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CLIL IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPING L2/FL SKILLS, HISTORY UNDERSTANDING AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

Eleni Griva and Kostas Kasvikis

Outline

This chapter provides a synthesis of twelve CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) projects, conducted by our research group, which were implemented to young students (aged 8–12 years) with the purpose to interweave language and content learning: that is, to develop students' foreign language skills simultaneously with enhancing their knowledge in aspects of history and developing their cultural awareness and multicultural understanding. Multimodal materials, such as stories, ppt, video clips, songs, movies, games and constructions were used to arouse the students' interest, in a 'game based' teaching environment, within a 'task-based' framework, which called for students working together on a common group task, and interacting while being involved in 'problem-solving'. The effectiveness and feasibility of the projects were estimated by collecting both qualitative and quantitative data on a formative and summative basis. The results indicated the positive effect of the CLIL approach on the students' FL skills language along with their considerable familiarization with the content (history and culture), b) seemed to have implications for changes in the Curriculum of Primary Education by contributing to the introduction of CLIL methodology in teaching young learners.

Key words: CLIL, second/foreign language, cultural awareness, history understanding, overview of projects

1. Introduction: CLIL as an educational practice

The chapter provides an overview of the work of our research group, including twelve CLIL projects which were piloted with young students with the purpose to develop their foreign language skills and enhance their knowledge in aspects of history, as well as to develop a better understanding of their own culture and the spectrum of cultural differences. In other words, an attempt was made to provide specific added value in both the development of content knowledge and language skills (see Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols 2008).

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), as an educational practice, can be applied to all educational levels from primary to higher education (Dalton-Puffer 2007; Dalton-Puffer 2011), covering a wide range of approaches from total/partial immersion (where subjects, like history, geography, citizenship, can be taught through the target language), to language showers (where there is an exposure to one subject area taught two-three times per week), and enriched language classes, where a topic-based approach is adopted, incorporating content from other curriculum subjects (cross curricular approach).

Since there is no single way of implementing CLIL, diverse models have been suggested: a) a 'strong/hard' model comprising either total or partial immersion, subject courses, and language classes with greater use of content, and b) a 'weak/soft' model, focusing mostly on language learning (Ball 2009; Bentley 2009), aiming to help students develop their L2/FL competency as a primary goal and their subject knowledge as a secondary goal (Ball 2009). On the same line, Bentley (2009) proposes three models of CLIL: partial immersion (about half of the curriculum), subject-led (15 hours

per term) and language-led (one hour 45-minute lesson per week). Also Perez-Vidal (2005) proposed a tripartite model comprising a) dual model, b) cross-curricular model, where only some aspects/units of different subjects are taught in L2/FL and c) reinforcement model, where teaching content in a L2/FL is preceded by teaching and practicing specific vocabulary and language items in L2 class. All above mentioned CLIL models, which bring the content of a subject area into a second/foreign language class, are often adequately adapted at a local level to respond to local conditions. In our projects, a variety of models were employed from partial immersion, to language showers and crosscurricular model.

CLIL approach has been practiced across Europe for the last two decades, with positive effects on target language learning and knowledge acquisition in other subject areas (Korosidou and Griva 2013; Lasagabaster 2008). Among the basic benefits, the following ones are highlighted: holistic language learning, a 'real' purpose for using the language, cognitive skills development, content knowledge in various subjects and enhancement of students' confidence (Brewster, 1999; Naves, 2009). In relation to subject content, it has been revealed that CLIL students outperform peers when tested in content in their first language (see Dalton- Puffer, 2007; Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Concerning target language outcomes, the language aspects mostly affected are: oral performance in L2/FL communicative and academic language skills, specific and receptive vocabulary, greater fluency and creativity in productive skills, and better reading and listening comprehension (Butler 2005; deZarobe and Catalán 2009; Griva and Semoglou 2012; Griva, Chostelidou and Semoglou 2014; Korosidou and Griva 2013; Mewald 2007).

Despite the fact that CLIL approach has been established as a popular educational practice across Europe, its adoption does not guarantee the quality and effectiveness of learning (Coyle 2008). Nevertheless, the development of a paradigm providing insights into CLIL pedagogies, based on the identification of fundamental principles and effective classroom practice is necessary. Such principles have been identified by Coyle (2008) and are combined in the '4Cs Framework', including contextualized content, communication (language learning and using), cognition (learning and thinking processes) and culture (developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship). For the purpose of attaining quality CLIL modules, all of the four Cs principles are present in syllabus design and materials development (Coyle 2008; Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010). Some other important factors to be considered when implementing a CLIL module are the following: a) meaningful and challenging input from different sources and appropriate both in terms of language and content; b) multi-modal input, which caters for individual learning styles and accommodates multiple intelligences; c) topic familiarity (Meyer, 2010; Naves, 2009); d) multifocal lesson planning; e) development of cognitive abilities and strategies; f) focus on intercultural communication; g) encouragement of co-operative work by involving children into problem-solving tasks, and inquiry based activities (Mehisto et al 2008; Navés et al. 2002).

