



MULTILINGUAL ACADEMIC JOURNAL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



CLIL in Second Language Education: A Pilot Project with Immigrant Students in Greece

Isaak Papadopoulos & Elena Agathokleous

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.46886/MAJESS/v8-i1/6972>

DOI:10.46886/MAJESS/v8-i1/6972

Received: 07 June 2020, Revised: 29 July 2020, Accepted: 25 August 2020

Published Online: 19 September 2020

In-Text Citation: (Papadopoulos & Agathokleous, 2020)

To Cite this Article: Papadopoulos, I., & Agathokleous, E. (2020). CLIL in Second Language Education: A Pilot Project with Immigrant Students in Greece. *Multilingual Academic Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 8(1), 76–86.

Copyright: © The Authors 2020

Published by Knowledge Words Publications (www.kwpublications.com)

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen

at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Vol. 8, No. 1, 2020, Pg. 76 - 86

<https://kwpublications.com/journals/journaldetail/MAJESS>

JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<https://kwpublications.com/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



CLIL in Second Language Education: A Pilot Project with Immigrant Students in Greece

Isaak Papadopoulos & Elena Agathokleous
European University Cyprus

Abstract

This paper outlines the rationale for and the purpose of designing and implementing a pilot project to immigrant students in Greece, based on the principles of CLIL approach. In particular, 30 Albanian speaking students participated in a CLIL project, which aimed at developing their language skills in Greek and their knowledge related to the Greek geography. The project lasted for five school months (School Year: 2018-2019) and took place in Larissa (Central Greece). The researchers employed two main research instruments: a) pre-/post-test and b) the teacher's journal while they also made use of satisfaction questionnaires as a supplementary tool of their research. Both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data revealed an important improvement in the students' language skills in Greek as well as in their knowledge about the Greek geography.

Keywords: CLIL, Immigrant Students, Language Skills, Primary Education.

Introduction

CLIL is an innovative approach in which content and language are integrated with the goal to provide students with more exposure to the foreign language and to enrich the areas of language use, thus enhancing language learning through the content of various school subjects (Goris, Denessen & Verhoeven, 2019). According to Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008), "CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language". In this approach lessons for subjects like chemistry, history or geography are redesigned and taught in the language target leading to a better acquisition of the target language (Graddol, 2006).

The European Union has received CLIL as an approach that would benefit the Union's goal on educating multilingual citizens and enhancing communication among them. CLIL has been supported and promoted as a means to accommodate the need of plurilinguals through the 1995 resolutions of the Council which stressed the need to improve language learning through new methods and various ways through the education systems in the European Union (The 1995 Resolution of the Council). CLIL was viewed as a valuable tool that would promote Europe's

multilingualism goals while at the same time educating learners about world cultures, history and science (Vez, 2009). European Union's policies targeted the promotion of CLIL throughout the Union as an approach that would benefit its citizens in various aspects and provide them with more opportunities.

As an approach, CLIL is rather communicational focused on targeting the needs of the multicultural environments of today's societies since it enhances acquisition rates and improves communication (Naves, 2009). CLIL provides a more natural way to learn language, placing it in a thematic context and allowing learners to use it extensively in that context, promoting content learning and raising students' motivation while enhancing both their linguistic as well as their academic skills (Griva & Chostelidou, 2017).

CLIL students benefit from their exposure to language in various topics and acquisition of related language as well as the enhancement of their skills in using language is facilitated. In parallel, development of critical thinking and expanding students' competencies on various aspects are considered to be among the CLIL advantageous outcomes (Griva & Kasvikis, 2014; Alzgoool, 2019; Umrani, Ahmed & Memon, 2015; Zin & Ibrahim, 2020). Research shows that the more time spent in contact with the foreign language, the more the students learn and are able to use the language in a variety of situations with different requirements leading to a more advanced linguistic competence (Coyle, 2006). CLIL aside from developing skills in second or foreign language, it also fosters culturally aware students, helps in the advancement of their general academic skills and leads to higher success rates in their school subjects (Papadopoulos & Griva, 2014; Khalid, Islam & Ahmed, 2019).

