opportunities available to them within Europe. The data presented here have been selected as relevant to the specific questions asked in this article.

During analysis a score was assigned to each response as follows: *strongly agree* (2), *slightly agree* (1), *neutral* (0), *slightly disagree* (-1) and *strongly disagree* (-2). These are the scores reflected in the results tables. Residual scores are used to show how a particular country scored in relation to the total sample mean. A negative residual means a score below the total sample mean.

Findings

- To what extent are adolescents aware of their status as European citizens and, consequently, of the rights and opportunities available within the European Union?

In addressing this first research question, the study sought to establish whether students perceived themselves as European citizens. Table II shows that of the total sample, 66.9% of respondents did consider themselves European citizens and only 6.3% of respondents did not. The mean total

sample score for this item was 1.02, with lower scores indicating negative responses and higher scores indicating positive ones.

	<i>n</i>	%
Strongly agree	346	44.4
Slightly agree	186	21.5
Neutral	192	22.2
Slightly disagree	27	3.1
Strongly disagree	28	3.2

Table II. Responses to the statement 'I consider myself a European citizen',

Table III shows the responses to the statement 'I consider myself a European citizen' by country. English respondents, scoring below the overall mean, show the lowest levels of any sense of European identity, while Irish pupils show the highest levels. In fact, the English group demonstrated the lowest proportion of agreement with the statement, the highest proportion of neutrality and the highest proportion of disagreement. By comparison, Ireland showed the opposite trend, with the highest proportion of positive responses and the lowest proportion of neutral or negative responses.

Country	Residual
Ireland	.26
England	-.18
Spain	.15
France	.22

Table III. Responses by country to the statement 'I consider myself a European citizen',

Students were then asked to report on how well informed they believe themselves to be about being a European citizen and on whether they would wish to know more about this and about the EU. Table IV shows students' self-reported levels of knowledge about European citizenship and their desire to know more about European citizenship and about the EU.

	Item 1: I want to know more about what it means to be a European citizen	Item 2: I think I am well informed about what it means to be a European citizen	Item 3: I would like to know more about the European Union
Whole sample	50.1	18.7	42.6
Ireland	53.3	19.3	46.7
Spain	50.3	23.7	42.5
England	46.4	14.0	35.9
France	60.6	30.7	64.9

Table IV. Pupils' self perceived knowledge about Europe and the European Union: percentage of pupils agreeing with the specified questionnaire items.

The results show that just over half of the total sample wanted to know more about their European citizenship; while less than half wished to know more about the EU. This pattern is reflected in all countries except France, where pupils were more likely to want to know more about the EU, perhaps due to France's more extensive historical tradition of addressing citizenship issues through education and more broadly in society. English pupils had the least confidence in their knowledge of European citizenship and were also the least likely to want to know more about the EU. Students' performance on the true/false test fell in line with findings of previous studies indicating a lack of knowledge about Europe and European citizenship.

Table V shows the scores at the beginning of the school year and at the end.

Test scores at the beginning of the school year		Test scores at the end of the school year	
Ireland	Mean 6.39 Residual .94	Ireland	Mean 6.87 Residual 1.67
Spain	Mean 6.06 Residual .61	Spain	Mean 5.55 Residual .35
England	Mean 4.74 Residual -.71	England	Mean 4.50 Residual -.70
France	Mean 6.18 Residual .73	France	Mean 5.42 Residual .22
Whole sample	n 757 Mean 5.45 Theoretical range 13 Actual range 12 Minimum 0 Maximum 12 SD 2.574	Whole sample	n 740 Mean 5.20 Theoretical range 13 Actual range 13 Minimum 0 Maximum 13 SD 2.861

Table V. Test scores at the beginning and end of the school year.

The maximum possible score on the test was 13, with one mark being given for every correct answer. At 5.45/13 and 5.2/13, mean scores across the four countries are low at both times of testing. At both time points, the highest scores were achieved by Irish participants and the lowest by the English. It is also important to note that only Irish pupils improved their score at the end of the year. All other countries showed a lower mean score at the end of the year than at the beginning, leading to the inference that there is little or no learning taking place about rights and opportunities available on the basis of being a European citizen.