2. Designing the CLIL projects: Transforming challenge into potential

2.1 The Purpose of the projects

Having considered the data of previous studies revealing certain benefits of CLIL on students' linguistic and cognitive development, twelve projects were designed and carried out by our research group¹ for the last four years (2011-2014). The main purpose of our interventions was to take foreign language learning beyond the traditional curriculum, by exploiting historical and cultural knowledge of different periods of the Greek past/present as the basis in foreign language classrooms. The following objectives were set:

- Provide opportunities to study specific content (history and culture) through different perspectives.
- Develop cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity.
- Develop subject-specific target language.
- Improve overall target language competence.

2.2 The participants

¹ Apart from the authors of the present chapter, the following researchers participated in our research team: Dr. Kleio Semoglou, Evaggelia Anagnostou, Anna Agiovlasi, Vasilis Iosifidis, Eleni Korosidou, Aggeliki Maggou, Chrysa Markou, Christina Tsaousi, Katerina Tsaousi, Paraskevi Tzoutza, Paraskevi Tsigeni, Sofia Venetopoulou.

Eight projects were piloted with 6th grade students (aged 11-12 years) of experimental primary schools in Northern Greece. The students' English language competency level was identified as A2+ (Elementary Level) according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). They had been taught EFL (English as a Foreign Language) as a compulsory subject for four years, three hours per week. The teaching approaches adopted before the intervention were rather conventional ones, based on the PPP (Presentation-Practice- Production) framework.

Four projects were piloted with children aged 8 - 12 years old. All students were born in Bitola (FYROM) and had been learning Greek as a foreign language (GFL) for three years in the private institutions in Bitola city.

2.3 Integrating content and target language

According to Bodo Von Borries (2009, 296) history is a mode of thinking rather than a chronological narrative, and thus it can be related with many aspects of people's life and be accessible through various school subjects. The importance of adopting an intercultural approach in language classroom has been strongly supported by the *Common European Framework of Reference for languages* (Council of Europe 2001) for raising learners' awareness of cultural diversity and promoting respect for other cultures. For the purpose of our studies, history and culture are perceived as a means to promote students' sensitive understanding of the past, to raise intercultural awareness and to avoid ethnocentric or a biased perception/conception of ethnic and cultural identity. The projects aimed at making students perceive Greek history and culture (locality) not isolated, but in relation to other cultures (globality) (Byram 2000), as their contents and the approaches employed support fluidity and multivocality of the historical interpretations (Kasvikis 2014).

History and cultural history in particular underlines the diachronic existence of cultural diversity as an important constituent of human condition. For that reason, cultural diversity and variability of cultural perspectives are recognized as valuable parameters for the modern societies, which enable people to appreciate culture as a product of different influences and to legitimate cultural pluralism (Parekh 2000, 165-172). From this perspective, culturally responsive teaching at school is a mode of empowering and emancipating students, making linkages between official knowledge – in our case history and culture - and their cultural and experiential background, when applying a "reflective-interpretive-inquiry based" approach (Gay 2000; Hollins 1996).

2.4 Designing the Thematic Modules

The design of these modules was an attempt of an alternative educational method to respond to the potential of CLIL, within existing curriculum and assessment policies, aiming to introduce students to new ideas and concepts in traditional curriculum subjects, using a second/foreign language as the medium of communication. They are communicative oriented modules aiming to make children learn about historical events, acquire cultural knowledge, recognize the features of other cultures, use appropriate vocabulary, select relevant information, describe situations and events, communicate in an appropriate way in specific contexts. As *content* lies at the heart of every unit thus, its selection is of primary importance and the starting point for module design and material construction.