Content acquisition is also favored in that CLIL students achieve better results in subjects like Mathematics and Science than when the subject is taught in L1, due to the fact that teachers are more aware of the challenges in students' understanding (Jäppinen, 2005). Merino's and Lasagabaster's research (2018) showed that CLIL learners perform better in L2 than non CLIL students especially regarding speaking and writing skills while their advancement in L1 is not affected and at the same time students also develop a more positive attitude towards the learned languages and the idea of multilingualism.

Research has proved that subjects like Mathematics can be better understood when taught in a foreign language due to the teacher's effort to better explain concepts when using a foreign language to do so (Marsh, Maljers & Hartiala, 2001). CLIL also reinforces content learning through group work which is also vital for developing the ability to learn, to take initiatives and to build confidence, things not achieved when using traditional language teaching techniques (Marsh et al., 2001).

As a technique, CLIL provides teachers with the opportunity to enhance their own development, try new things and discover new more creative ways to teach language which benefit students even more (Coyle, 2006). Through CLIL the target of teaching content is acquired while at the same time there are significant parallel benefits for the students like the advancement of their communication abilities using the foreign language, their cultural awareness and understanding for a variety of cultures other than their own while at the same time they become increasingly motivated and more engaged in the learning process. However, the main concern which has not been solved so far is related to who is going to teach CLIL and

whether CLIL should receive an official position in the Greek education system with appropriate legislations.

The Project

Rationale and Objectives of the Project

Studies at national and international level have indicated the advantageous impact of CLIL (Linares & Whitaker 2007; Mehisto and Asser, 2008; Papadopoulos & Griva, 2014; Charalampoglou & Papadopoulos, 2019) on content and language areas. Given that, this project was designed and implemented with the purpose to develop immigrant students' a) skills in Greek language and b) knowledge related to Greek geography.

Sample

As shown in the following table (Table 1), the sample of this pilot project consisted of 30 students of Albanian origin, who had been attending a Greek primary school in Larissa (a city in Central Greece) and had been learning Greek as a second language (GL2). It is very important to state that students were placed in the A2 level of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) and they took part in this five-month programme (February – June 2019) with the permission of their parents.

Table 1. Sample of the project

Gender	<i>55% Male Students 45% Female Students</i>
Country of Origin	<i>100% Albania</i>
Years of Staying in Greece	<i>74% 4 years 15% 2 years 11% 1 year</i>
Language Level in Greece	<i>A2 Language Level (CEFR)</i>

Design of the Project

The principles of Coyle's 4Cs framework (2007) were used in the designing procedures of this project, as an attempt was made towards fostering "interrelationship between content (subject), communication (language), cognition (thinking) and culture" (Costa & D'Angelo, 2011: 6).

In particular, this CLIL programme was developed in the form of a topic-based mini-syllabus incorporating a variety of creative activities and games, appreciating the advantageous role of games in language classrooms (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2009).

Within this context, the expected learning outcomes involved the development of the students':

- i) Cognitive skills, through their engagement in knowledge-based activities, which required the employment of problem-solving strategies and decision making actions;
- ii) Communication skills, through their participation in the creative activities that facilitated the use of the target language, their interaction and expression of views.

- iii) Cultural sensitivity and awareness, through familiarizing students with topics related to Greek history/geography and history along with aspects of Greek geography.

The syllabus of the project was designed around ten units focusing on the following topics:

- 1) Greece on the map
The students acquired an awareness of the position of Greece on the European map, through using and dealing with multimodal material. In this way, they were encouraged to spot their country of origin (Albania) as well and see the “distance” between Greece and Albania.
- 2) Greek prefectures
The students investigated the Greek prefectures in an attempt to focus more on the country of Greece. More specifically, they spotted the prefectures on the map, they became familiar with their names and they discussed various aspects of geography with regard to these prefectures.
- 3) Greek rivers
Having discussed the Greek prefectures, the students were introduced to the Greek rivers. In particular, they investigated the rivers that each prefecture has, they became familiar with their names, their importance in the local place and potential traditions related to them.
- 4) Greek lakes
Apart from the rivers, the students were provided with opportunities to explore the Greek lakes in each prefecture of the country. Lakes have been associated with traditions of Greece, thus students had the chance to navigate through the Greek folk-tradition in parallel with their familiarization with the names and certain information about the lakes.
- 5) Greek forests
Students had also the chance to learn about the forests in Greece. More specifically, they came into contact with information regarding the importance of forests and plants in the environment and the importance of the Greek forests in maintaining certain species of animals and insects.
- 6) Greek mountains
Starting from the mountain “Olympus”, students were engaged in inquiry activities with regard to mountains of Greece. They learnt about their details, their heights, their history and they created various crafts based on them.
- 7) Greek animal species
Greek animals was another thematic area of this particular project. Students learnt about animals that exist in Greece with emphasis on Kareta-Kareta in Corfu, the Bears in Kastoria, Kri-Kri Goats in Crete etc. They searched for information about them, they created stories based on them and they learnt about their dangers of extinction.
- 8) Greek traditions
Greece has been a country with rich traditions. In particular, the students were provided with information about Greek customs and traditions regarding the weddings, the baptism, the Christmas and Easter celebrations. They also discussed traditions of various villages of Larissa and they also visited the Museums of the city.
- 9) Greece and its neighbouring countries

Another important unit of the project was the students' familiarization with the neighbouring countries of Greece. Although they had dealt with the European map in the first unit, it is in this unit that students focused on all the neighbouring countries of Greece apart from Albania. They played with the maps, they learnt the names of the other countries and basic information about them.

10) General Review

This is the last unit of the project. It is where the students participated in activities that were related to all the thematic units of the projects in an attempt to combine all of them as interrelated parts of Greece and its geography.

The Effectiveness and Feasibility of the Project

It is worth mentioning that both summative and formative evaluation was conducted with the purpose to record the feasibility of the project by using the following instruments:

Pre-Post-Test for Students

A pre-test and post-test, in the target language, administered to the students at the beginning of the programme and after the completion of it with the aim to identify the students' cognitive level related to aspects of the Geography of Greece, as well as their competence in Greek language.

In particular, students were asked to choose the correct answer in multiple choice activities, crosswords and matches with regard to aspects of Greek geography focusing on information they learnt throughout the educational project.

The comparison of the total correct answers (Table 2.) of the pre-test and the total correct answers of the post-test revealed significant differences. More specifically, the students achieved a score of $m = 14.868$ in the pre-test while in the post-test their score was $m = 23.000$.

Table 2. Pre- and Post-Test Results

	Pre-Test Performance	Post-Test Performance
Mean	14.868	23.000
Std. Deviation	1.001	1.030

Through the qualitative analysis of journal entries, it was shown that

...the Multimodal Environment was advantageous for students.

Using multimedia and fostering a multisensory teaching and learning environment within a CLIL context, encouraged students to participate actively in the activities implemented. It also enhanced their attitude towards the Greek language while it facilitated their content-knowledge acquisition.

...vocabulary-oriented difficulties were encountered by students,

Learning about the names of the prefectures, the rivers, the lakes and the mountains was an experience in which students faced some difficulties. In particular, they seemed to have difficulties in remembering the names and sometimes they got confused with the rivers and the lakes. They also had some difficulties in producing written discourse using such terms and thus, the teacher made use of the multimodal environment to facilitate their learning.

...translanguaging use was encouraged,
Having knowledge of the Albanian language as well, the students were encouraged to make use of all their linguistic resources during the educational project. They made use of the Albanian language in their attempt to enhance the communication, interaction while they also used verbal and non-verbal communication in the class.

Satisfaction Questionnaires

Satisfaction questionnaires were also used as a supplementary research instrument. They were filled by the students, at the end of the project with the purpose to investigate their attitudes towards the CLIL project which was implemented. As shown in the table below (Table), it was revealed that the students enjoyed learning about the natural environment topics with a focus on Greece, their host country, in a game-based context, and were proud of their contribution to the CLIL project.