- What evidence is there that MFL teaching is contributing towards making pupils aware of both their status as European citizens and the practical implications thereof?

In order to address this second research question, pupils were presented with a series of topics relating to European citizenship and asked to report whether they felt these were addressed in their MFL lessons.

Table VI uses residual scores to compare the learning taking place in MFL lessons across the four countries.

	Language content topics: mean score for whole sample and residuals by country									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Whole sample	.60	.52	.34	-.36	.50	-.64	-.66	-.48	-.59	-.51
Ireland	.35	.36	.21	-.09	.30	-.37	-.39	-.24	-.31	-.28
Spain	-.06	-.23	-.15	-.07	-.19	.43	.24	.20	.30	.33
England	-.29	-.15	-.10	-.11	-.16	-.19	-.04	-.14	-.14	-.16
France	.69	.36	.23	.56	.40	.76	.37	.65	.61	.60

Topic 1: The target culture; Topic 2: The people of the target culture; Topic 3: Reasons to visit the country; Topic 4: How to go and work in the country; Topic 5: What it's like living in the country; Topic 6: The European Union; Topic 7: What it means to be a European citizen; Topic 8: Opportunities to work and travel abroad; Topic 9: What it means for the country to be a member of the EU; Topic 10: Ways to take part in European projects.

Table VI. Pupils' reported learning on Europe through MFL lessons.

The mean scores, from which the residuals were calculated, were negative on six of the ten items for the whole sample. In other words, most students did not feel that they learn about topics 4 or 6-10 in their language lessons, indicating that, while none of the ten topics feature strongly in the language experience of the student participants, there appears to be an overall tendency for language teaching to focus on integrative rather than instrumental aspects of language learning. Alternatively, it could be said that, beyond vocabulary and grammar acquisition, language learning

for these participants appears to present the language as one of various aspects of a culture rather than as a tool for accessing a community of cultures. Residual scores show England and France at opposite extremes of the scale; French pupils report the most learning on all topics, while English pupils feel they learn less than average on all topics.

Of the ten topics, Irish scores are higher than the mean on four, reflecting the overall trend towards emphasising the integrative aspects of language learning: the target culture; the people of the target culture; reasons to visit the country; and what it is like living in the country. Spanish students, however, report the reverse, with most of their learning focusing on instrumental topics related to the EU: what it means to be a European citizen; opportunities to work and travel abroad; what it means for the country to be a member of the EU; and ways of participating in European projects.

Discussion

As a means of contributing to and extending previous research, this study sought to identify the extent to which pupils are aware of their status as European citizens, and the way in which MFL teaching contributes to that end.

The findings presented here indicate that although the majority of young people do feel European, their self-reported levels of knowledge about what it means to be a European citizen are low. This self-report is supported by their performance in the test of citizens' rights and opportunities. However, as in previous studies (Bordas & Giles Jones, 1993; Convery et al, 1997), the findings presented here indicate that young people do want to know more about what it means to be a European citizen and, albeit to a slightly lesser degree, more about the European Union. This is particularly the case in France. Three of the four countries seem to show less interest in learning about the EU than about European citizenship. One possible explanation for this is that pupils consider European citizenship to be about *their* rights, *their* responsibilities and *their* opportunities, and as such, this appears more significant to them than the institution of the EU.

As previously discussed, there are arguments in the literature for an association between orientation towards a European identity and levels of knowledge and awareness about Europe and the EU (Cinnirella, 2001; Jamieson, 2005). The findings of the present study support this hypothesis. Irish students display the greatest awareness about their rights and opportunities, followed by French and Spanish students, while English students show the least awareness. Participants' sense of European identity reflects this pattern also, Irish students showing the strongest sense, the French and Spanish falling in the middle, and English students showing the weakest sense.

The evidence presented in this article inevitably draws attention to the consistent difference in orientation towards European citizenship among English young people in comparison with their European counterparts. On every measure, English young people show less enthusiasm towards and less awareness of their European citizenship or the European Union.

