

## **To CLIL on Translanguaging or not to CLIL? Exploring Students' Experiences towards Translanguaging CLIL in an EFL Class**

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijellr.13/vol11n23960>

Published May 30, 2023

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**Citation:** Charalampoglou N. and Karras I. (2023) To CLIL on Translanguaging or not to CLIL? Exploring Students' Experiences towards Translanguaging CLIL in an EFL Class, *International Journal of English Language and Linguistics Research*, Vol.11, No 2, pp.39-60

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**ABSTRACT:** *The increased diversity that characterizes today's society necessitates the need for new ways of accommodating cultural differences. Translanguaging and CLIL have contribute enhancing proficiency, communicative competence, and intercultural communication. This study was conducted in a third-grade primary school class in Drama, North-eastern Greece that consisted of 13 students: 8 Greek students and 5 with Albanian backgrounds born in Greece. Interviews, pre-and post-tests, and observations were combined to investigate students' experiences in a translanguaging CLIL lesson. The findings reveal that students' experiences in a translanguaging CLIL lesson helped to develop intercultural awareness and enhance language competence in English. The study concludes that further teacher training is required, monolingual policies need to be revised and an intercultural approach to learning needs to be implemented.*

**KEYWORDS:** CLIL, translanguaging, Greek, Albanian, intercultural awareness, linguistic skills

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Language is a vital tool for communication as people can interact with each other, shape personalities, and express themselves by transmitting knowledge, culture, and values from generation to generation (Gelman & Roberts, 2017). The traditional view of keeping languages as separate linguistic systems and following a monolingual language policy has led to a worldwide loss of home languages (Makalela, 2015). This approach entails the risk of assimilating people without taking their ethnic identity and mother tongue into consideration. Thus, research has shifted towards a holistic language

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approach where all learners use their languages in an equity-driven learning environment (Garcia et al., 2017).

In this context, translanguaging is the natural process of utilizing multiple resources to communicate meanings and interact with others. It has significant linguistic, cognitive, and emotional effects on learners by shaping their personalities and making them feel like a whole identity (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is another innovative pedagogical approach applied in multilingual classes which guarantees successful learning of a second or foreign language by teaching language through content (Järvinen, 2007, in Marsh & Wolff, 2012).

Regarding Greece, it received immigrants from Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania from 2015 to 2019 (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2019) and refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, and DRC in 2020 (GCR, 2020). 35.73% out of 15.696 are children who attend Greek formal education (GCR, 2020), taught in the same way as Greek students based on the official syllabus.

In EFL Greek Primary classes, cultural and linguistic pluralism is a significant point of reference. Immigrant arrival has transformed the English as a foreign language (EFL) lesson into an unprecedented multi-ethnic mosaic in which English acquisition is regarded as the third (L3) language for some bilingual learners and the second one (L2) for Greek students (Papalexatou, 2016). Translanguaging and CLIL must be taken into account. There is a need for an inclusive education that caters to all learners' needs.

## **The study**

### **The rationale of the study**

The current research relies on the assumption that the EFL class is an ideal place to celebrate diversity, tolerance, respect, multicultural, and multilingual awareness by utilizing innovative practices which correspond to the multicultural needs of learners and society.

Given the beneficial effects of the CLIL approach on both the international (Coyle et al, 2010) and national levels (Griva & Kasvikis, 2017) as well as the positive outcomes of translanguaging in multicultural education (Garcia & Wei, 2014), this study aims to explore learners' experiences of a class based on a translanguaging and CLIL learning environment, where both the indigenous and immigrant students can use their native languages. Moreover, it aims at elevating learners' multicultural and multilingual awareness regarding students' languages and cultures.

More specifically, the approach taken in this class was created with the goal of exploring:

- a) how Greek students and learners with immigrant background experience a translanguaging CLIL lesson in an EFL class,

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- b) if Greek students and learners with immigrant background show progress in English learning in a translanguaging CLIL lesson by using their native languages as supportive tools,
- c) the extent to which Greek students and learners with immigrant background develop intercultural awareness in a translanguaging CLIL lesson

This study aims at contributing to the existing knowledge, as research that involves the use of target languages based on CLIL and translanguaging in the classroom by facilitating linguistic and cultural interaction is rather limited (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Moreover, this study may inspire educators to adopt effective teaching practices which promote the cultural identities of all students and emphasize the communicative role of the English language.

### **Context and Sample**

The study was launched in a third-grade primary school classroom in Drama, Greece, in 2021/2022. Asylum Information Database (2022) reports that in 2021–2022, 2028 citizens from other countries are registered in the prefecture of Drama, of whom 1540 are Albanians. The high influx of Albanians explains why many students are of Albanian background in this school.