Since language acquisition is a contextualized and comprehensible learning experience involving a multidimensional processing, teaching context should satisfy various learning strategies and styles (Tomlinson 2001). For this purpose, the basic philosophy in every of the twelve modules was to follow a *holistic* approach to learning, create *multimodal* context and employ a *variety of methods* and approaches. An attempt was made for students' cultural awareness to be developed by experiencing the culture indirectly through films, art and stories. *Multimodal* input (texts, charts, maps, ppts, videos, films, pictures etc) was used for presenting primary and secondary historical sources, since it contributes to the production of highly differentiated materials accommodating different learning styles and strategies. Multi-faceted approaches were integrated into the CLIL modular design:

2.4.1 Theme- based approach

The CLIL syllabi were derived from the subjects of Greek and World History and Culture organized around the following topics and concepts, which offer opportunities for developing skills, knowledge and cultural understanding: material culture, cultural heritage management, heritage, interculturality, culture, art, material culture, art, local history, multi/interculturalism, multiculturalism, public history, national and global history, history of art, history of ideas (see table 1).

2.4.2 Story-based approach

The choice of the stories was regarded as pivotal in the success of story-based CLIL lessons in the case considered. History and culture are ideal topics for discovering authentic stories coming from the past or creating stories about the past and present based on the available evidence (see table 1). *Stories* seem to be a valuable tool for young learners, since they offer both linguistic and personal benefits to the children in a 'safe' and relaxing environment (Mixon and Temu 2006, in Georgopoulou and Griva 2012) and make children exercise their imagination, fantasy and creativity (Halliwell 1992, in Griva & Chostelidou 2012). In addition, multicultural stories utilized in some of the pilot projects can reflect various cultures and traditions, different styles of communication and represent different groups of people with their own cultural issues.

2.4.3 Game- based approach

Moreover, the choice of the games was regarded as pivotal in the success of all CLIL projects in the case considered (see table 1). Learning while playing is the best way to learn a second/foreign language since the focus is on children's active participation and interaction in a non-threatening and relaxed situation (Dryden and Vos 1997). Physical activities and games can contribute to the development of children's motor competence and problem solving skills, as well as to the development of a positive attitude towards the target language and the learning process (Hutchinson 1999, in Griva, Semoglou and Geladari 2010). They provide students with a rich experience of language in use and give shy children more opportunities to express their opinions and feelings (Griva and Semoglou 2012). Also games stimulate children's fantasy, curiosity and challenge and provide them with opportunities to practice various language aspects (Aldavero 2008; Griva and Semoglou 2013). In the specific projects, children participated in a variety of games and physical activities, such as memory and word games, constructions, role-play games, pantomime, songs, races, chases, relays, dance etc. Additionally, dramatization, debates, empathy, on site inquiry and object study were employed for promoting multiperspectivity in students' historical understanding and interpretation (Kitson, Husbands and Steward 2011; Levstik and Barton 1997).

2.4.4.Task-based framework

Every project was carried out in a *task-based framework* (Nunan, 2004; Willis, 1996) applying a *CaPePe model* (Griva and Semoglou 2013) with 6 pedagogical principles: Communication, Activation, Problem solving, Exploitation, Participation, Enjoyment. In such a context, peer interaction, meaningful exploitation and communication of ideas and concepts and active participation in the learning process can be promoted (see table 1).

Since an interactive and creative environment being of paramount importance, various types of activities were designed and included in our projects: a) 'information-gap' activities, b) 'hands-on' activities, involving exploration, practice and production in a variety of learning contexts, c) 'reasoning-gap' activities involving processes such as inference and deduction, d) constructions and creations, such as creating maps and charts, stories and multimodal texts.

The tasks were distinguished between a *macro-task* (eg 'organise a debate or a role play'), which was divided among groups of students working in collaboration, an *intermediary task* (eg games, written production) and a *micro-task* (eg vocabulary games, specific vocabulary, grammar items) and were performed through three phases:

Pre-task phase: it encompassed the following steps: a) introduction to the topic and task in a multisensory/ multimodal context, b) contextualization of the task (through pictures, realia, historical evidence, questions and answers etc., c) exposure to specific language, d) scaffolding and motivation to participate in the tasks.

Task cycle: in this stage the teacher formed groups of 4-5 children, who were encouraged to use the target language creatively and spontaneously through participating in a 'macro task' within group. They had to work together on a common task, helping each other and interacting with each other during "problem-solving" negotiation and assume responsibility for contributing to the group task.

Follow up phase: The teacher gave feedback on the content and quickly reviewed what was presented; meanwhile, the students voted and chose their preferred task. Furthermore, the teacher picked up and drew attention to relevant language and semantic points and made children recycle new vocabulary by getting them involved in some micro tasks, such as games, puzzles etc.