Table 3. Students' Feedback

Field of Focus	Students' Responses
The immigrant students seemed to enjoy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Investigating information about Greece and Greek places</i> - <i>Games with their classmates</i> - <i>Greek customs and traditions</i>
The difficulties encountered by students were related to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Words/vocabulary related to Greek geography</i> - <i>Names of the neighbouring countries</i> - <i>Written production activities</i>
The students' suggestions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Short educational trips to cities of Greece</i> - <i>More game-based activities</i> - <i>More inquiry activities</i>

Concluding Remarks

This particular paper provides an account of a CLIL project implemented to young immigrant students in Greece with the purpose to develop the students' skills in Greek language and enhance their knowledge in aspects of geography with a focus on the landscape of Greece.

The results indicated the positive effect of the CLIL approach on language and content-oriented field. More specifically, it appeared to enhance the students' language skills and their vocabulary in the Greek language, while students were provided with opportunities to come into contact with aspects of Greek geography. The multimodal learning environment which was fostered gave the students stimuli and opportunities for developing content knowledge. They participated in a game-based context, in which they realized that learning a language can be a truly meaningful experience (Mpalatsou et al, 2019; Karyou et al, 2019).

Furthermore, based on the records of the teacher's journal throughout the programme, it was shown that students used the target language to communicate and interact with each other and their teacher. Students had the opportunity to use Greek in various ways, while participating in interactive games. As a result, through the analysis of journals' entries, it was revealed that they enhanced their confidence to communicate in the target language, while competence in communicative skills was also revealed in many previous studies conducted with content-based

FL/L2 programmes. (Theologou & Papadopoulos, 2015; Maillat, 2010; Mewald, 2007; Moore, 2009).

Moreover, CLIL proved to have advantageous impact on students' content-knowledge acquisition. Through their participation in the CLIL project, they seemed to achieve a better understanding of Greek geography; they acquired an awareness of Greek rivers, lakes, mountains and forests. In parallel, the collaborative and inquiry activities appeared to encourage students exchange their views (Charalampoglou & Papadopoulos, 2019), discuss content topics and develop their skills in language and content areas.

Thus, it is advisable that teachers design and implement educational CLIL projects with the purpose to facilitate both the language development and student's content-oriented skills, which can be highly beneficial not only for immigrant students but for indigenous students as well.

References

- Charalampoglou, N., & Papadopoulos, I. (2019). CLILing with Young Language Learners: a multidimensional reflection on teaching practices in Greek foreign language education. Published in the Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on the Promotion of Education Innovation. Larissa, 11 – 13 October 2019
- Costa, F., & D' Angelo, L. (2011). CLIL: a suit for all seasons? *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning* 4 (1), 1–13.
- Coyle, D. (2006). Towards strategic classrooms: Learning communities which nurture the development of learner strategies. *Language Learning Journal*, 31 (1), 65-79
- Goris, J., Denessen, E., & Verhoeven, L. (2019). The contribution of CLIL to learners' international orientation and EFL confidence. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(2), 246-256. doi: 10.1080/09571736.2016.1275034
- Graddol, D. (2006). *English Next*. British Council.
- Griva, E., & Kasvikis, K. (2014). CLIL in Primary Education: Possibilities and challenges for developing L2/FL skills, history understanding and cultural awareness. In N. BakićMirić & D. Erkinovich Gaipov (Eds), *Current trends and issues in higher education: an international dialogue*. Cambridge Scholars
- Griva, E., & Semoglou, K. (2015). *Foreign language and Games: Implementing Physical activities of creativity at early years (In Greek)*. Thessaloniki: Kyriakidis Editions
- Griva, E., & Chostelidou, D. (2017). CLIL in Primary Education: Promoting Multicultural Citizenship Awareness in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning*, 8(2), 9-23.
- Jappinen, A. K. (2005). Thinking and content learning " of mathematics and science as cognitional development in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): Teaching through a foreign language in Finland. *Language and Education* 19.2, 148–166
- Karyou, C., Lazarou, E., Trott, L. R., & Papadopoulos, I. (2019). Second/foreign language learning within a multimodal learning environment: exploring creative ways of teaching young language learners. Published in the Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on the Promotion of Education Innovation. Larissa, 11 – 13 October 2019
- Linares, A., & Whitaker, R. (2007) Talking and writing in a Foreign Language in CLIL contexts: a linguistic analysis of secondary school learners of geography and history. *Revista española de lingüística aplicada, Monographic 1*, 83-91.
- Maillat, D. (2010). The pragmatics of L2 in CLIL. In C. Dalton-Puffer. T. Nikula & U. Smit (eds.). *Language Use and Language Learning in CLIL Classrooms*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Marsh, D., Maljers, A., and Hartiala, A. K. (eds.): 2001, *Profiling European CLIL Classrooms: Languages Open Doors*, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä.
- Mehisto, P., Marsh, D., and Frigols, M. (2008). *Uncovering CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning in Bilingual and Multilingual Education*. Macmillan Education.