The class comprises 13 students, five of whom are of Albanian background and born in Greece to Albanian immigrant parents. Hence, they were fluent in speaking the Albanian language since it was their home language but could only read and write the basics. Greek followed as a second language (L2) at age four and English as a third language (L3) when taking classes at primary school. The other students were of Greek ethnicity and had been learning English as L2.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The following section deals with the theoretical framework that underpins this investigation, which laid the foundation for the research. Specifically, it aims to relate these theoretical concepts to the Greek school and a specific group of learners.

#### **Key Concepts**

##### *Multicultural and Intercultural Awareness*

Multiculturality can be defined as the coexistence of different cultures within the same geographical and social space (Argibay, 2003). Multicultural awareness involves an understanding of the history, traditions, values, and experiences of other groups, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, and mental and physical abilities amongst others (University of Norte Dame, 2022).

Intercultural awareness is one's ability to acknowledge differences that result from culture as well as their effect on one's daily life (Jiménez Bernal, 2020). It is a conscious understanding that involves positive and negative attitudes toward cultural identities, and thus emotions and subjective feelings (Karras, 2021). In either case, raising

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awareness of the existence of different cultures in a non-hierarchical manner reduces fear and enriches the knowledge of otherness. In EFL classrooms different cultures are introduced and are therefore the ideal *topos* for multicultural and intercultural awareness.

### *Cultural and Linguistic Diversity*

Both UNESCO and the UN promote cultural and linguistic diversity which, however, have been neglected in educational reforms due to the persistent patterns of power relations within societies (Cummins, 2006). Greece is an example of immigrant students facing challenges in being integrated into the education system and society.

The need for intercultural education first appeared in Greece during the eighties when children of Eastern European immigrants entered Greek schools. No particular measures were taken to cater to their needs other than special reception classes or additional tutoring hours to be integrated into the dominant language and culture. It was after the nineties when Greece began following EU guidelines and voting relevant legislation to address the needs of immigrant and refugee children (Gousis, 1998). Nevertheless, there is still an urge for inclusive education that meets the needs of all learners involving effective teaching practices which promote students' cultural identities and intercultural communication skills and enable them to develop adaptability to culturally diverse environments (Karras, 2021).

Bilingualism refers to a person who knows two languages (Valdez & Figueora, 1994). When the acquisition begins at birth up to one year, the speaker is a simultaneous bilingual (De Houwer, 2005). Speakers acquiring their second language later are sequential bilinguals. The age of L2 acquisition is also important due to the critical period hypothesis and recent findings that indicate the sensitive period for native-like L2 acquisition occurs until the age of five (De Houwer, 2005). Therefore, concerning our learners' group, the immigrant children who acquired Greek at school did so within this sensitive period, but not before one year of age.

### *Multilingualism and Plurilingualism*

Multilinguals are speakers of a minority language or immigrant speakers who use both their dominant language and the majority language of their host country every day (Cenoz, 2013).

In contrast, plurilingualism involves code-switching between languages or dialects (Council of Europe, 2007). Effective communicators draw on their linguistic and cultural repertoire to produce a creative idiolect. It does not necessarily imply perfect command of all languages used but involves pluricultural competence (Rahal, 2019).

### *Heritage language*

The term refers to the language spoken or heard at home but not to the majority language spoken in the community (Baker, 2011). A heritage language student acquires the language first and achieves a specific level of competency in the language.

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Throughout school, however, they shift to the socially dominant language, and their linguistic ability in the heritage language may deteriorate. Regarding our Albanian learners, they were first exposed to Albanian spoken in the Albanian family living in Greece and then, learned Greek at pre-school. Eventually, the students became more dominant in Greek, and Albanian was reduced to the basics.

### **The Status of English in Greece**

The English language holds a privileged position in the contemporary world as a global *lingua franca* since it is spoken by a quarter of the world's population. This brings to the surface issues of language varieties and dialects, and their evaluation (Crystal, 2003).

Greece represents a monolingual country as its official language is Modern Greek spoken by 10.7 million people (European Commission, 2007). Foreign language learning has been considered necessary to keep up with the wider European values of 'united in diversity' (European Union, n.d.). Therefore, English is the primary foreign language in Greek primary and secondary schools. From 2010-11 PEAP, a new curriculum for foreign language learning has been introduced. PEAP is the national English for Young Learners (EYL) project that forms part of the Cohesion Policy 2007-13 National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) and piloted English as a compulsory subject from the first grade of primary school for 20% of the primary state schools (PEAP, 2014).

Nowadays, relying on the PEAP program, the Greek ministry has modified the national curriculum for primary schools *Ministerial decision 82462/DG4/29-06-2020*. English is taught as a first foreign language to all grades of primary school. PEAP produces teaching-learning materials and supports teachers by offering guidelines and teacher training. Moreover, English has been recently introduced in pre-primary schools using creative teaching materials *Ministerial decision Φ.7/82462/ΓΔ4/29.06.2020* (EAN, 2022). Additionally, the large proportion of learners attending afterschool private language centers to learn English based on different methodologies and teaching materials while investing money and time, further attests to the importance of the language.