2.5 Estimating the effectiveness of the CLIL projects

In order to estimate the impact of each project on the language skills and to determine whether the CLIL projects confer added value on the quality of learning on content knowledge, cognitive skills, as well as cultural and intercultural awareness, pre and post (summative) evaluation and on-going (formative) evaluation were conducted. Emphasis was placed on process oriented assessment, including a variety of alternative instruments (eg portfolio, dramatization, journal), as they are based on the idea that students can reflect on their learning processes and evaluate their own learning (see table 1).

The following instruments were employed:

- a) A students' needs analysis tool was administered in order to the class to identify their perceived needs and preferences;
- b) Content- specific and FL pre/post testing were administered to the students;
- c) Portfolios were kept by the students per week;
- d) Dramatization was employed;
- e) Journals were kept by the researchers once a week, while videotaping of teaching episodes was used to provide further insights;
- f) Satisfaction questionnaires were filled in by the students, at the end of the project to record their attitudes towards the project and the difficulties they encountered.

3. CLIL in action: an overview of the Projects

Table 1. The core features of the twelve CLIL projects

CLIL Project Topics	Target Language (L2 /FL)	Content	Concept	Methods/Approaches	Evaluation
1 The 'other' language of Acropolis	EFL	Classical archaeology, history	material culture, cultural heritage management,	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, task-based, hands on tasks	Content- specific and FL pre/post test, portfolio, journal, questionnaire
2 Ancient Greek myths across borders	GFL	mythology, literature	Heritage, Interculturality	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, Task-based, game based, dramatization	Pre-interviews, role playing, journal, questionnaire
3 'Playing' Games through centuries	GFL	History, athletics / gymnastics	Culture, heritage, Interculturality	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, , game-based	Pre/post interviews, journal
4. Byzantine Art and culture: promoting creativity	EFL	Byzantine archaeology, byzantine history	Material culture, art, heritage	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, , hands on tasks	Content- specific and FL pre/post test, portfolio, journal, questionnaire
5. Byzantine and Post-byzantine art from a local perspective	EFL	Byzantine and post-byzantine archaeology	local history, material culture, art, heritage	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, , Task-based, out of school visits	Content- specific and FL pre/post test, field notes journal, interviews
6 Inter-cultural stories in a bicultural community	GFL	popular literature (ethnography, customs)	Interculturality, heritage	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, , story- based, dramatization	Pre-Interviews, pre/post test, role playing, journal, questionnaire
7 Folk stories as a 'crossroads' of neighbouring countries	EFL	Folk literature, ethnogeography	Multi/Interculturalism, local history	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, Task-based, story based	Pre/post interviews, Content- specific and FL pre/post test, journal
8 "meeting" different cultures all over the world	EFL	Culture, ethnogeography,	Multiculturalism , global history	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, Task-based, game based	Pre/post interviews, Content- specific and FL pre/post test, journal, portfolio

9. Introducing Greece and its culture to the neighbours	GFL	Modern culture, geography	Culture, interculturalism	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, game based, dramatization	Pre/post interviews, pre/post test, journal
10 Greece in the Second World War through movies	EFL	modern history	public history, national and global history	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, task-based	Pre interviews, Content- specific and FL pre/post test, journal, questionnaire
11 Renaissance and Enlightenment from a different view	EFL	History, art, sciences	history of art, history of ideas	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, dramatization, game based	Pre/post interviews, Content- specific and FL pre/post test, journal
12 From Michelangelo to Picasso	EFL	History of art	art, culture	Multimodal pedagogy/communication, dramatization, hands on tasks	Content- specific and FL pre/post test, role playing, journal, portfolio, questionnaire

3.1 The ‘other’ language of Acropolis

The project, *The ‘other’ language of Acropolis*, concerned with teaching the history of the Athenian Acropolis and its monuments through English as a foreign language (EFL) to Greek-speaking primary school students with the ultimate purpose to develop students’ competence in EFL and their cultural awareness of the past. The CLIL project was implemented on seventeen 6th grade primary school students, aged 11 to 12. It lasted for a semester and it was designed around six basic thematic axis, including: “The socio-political context of Athens during Pericles’ building program”, “The monuments of Acropolis”, “The architecture and the sculptural decoration of the Parthenon”, “The role of Acropolis as a religious center”, “The mythology related to Acropolis”, “the Acropolis through/over centuries-The “Elgin” Marbles”.