In the context of previous research (Hewstone, 1986; Cinnirella, 1997), it is perhaps not surprising that English young people manifest the weakest sense of European identity. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this difference between English young people and their European counterparts is evident from as early on as age 13. At the very least this has implications for the initiatives and the directives emanating from the European Commission, and perhaps in particular for bodies and institutions in England working towards the promotion of European citizenship. If there is indeed to be a focused effort to promote and encourage active European citizenship, then a sense of European identity needs to be fostered in order to engender a sense of belonging. Evidence presented in this study suggests that this needs to be addressed at an early age if it is to be proactive rather than retroactive action.

The inclusion of Ireland in the sample provides an indication that the global nature of the English language cannot be argued to be a major contributing factor. It makes the case for the possibility of maintaining a strong sense of European identity and an understanding of European citizens' rights and opportunities while still being a native English-speaking country. Additionally, the argument that the sense of European identity is impacted upon by geographical location is difficult to maintain when considering the present findings. The participants in Barrett's (1996) study and in that of Philippou (2005) were aged between six and ten years old, so it is possible that

geographical distance plays a more important role at a younger age. However, since Irish pupils in the present study displayed a strong sense of European identity, and Ireland is geographically further away from mainland Europe than England is, there is a case for arguing that, by the time children reach the age of 13, geographical distance plays a less influential role.

There are numerous factors that can be argued to be causes of Britain's negative or apathetic attitudes towards Europe, from the media to history and politics. It is not in the scope of this article to argue these possibilities. However, in the light of arguments in the literature and from Brussels for MFL playing a key role in the European citizenship education, this study did consider the role of MFL teaching in developing active European citizenship.

It is important first to note that, according to the reports from the students, supported by teacher-interview data presented in a further article, MFL teaching across the four countries addresses topics that might contribute to the development of European citizenship in a rather haphazard way. Ireland, France and England tend towards the integrative rather than instrumental aspects of language learning, while Spanish pupils report the reverse experience of language learning. Despite these differing approaches, according to students' learning experiences, the degree of learning that is taking place in terms of the topics outlined is low across the four countries.

Interestingly, French students report the most learning on all topics in their MFL lessons. However, as previously discussed, they do not display the highest levels of knowledge. It is possible that Irish students, with the greatest awareness, may in fact believe that their learning about Europe is more attributable to other subjects, such as geography, history or civic and political education. It may also be the case that French students believe they learn more about Europe than they actually do in MFL lessons. The implication of either alternative remains the same; MFL teaching in its current form is not, in learners' perceptions, coherently and effectively creating links between language learning and the opportunities and rights of European citizens. Indeed, the evidence from the test suggests that these issues are not being addressed in other subject areas either. In Ireland, Spain and England there is also scope for the teaching of topics relating to the target culture to be further developed.

The findings of this study suggest that the role carved out for MFL in the literature and in Brussels does not match the role that teaching and learning of MFL currently have in the classroom. A key step that seems to be lacking is a clear outlining of the broad educational goals of MFL teaching and specific ways in which MFL might fulfil the identified role, alongside a feasibility analysis to determine whether this can be achieved in the current context or whether this would necessitate changes in curriculum design, pedagogical approaches or teacher training.

Implications and Further Research

Habermas (1984) proposes that a sense of membership and ownership of a group or an institution by its individual members is an important requisite for social or political participation. The European Commission acknowledges the need to develop a sense of belonging and ownership among its citizens (European Parliament, 2006). The evidence presented in this study suggests that a key step in this process is to create in young people a greater awareness of what the European Union is, what it does and how it might impact on their lives. In the context of ownership and belonging, it is essential that directives and initiatives intended for the classroom are developed in collaboration with the practitioners who are expected to implement them and the learners who are to experience them. Without such collaborative processes the European project will remain something that is imposed upon its citizens rather than co-created with them.

A number of questions emerge from the findings of this study that would be worthy of further investigation. First, an in-depth study of ways in which other subjects might be addressing education for European citizenship would shed light on whether in fact MFL does have a key role to play or whether this is a matter better addressed through other subject areas. Additionally, such research would enable concrete consideration of the development of effective cross-curricular approaches to European citizenship education. Second, this study has highlighted key topics that are not being addressed through MFL teaching. A more thorough investigation of the content of language teaching would shed light on what is being taught in language lessons, going beyond

document analysis and actually observing the teaching in the classroom, and it would be useful as a further step towards considering whether current MFL teaching is addressing the goals intended for it and whether there is flexibility to adapt current teaching to make space for new content. Finally, given the mismatch between the directives emerging from Brussels and learners' experiences of language learning, careful consideration needs to be given to channels of communication and the ways in which decisions and policies filter down into the classroom.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire Administered to Participants

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out what you think of Europe and the European Union. It is part of a study being carried out at the University of Oxford. Your answers will be really helpful.