Within Greek context, the motivation of learners to learn English is associated with getting proficiency language certificates as future career success depends on certified knowledge of foreign languages (Sougari and Hoyhannisyian 2013). Attention is paid to accuracy not fluency, which contrasts Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2020) that emphasizes English should be used to consolidate relationships. Furthermore, they disregard learners' cultural diversity and intercultural identities in class, since English is often taught and learned mechanically which does not leave scope for self-expression.

### **CLIL Education and its Added Value**

Marsh (2007) introduced an innovative educational approach that combines the teaching of a subject and a foreign or second language (i.e., CLIL). CLIL has been

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK developed to promote bilingual education (Garcia et al., 2017); it does not exclude L1 but focuses on productive L2 skills and authentic communication. Its objective is to develop learners' language skills, combined with the simultaneous learning of content. It promotes multilingualism and multiculturalism in an educational setting while learners gain multicultural awareness and remain motivated and involved in the learning process (Charalampoglou & Papadopoulos, 2019).

There are three CLIL models of implementation which serve different purposes. In Greece, the third model is the most common one, as there are ELT textbooks that follow the standard curriculum and include a CLIL section at the end of each unit. Research into CLIL in Greek EFL education for young learners suggests its impact on cognitive and socio-emotional skills. Griva and Kasvikis (2014) cite a project that revolves around the teaching of Geography, History, and Culture by means of meeting different cultures and the use of the target language. The project is deemed to be efficient as learners developed both content knowledge and language skills.

### **Translanguaging and its Added Value**

Translanguaging involves using at least two languages for teaching and learning purposes in a given lesson (Garcia, 2009). The term was introduced in Wales in 1980, but the use of more than one language in an EFL context is not new as learners' L1 has been traditionally used in the classroom. What separates this practice from translanguaging is that the latter is purposeful in itself. The languages are used in an integrated manner and developed in a symbiotic relationship (Canagarajah, 2011) that does not impede the learning of the target language, but rather assists learners to become proficient users of both the home and target language (Baker, 2011).

There is research on translanguaging strategies in a Greek setting, mainly on teachers' attitudes when teaching Greek as a second language. A survey conducted by Karafylli and Maligkoudi (2021) investigates the use of translanguaging practices in multilingual schools, where teachers seem to be able to create a safe environment for learners by encouraging the use of their L1, as well as by using other media that are not exclusively language-based, for instance, visual elements and songs. When translanguaging is used, learners become actively involved with the lesson, achieve a better understanding of the subject matter, and enrich their knowledge of the target language and their L1 (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

In conclusion, while there is a significant body of research on teaching English as a foreign language in Greece, there is not any research that specifically investigates the learners' experiences in an EFL context that incorporates CLIL and Translanguaging, using three languages, namely, English, Greek, and Albanian, to raise intercultural awareness along with obtaining specific language learning goals.

This section contributed toward setting a comprehensive theoretical background upon which research on a specific group of learners from a Greek EFL context will be

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conducted with the view of determining the value of CLIL and translanguaging in this specific context.

## METHODOLOGY

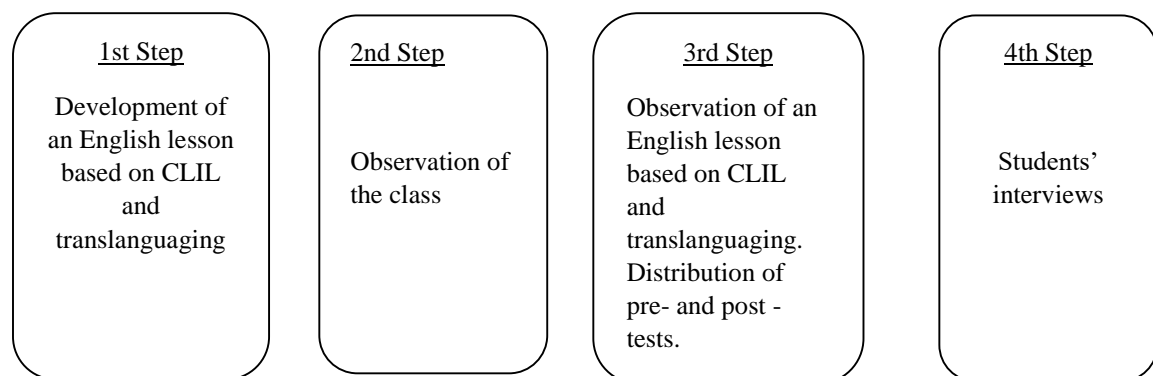
This section presents the research design and research tools employed in the study, accompanied by a description and analysis of the methods used to co

### Research Design

The research is conducted in an EFL class of a primary school to investigate how learners experience CLIL in the English lesson by utilizing their native languages as a resource to support their learning. Qualitative research was used to get a deeper understanding of the participants' thoughts and explore learners' beliefs and emotions (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009).