Topic-based and task-based approaches were used as the basis for the design and management of the units, where language is approached lexically and functionally rather than grammatically. Cooperative and exploratory learning were adopted for the development of both receptive and productive skills, as well as reasoning abilities. Efforts were made to create a multisensory and multimodal teaching context by incorporating visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic modes for considering multiple intelligences of students. Therefore, video clips, model monuments, other authentic and illustrative materials, historical sources, created opportunities for meaningful and interesting language input and comprehensive content. Moreover, interactive and problem solving activities, such as role-playing, pantomime, constructions, making predictions, exchanging information and presentations helped students communicate in the target language and use specific vocabulary, as well as achieve a deeper understanding and awareness of many historical, cultural and ideological aspects of the Acropolis in the past and present.

The project proved to be effective, since students improved EFL skills, developed history knowledge and indicated an outstanding appreciation and cultural awareness of the Greek past, while expressed their willingness to be taught English and history in such a context.

3.2 Ancient Greek myths across borders

The project, *Ancient Greek myths across borders*, employed a story-based approach through an interdisciplinary paradigm. Ten well known Greek myths and folk stories, which were selected and were simplified for educational purposes, were at the core of the interventions. Those interventions were piloted with 22 children aged 10 - 12 years old, who had been learning GFL for three years in private institutions in Bitola city (FYROM).

The module aimed at developing student’s four language skills (listening, reading, writing & speaking) in Greek as a foreign language, while triggering an intercultural dialogue by comparing cultural elements of the Greek myths and stories with elements of students’ own culture. Thus, the

ultimate purpose was to develop intercultural awareness based on a cultural product with a 'global appeal'. An attempt was made to create learning opportunities in a game-based and multimodal context, where students actively participated in problem solving activities, so as to achieve linguistic, communicative, socio-emotional and cognitive goals in a pleasant environment.

A variety of assessment instruments were employed in order to estimate the feasibility of the project: pre-interviews with the students and the coordinator of the institute, role playing, journals kept by the researcher and students' satisfaction questionnaires. The findings revealed the advantages of storytelling in a game-based context in relation to enhancing the four language skills in the target language in an enjoyable environment. Problem solving and multisensory activities helped the students to participate actively in the learning process, meanwhile Greek myths and folk stories helped them to develop, to some extent, intercultural awareness and appreciation of the 'other'.

3.3 'Playing' Games through centuries

The purpose of the project, *'Playing' Games through centuries*, was to develop both productive and receptive skills, as well as to create an environment of emergent literacy through a multisensory and multimodal environment. It aimed at making children understand the diachronic dimension of the 'game', using certain ancient games as a starting point and as a 'vehicle' for comparing them with games of their own culture.

The project was piloted with a class of 8 year old children, who had been learning Greek as a foreign language for one year. It was based on CaPePe (Communication, Activation, Problem solving, Exploitation, Participation, Enjoyment) framework with games being at the core of the module. During the intervention, very young children communicated in the target language by getting engaged into cross thematic, interactive and physical activities in a multisensory environment. They were classified into: a) "in classroom" creative activities, such as memory and word games, constructions, role-play games, pantomime, songs, etc. and b) "out of classroom" physical activities and games, such as races, chases, relays, dance etc. In such a context, language acquisition was a natural process related to all aspects of the children's lives involving them in making meaning and communicating. Some well known traditional games -but still popular- were at the core of the project and were organized under basic thematic units: "Types of games", "Whirligig and yoyo", "Dolls", "Animal models", "Table games dice, guess the number, odd or even, etc.)", "Physical activities (hide and seek, chase, etc.)".

The results of the estimation of the project indicated that games and physical interactive activities can be an effective way to learn a foreign language at an early age, providing children with the opportunity to communicate both verbally and non-verbally in a relaxed learning context. In addition, students appreciated the value of the game, realizing that it is a diachronic component of childhood.

3.4 Byzantine Art and culture promoting creativity

The project, *Byzantine Art and culture promoting creativity*, was introduced to serve the dual aim of a) developing a CLIL project with a focus on Byzantine history and culture for primary education students; b) measuring the effect of the implementation of a CLIL project that promotes creativity.

The ultimate aim was to determine the impact of the CLIL approach on the students' EFL oral performance, in terms of aspects such as accuracy, fluency, interaction skills, and coherence by means of analytic measures along with their gains in content-based knowledge dealing with several aspects of the byzantine art. The experimental thematic module was designed around the following thematic axes related to byzantine material culture: "Architecture", "Mosaics", "Murals", "Icons", "Painting", "Illustrated manuscripts", "Sculpture and miniature art". It was developed on the basis of criteria for providing successful and sustainable CLIL teaching and learning as suggested by Coyle's 4Cs-Framework. Among them was the provision of rich, challenging, and authentic input, while content, communication, cognition and culture are inextricably linked. In parallel every thematic unit comprised various creative workshops with hands on and minds on activities that familiarised students with byzantine art and techniques in a pleasant and constructive mode.