You do not have to fill in the questionnaire if you do not want to, you may continue with your normal class activity. If you do fill the questionnaire in, your answers will be kept anonymous.

Please tick the box you feel best describes your view:

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
I would like to visit other countries in Europe					
I don't like people from other countries					
I consider myself a European citizen					
I am proud of my nationality					
I am proud to be European					
I consider myself completely different to people from other European countries					
I have a positive attitude towards all other European countries					
I have a positive attitude towards the European Union					
I consider myself a citizen of my country					
It is a good thing that England is part of the European Union					
Being a part of Europe is an important part of British identity					
I can make a difference to the way things work in the European Union					
I would like to study in another European country					
The more I learn about people from other European countries, the more I like them					
Being a European citizen gives me opportunities I wouldn't have if I was only a British citizen					
I want to make sure I make the most of the opportunities I have as a European citizen					
I want to know more about what it means to be a European citizen					
I think I am well informed about what it means to be a European citizen					
The European Union is interested in what I have to say					

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
I would like to know more about the European Union					
I would like to be more involved in projects or events happening in other European countries					
I don't think there is anything I can learn from other European countries					
I have a positive attitude towards some European countries					
When I get a job I would like to work in another European country					

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I think British people should have more positive attitudes towards other European countries					
I am not interested in travelling to other European countries					
I think it is important for people to know what it means to be a European citizen					
I think British people should be keen to know more about other European countries					
I don't think Britain should be part of the European Union					
I think British people have positive attitudes towards other European countries					
I think I have some things in common with people from other European countries					
I would like to know more people from European countries					

Do you think that the following issues should be dealt with by the British government or by the European Community?

Defence	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Immigration	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pollution	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health education	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equal opportunities	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race relations	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Iraq	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
Third World	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>
The family	UK	<input type="checkbox"/>	EU	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you think it is important to know about the European Union? Yes No

Please explain your answer.....

What would you like to know about the European Union and why?.....

Which country have you lived in most of your life:.....

Age:.....

Male Female

Would you describe yourself as:

Afro-Caribbean Asian White Mixed heritage

Mairin Hennebry

Other (please specify).....

Occupation of mother/stepmother.....

Occupation of father/stepfather.....

(Leave one blank if you only have one parent/guardian)

Have you ever been to another European country? Yes [] No []

If yes, which one (s) have you visited most often?.....

.....

How many times have you been to another European country with:

Family..... School..... Friends.....

What foreign languages have you been taught at school?

In primary school?.....

In secondary school?.....

In which school year did you begin to learn foreign languages?.....

Thank you for your answers!

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out what you think of learning foreign languages. It is part of a study being carried out at the University of Oxford. Your answers will be really helpful. You do not have to fill in the questionnaire if you do not want to, you may continue with your normal class activity. If you do fill the questionnaire in, your answers will be kept anonymous.

Please tick the box you feel best describes your view:

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
If I were visiting a foreign country I would like to be able to speak the language of the people					
Learning foreign languages is a waste of time					
It is important to learn other languages to understand the people better					
I wish I could read newspapers and magazines in another language					
I would study a foreign language in school even if I didn't have to					
I would really like to learn a lot of foreign languages					
I would like to speak another language fluently					
Studying a foreign language is an enjoyable experience					
My parents really encourage me to study languages					
If I planned to stay in another country, I would make an effort to learn the language					
My parents talk to me about things I can do abroad					
Studying foreign languages can be important for me					