- Mehisto, P., & Asser, H. (2007). Stakeholder perspectives: CLIL programme management in Estonia. *Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(5), 683- 701.
- Merino, J., & Lasagabaster, D. (2018). CLIL as a way to multilingualism. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 21(1), 79-92.
- Mewald, C. (2007). "A comparison of oral language performance of learners in CLIL and in Mainstream Classes at Lower Secondary Level in Lower Austria". In Dalton-Puffer, C. 47 & Smit, U. (eds.). *Empirical Perspectives on CLIL Classroom Discourse*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
- Moore, F. P. (2009). *On the Emergence of L2 Oracy in Bilingual Education: A comparative Analysis of CLIL and Mainstream Learner Talk*. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla. Unpublished PhD thesis.
- Mpalatsou, A., Papakosta-Pigro, E., & Papadopoulos, I. (2019). Let me push the button of languages: a descriptive account of creative multimodal activities for young second/foreign language learners. Published in the proceedings of the *5th International Conference on the Promotion of Education Innovation*. Larissa, 11 – 13 October 2019
- Naves, T. (2009). Effective Content and Language Integrated learning (CLIL) Programmes. In Content and Language Integrated Learning: Evidence from Research in Europe. *Volume 41 of Second Language Acquisition*. Zarobe, Y and Catalan, R. (eds) Multilingual Matters. 2:22-92.
- Papadopoulos, I. (2014). The dramatization of children literature books for the development of the second/foreign language: An implementation of a dramabased project to students of primary school. *Journal of Study in English Language Teaching*.
- Papadopoulos, I., & Griva, E. (2014). «Learning in the Traces of Greek Culture»: A CLIL Project for Raising Cultural Awareness and Developing L2 Skills. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 8(1), pp. 76-92
- Papadopoulos, I., & Peiou, V. (2014). The foreign language development of students in a language and traditional dance integrated context: An implementation of a task-based learning project, *Aspects Today Journal of English Language Teachers*
- Theologou, E., & Papadopoulos, I. (2015). CLIL Community of Students: a Longitudinal Project for Developing Content-Based Material within a Learning Community in Primary Education. *MIBES Transactions*, 9(2), pp. 71-84
- Tomlinson, B., & Masuhara, H. (2009). 'Engaging learners of English through football'. In V. P. Vasquez and J. A. Lopez (eds.). *Aplicaciones Didacticas Para La Ensananza Integreda De Lenguy Contenidos*
- Vez, J. M. (2009). Multilingual Education in Europe: Policy Developments. *Porta Linguarum* 12, 7-24.
- Khalid, N., Islam, D. M. Z., & Ahmed, M. R. M. (2019). Sentrepreneurial Training and Organizational Performance: Implications for Future. *Humanities & Social Sciences Reviews*, 7(2), 590-593.

- Alzgoool, M. (2019). Nexus between green HRM and green management towards fostering green values. *Management Science Letters*, 9(12), 2073-2082.
- Umrani, W., Ahmed, U., & Memon, P. (2015). Examining the absorptive capacity construct: A validation study in the Pakistani banking context. *Management Science Letters*, 5(12), 1053-1058.
- Zin, M. L. M., & Ibrahim, H. (2020). The Influence of Entrepreneurial Supports on Business Performance among Rural Entrepreneurs. *Annals of Contemporary Developments in Management & HR (ACDMHR)*, 2(1), 31-41.