The feasibility estimation of this project was examined by using summative and formative assessment instruments, such as content-specific and FL pre/post test, portfolio, journal, questionnaire. In effect, the data provided support for the efficacy of CLIL and suggested that it could be extensively introduced in the context of the Greek primary education.

3.5 Byzantine and Post-byzantine art from a local perspective

The project, *Byzantine and Post-byzantine art from a local perspective*, was introduced with the purpose to provide insights into developing both EFL skills and local aspects of Byzantine history and culture in the context of Greek primary education. It aims at a) developing a CLIL paradigm with a focus on Byzantine and post Byzantine history and culture for 6th primary school students; b) investigating the effects of CLIL on students' skills performance after a total of 30 teaching sessions intervention; c) identifying whether CLIL instruction develops a more positive attitude towards FL and content learning. The project referred to Byzantine and Post-byzantine art in relation to the specific context of Kastoria city and was designed around the following thematic axis: "The Byzantine and Ottoman period - Historical Framework", "Kastoria in the Byzantine Era (geography, culture, daily life, economy)", "The Byzantine art in the area of Kastoria (public architecture, painting)", "Kastoria in the post byzantine era (economy, private architecture, religious art)".

A multimodal and multisensory learning environment was created in order to support and enhance language skills and content knowledge. Students were encouraged to use language creatively through getting involved in communicative, problem-solving, on-site visiting, inquiry-based activities and hands on activities aiming at situated learning experiences related to children's background and interests and to contextualizing the historical content. In such an educational context the children were involved in collaboration, interaction, exploration and creative expression.

The data resulted from the formative and summative evaluation indicated the positive effects on students' communicative skills and the enhancement of content knowledge and cognitive skills, as well students' attitude towards FL and content learning in such a context.

3.6 Inter-cultural stories in a bicultural community

The project, *Inter-cultural stories in a bicultural community*, was introduced with the purpose to develop students' second language skills (Greek as a second language) and their bicultural awareness and sensitivity. It was piloted for six months with a bilingual class of 22 Greek speaking and Turkish speaking students, attending the fifth grade of a Greek primary school in a bilingual community in North-Eastern Greece.

Greek and Muslim folk stories were at the core of the project, which were selected for dual purpose: a) they were used as a tool of 'bicultural meeting and interaction' and b) they were used as a means of promoting children's creativity. Folk stories were at the 'core' of the project, since they are considered motivating and fun, and as a result an optimal way to introduce children to the diversity of the two cultures. The module was designed in the form of a 'story-based' mini syllabus, including 20 common traditional Greek stories and 20 common traditional Muslim stories (in Greek language).

Each folk story was taught through three stages: a) the pre-stage which aimed at activating students' linguistic and bicultural knowledge. b) the main stage, with the purpose to make students understand the folk story in a multimodal context and interpret its cultural elements and characteristics, c) the post-stage, which aimed at involving students in problem solving activities, role play, debates, and creative activities, such as 'story production'. Students had the opportunity to get involved in extraverbal and verbal communication within an authentic and creative environment.

The results from the formative and summative evaluation indicated a positive influence of the project on a) young children's productive and receptive skills development, and specific vocabulary enhancement b) young children's enjoyment and creativity c) their enhancement of bicultural respect and awareness of the smooth bicultural 'coexistence' in the classroom.

3.7 'Meeting' different cultures all over the world

The project, *'meeting' different cultures all over the world*, employed a dual-focused approach in which EFL was used for the learning and teaching of both aspects of Geography, History, Culture and target language to young students through their involvement into interactive table games. The project

was designed and piloted for 18 weeks, in a 6th grade classroom of a primary school, in northern Greece, where EFL is taught as a compulsory subject from the 3rd grade onwards. The objectives of the project were the following: a) developing students' skills in the target language, b) enhancing their knowledge in geography and c) developing their multicultural awareness.

The project was designed around five basic thematic units: "Europe", "Asia", "Africa", "America", "Oceania". The children, "traveling" to and through the countries of the five continents, in a task-based framework, learned about: the culture of those countries, their famous sightseeing and museums, folk costumes, flags and food, traditional music instruments.

Three table games were constructed, including exploration, mystery and adventure. Students in groups assumed roles of a 'detective' searching for the 'suspect', each time travelling in various countries in a different continent. They collaborated to collect evidence for the suspect by helping each other, interacting with each other during "problem-solving" and assuming responsibility for contributing to the group task. Within a communicative game based context, children had the opportunity to interact in the target language, participate in a number of intermediate and micro tasks such as 'Smart light', 'Go to some international Restaurants', 'Flags Speed', 'Safari with the Roulette', 'Guess the country', 'Jenga with questions', while gaining knowledge of aspects of Geography, History and Culture in a playful environment.