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because it will allow me to meet and talk to more and different people					
My parents show interest in other cultures					
Studying foreign languages can be important for me because it will make me a more knowledgeable person					
My parents believe the European Union is a good thing for Britain					
My parents encourage me to practise foreign languages as much as possible					
Studying foreign languages can be important for me because I will be able to join in with activities or projects in other countries or of other cultures					
My parents think I should try to travel abroad when I leave school					
Studying foreign languages can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job					
When I leave school, I shall give up the studying foreign languages entirely because I am not interested in them					
My parents feel that because we live in Europe, I should learn other languages					
Studying foreign languages can be important for me only because I'll need it for what I plan to do in the future					
Foreign languages are an important part of the school programme					

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
My parents feel that I should continue studying languages all through school					
I hate foreign languages					
Studying foreign languages can be important for me because it will enable me to better understand and appreciate foreign literature, films and culture					
I plan to learn as many foreign languages as possible					
I would like to meet and speak to people who speak other languages that are not my mother tongue					
Studying foreign languages can be important to me because it will allow me to be more at ease with people from other countries					
I enjoy learning foreign languages					
Studying foreign languages can be important for me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of a foreign language					

Put the following in order 1-6 depending on where you get the most knowledge about Europe from, 6 being where you get the most and 1 where you get the least.

from school..... from home..... from the media.....

from friends..... from travel..... from relatives or friends abroad.....

I get my knowledge about Europe from somewhere else Yes [] No []

If yes please state where from.....

How often would you say you gained knowledge or understanding about Europe in school?

Please tick one of the following:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Daily | <input type="checkbox"/> | A few times a term | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A few lessons a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | Once a term | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> | Never or almost never | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Once every few weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

How much knowledge or understanding about Europe do you gain from each of the following subjects?

- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| English | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Geography | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| History | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mathematics | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Modern Foreign Languages | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Science | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sport/PE | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| PSHE | a lot | <input type="checkbox"/> | some | <input type="checkbox"/> | a little | <input type="checkbox"/> | none | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Do you think it is important to learn about other European countries? Yes No

Please explain your answer.....

.....

.....

Please tick the box you feel best describes what you think:

In foreign language lessons I learn about...

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
a. the culture of the country					
b. the people					
c. reasons to visit the country					
d. how I can go and work in other European countries					
e. what it's like living in the country					
f. the European Union					
g. what it means to be a European citizen					
h. the opportunities I have as a European citizen to work and travel abroad					
i. what it means for my country to be part of the European Union					
j. ways that I can take part in European projects					

Thank you for your answers!

The next section is a quiz about Europe

True or false:

T = true, F = false, DK = don't know

	T	F	DK
British people must choose whether they want to be British citizens or European citizens. They cannot be both	[]	[]	[]
If a British citizen wishes to study in a country of the European Union for three months he/she must register with the police in that country	[]	[]	[]
After turning 18 years old British citizens are allowed to vote in European elections	[]	[]	[]
British citizens are not allowed to travel to other countries in the European Union unless they have a visa	[]	[]	[]
The European Ombudsman defends the rights of European citizens who feel they have been unfairly treated	[]	[]	[]
As a European citizen I can write to the European Ombudsman with complaints	[]	[]	[]
As a European citizen I am allowed to live in any country of the European Union	[]	[]	[]
The European Commission organises projects that allow people to study abroad in other European countries	[]	[]	[]
The European Union organises a special discussion group on the Internet for young people where I can express my opinion on what the EU does	[]	[]	[]
As a European citizen I can send questions to the European Parliament	[]	[]	[]
The European Commission offers opportunities for people to work as volunteers in other European countries after they are 18 years old	[]	[]	[]
As a European citizen, if I have problems (e.g. I am seriously ill or injured or I am arrested) when I am in a country which is not in the EU, I can only go to the embassy of my country for help	[]	[]	[]
The European Union has its own constitution	[]	[]	[]

MAIRIN HENNEBRY worked as a modern foreign languages teacher before going on to complete her doctoral studies at the University of Oxford. Since then she has worked as a postdoctoral researcher in applied linguistics and as a teaching fellow at Newcastle University, and is now a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh. Her teaching and research focuses on aspects of second language acquisition, the professional development of teachers and the internationalisation of higher education. A common strand running through these research interests is the investigation of identity formation through processes of social engagement. *Correspondence:* Mairin Hennebry, Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, Charteris Land, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ, United Kingdom (mairin.hennebry@ed.ac.uk).