The results indicated the positive effect of the CLIL project on children's communicative strategies, their knowledge on subject matter, as well as on their cooperative skills in 'real' situations, while solving problems and making decisions. Students were able to use a high number of specific vocabulary at the end of the project and performed better in their verbal communication and interaction.

3.8 Folk Stories as a crossroad of neighbouring countries

The project, *Folk Stories as a crossroad of neighbouring countries*, introduced a general framework for using traditional stories complemented with games and applied in accordance with the principles of the 'task-based' approach. Every effort was made to efficiently interweave language, content learning and intercultural sensitivity. In particular, the following objectives were set: a) to develop the students' skills in EFL, b) to develop their multicultural awareness, c) to enhance their knowledge in aspects of cultures of neighbouring countries and corresponding aspects of Geography. The project was piloted with 6th grade Greek-speaking students (11-12 years old), who had been learning EFL for four years. The project was implemented in an experimental primary school, in northern Greece and lasted for 18 weeks.

Stories were at the 'core' of the project, since they are considered motivating and fun, as well as an optimal way to introduce children to a diversity of cultures. The CLIL courses were designed in the form of a 'story-based' mini syllabus, including common traditional stories, translated in English language, from our neighbouring countries in the Balkan and North-East Mediterranean area (Serbia, Cyprus, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, FYROM, Turkey). Multimodal materials, such as stories, ppt, video clips, songs were used to arouse the students' interest within a 'task-based' framework, which called for working together on a common group task, helping each other and interacting while being involved in "problem-solving".

The results of the project estimation indicated the positive effect of the CLIL approach on the students' skills in the target language along with the students' considerable familiarization with the target cultures. Storytelling proved to have raised the students' inter/multicultural awareness besides offering them opportunities for creativity, imagination and understanding of cultural diversity.

3.9 Introducing Greece and its culture to the neighbours

The focus of the project, *Introducing Greece and its Culture to the Neighbours*, was on teaching Greek as a foreign language (GFL), in a cross curricular context, highlighting elements of Greek culture and aspects of modern life in Greece. It was piloted with 18 young students, aged 11 - 12 years old, who attended the Greek language school of the Association Pelagonia at Bitola (FYROM).

For the purpose of the project, materials and tasks were developed, based on learners' individual needs, which were identified through a needs assessment instrument, before the

implementation of the project. Ten theme-based units were created around selected topics, incorporating elements of Greek culture in order for the learners to know and use them alongside with their own culture: “Geography of Greece”, “Greek Music- theater- literature”, “Monuments”, “Food”, “Daily habits”.

Every unit was taught through three stages: a) In the ‘pre-stage’, an attempt was made to activate students’ prior knowledge and familiarise them with the vocabulary of the unit; b) In the ‘while stage’, the students were engaged in reading comprehension and performing various activities related to the texts; c) In the ‘post-stage’, they were involved in interactive and information-gap activities.

During the implementation of the project, a pleasant and creative environment was created, where the students communicated spontaneously in GFL. A multisensory and multidimensional approach was followed through the use of visual material, and music. In such a context, games and constructions were among the most successful activities of the teaching process, since they seemed to stimulate students’ motivation and enhance their participation in the learning process and their familiarization with a different culture in order to identify common trends and differences for promoting intercultural understanding.

3.10 Greece in the Second World War through movies

The project, *Greece in the Second World War through movies*, focused on:

- developing students’ language skills in English as a foreign language (EFL);
- enhancing subject knowledge related to many aspects of the Second World War in the Greek context;
- stimulating their motivation for EFL learning and historical knowledge development;
- enhancing their involvement in learning through their senses by making provision for multi sensory learning using films and the fictional representations as cultural “toolkits”.

The project was implemented in a 6th grade classroom of an experimental primary school in Northern Greece. Twenty four students were assigned to the experimental group receiving English language teaching events of the Second World War in Greece. The project was designed around 10 thematic axes, including ‘the outbreak of the World War II’, ‘the Triple Occupation in/of Greece’, ‘Everyday life during the German occupation (1941-1944)’, ‘the Greek Resistance’, ‘the end of the war’. The basic ‘principles’ of the project were: multimodality, communication in the target language, cooperation, problem solving, expression, interaction and active participation.

It was carried out through three stages: a) introducing the topic and specific vocabulary; This was achieved with the use of contextual clues, like visuals, a wide range of teaching resources and historical documents that were provided through ICT. b) presenting extracts of Greek and foreign fiction movies and documentaries related to the specific historical event a. c) communicating and participating in activities related to the topic of each film, which focused on exchange factual information, such as ‘role-play’, ‘sorting’, ‘ordering’, or ‘arranging puzzles’, ‘labelling’ games, graphing activities, dialogues, and presentations in pair and group work.

The results from the formative and summative evaluation indicated a positive influence of the project on students’ language skills, specific historical vocabulary, and subject knowledge dealing with one of the most important and dramatic events of the Greek and World history in the 20th century.

3.11 Renaissance and Enlightenment from a different view

The project, *Renaissance and Enlightenment from a different view*, focused on introducing aspects of history and culture, including history of art and sciences to 6th grade students of an experimental Primary School in Northern Greece. The EFL Project aimed at expanding and deepening the rather shallow educational approach adopted in the Greek educational system, related to aspects of European history, in a game-based and multimodal framework. It was developed in the following thematic units: “Renaissance: historical framework”, “Renaissance art”, “Renaissance science and inventions”, “The Age of exploration”, “Enlightenment: historical framework”, “Education, science, music in the Enlightenment period”, “Greek Enlightenment”.

Every teaching session included: a. the presentation of the topic using multimodal materials (a short text, a ppt, a combination of textual and visual historical sources, videos etc.) in order to stimulate student’s interest in the subject and to introduce the specific vocabulary and b. a variety of activities involving team-working, role playing, constructions, exhibitions, debates, that enabled students to practice EFL skills and to experience aspects of the content knowledge.

The results of the project evaluation indicated its effectiveness on students' EFL skills as well as on their improvement of content knowledge and their enhancement of a demanding historical content characterized by many abstract concepts.

3.12 From Michelangelo to Picasso

The project, *From Michelangelo to Picasso*, aimed at introducing some aspects of cultural history in an alternative way and creating an educational environment that favors the art experimentation and expression in EFL. The project lasted for 3 months and was piloted with 6th grade students of a Primary education School in Northern Greece. The development of the 'western art' was the project's core content, comprising 10 thematic axes including all the important artistic movements from 15th to 21st century: "Renaissance", "Baroque", "Neoclassicism, Romanticism", "Realism", "Impressionism", "post-impressionism", "Expressionism, Fauvism", "Cubism, Abstract Art", "Surrealism", "Contemporary art (abstract expression, pop art, performance, installation etc.)".

The project was carried out in three stages: a. Pre-task, where the students were introduced to the historic, artistic and ideological framework and the key-artists of each movement. b. Task-Cycle, where they were involved into team working tasks leading to experiential learning, problem solving and creative expression, and c. Language Focus, which was carried out in a game-based context. Activities such as role play games, pantomime, creative workshops, exhibitions, artistic presentations, quiz and puzzle games, debates, empathy were at the core of every thematic unit. In such an activity-based context students were exploring, communicating in EFL, creating, playing and interacting in the target language and elaborating content knowledge.

The evaluation data suggested that the CLIL module contributed to students' improving specific vocabulary and enhancing their communication skills. They also expanded their knowledge on history of art approaching experientially and creatively the artistic, historical and ideological framework of the development of art in the western world.

4. Concluding remarks

This chapter provides an account of twelve CLIL projects piloted in primary school classrooms with the purpose to develop students' skills in a foreign language and enhance their knowledge in a variety of topics related to history and culture at local, national or global level. The findings resulted from the evaluation of the projects confirmed that CLIL has the potential to lead to better understanding and development of the content knowledge and can be an effective educational practice for target language skills enhancement.

Overall, the data resulted from the evaluation of the projects indicated that those interventions were successful in that, the students: a) acquired new areas of language and enhanced their language skills, b) accessed basic concepts and specific vocabulary related to the subjects of history and culture, c) acquired a fair amount of the content knowledge deepening their critical thinking and widening their perspectives on various curricular and no-curricular aspects of history and culture, d) developed cultural understanding and competences and favoured an opening to other cultures. In other words, the students had the opportunity to use '*the language of learning, for learning and through learning*' (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010).

The aforementioned projects have made a contribution to the research on CLIL by showing that there is a potential for such projects even with young students. Although the scale of the studies is not broad enough to make generalisations- given the limited number of the target population and the restricted context of conducting the interventions- all these projects support a policy for introducing CLIL educational practices in primary education on a systematic basis, since they could offer an alternative educational practice to the existing curricula.

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