Additionally, exploratory research, which is "a methodological approach that is primarily concerned with discovery and with generating or building theory" (Jupp 2006, p.110), based on a qualitative approach is essential to shed light on this relatively unexplored field, enlighten learners' experiences, and provide potential opportunities for educators.

To gather data with the aim of answering the research questions (see 1.1.1 The Rationale of the Study), two separate 45-minute lessons were observed. The first one was a regular English lesson to detect the classroom dynamics and observe how the lessons usually tend to be, and the second one was an English lesson based on CLIL and translanguaging, created by the researcher and adopted by the teacher. Apart from observation, a pre-test was administered at the beginning of this lesson, and the same test was administered at the end in an attempt to identify improvement in the learners' skills related to the English subject. Moreover, semi-structured interviews with students were carried out to spot the extent to which intercultural awareness was raised. Thus, Figure 1 below shows the specific steps of data collection used in the research design.



**Figure 1: The steps of the data collection followed in the research**

## **Research Tools**

The methods of data collection chosen owing to their appropriateness for the cause were: observation, interviews, and pre-and post-tests.

### *Observation*

Observation is a fundamental method of getting information about how the participants interact with each other and what actions they carry out in the original setting, not only by watching them but also by listening to them in an attempt to comprehend them in depth (Sharp, 2012). In this way, data on exploring the members' actions and behaviors is selected.

In this study, the researcher observed the particular activities of the lessons as they were carried out and captured the different dynamics of the class by observing the extent to which learners were engaged in the learning process.

### *Interviews*

The interview is a significant data-gathering technique that entails verbal communication between the interviewer and the interviewee and permits the researcher to figure out what is happening in the subject's mind (Patton, 1990).

A semi-structured interview was conducted at the end of the CLIL translanguaging lesson which encouraged the learners to share their experiences, views, and feelings related to the lesson and it enabled the researcher to understand any noted progress in the development of intercultural awareness.

Given the fact that the researcher produced open-ended questions relying on students' answers, the unstructured element allowed the researcher to delve into intriguing issues that were raised, which offered new data, meanings, and interpretations of the given research topic (Galletta, 2012).

### *Pre-and post-tests*

A pre-test was handed out to all students at the beginning of the lesson, that is, before the researcher's intervention. The same test (post-test) was given after the completion of the lesson built on CLIL and using translanguaging as a resource.

The purpose of these tests was for the researcher to see if there had been any progress in the target language when learners used their native languages as supportive tools in their learning process.



## **Data collection**

Interviews, observation, and pre-and post-tests are the main methods used to collect data in this research. The collection of data was selected over two days and took place in four steps (see Research Design, Figure 1). In the first step, which refers to the design of a CLIL translanguaging lesson in an EFL class, data was not collected. The process of the actual data collection took place in the second, third, and fourth steps (see Research Design, Figure 1).

### **First Step: Developing a Translanguaging CLIL Lesson**

The design of the lesson relied on the principles of the MulDiLanguaging Framework which, by definition, serves as an educational tool relying on guidelines on how to produce a connection between the linguistic and cultural aspects in the context of language education in classrooms with a multicultural background (Griva & Papadopoulos, 2019). Based on the topic "Cultural Heritage", characteristics of Greek culture along with the immigrant learners' culture were presented, while learners were encouraged to utilize their native languages. Special emphasis was placed on enhancing learners' intercultural awareness and linguistic skills in an enjoyable and creative learning environment where cultural information was familiar and interpersonal characteristics were developed. The activities were designed to develop students' cognitive skills through problem-solving situations; communication through participating in presentations where learners use both English and their heritage languages and collaboration through group work. All these constitute characteristics of CLIL and the translanguaging process (Griva & Semoglou, 2013).

#### *Pre-stage*

The lesson was carried out in three phases. In the initial phase, the aim was to activate learners' previous knowledge (schemata) and introduce them to the topic and the tasks.

In pre-task activities, learners were introduced to the particular vocabulary of the topic and the content of the reading text given where they could mobilize their existing language resources in a multisensory learning environment. Hence, they were motivated to guess what the lesson would be about and took notes through videos and digital maps concerning the Acropolis and the Parthenon. The goddess Athena encouraged them to complete the tasks where they could say and write *Hello* in as many languages as they know and through a video to discover where she lives by writing the answer on a given sheet using English and their heritage languages. Thus, they practiced their oral and written skills and became familiar with the content-specific vocabulary.

#### *Main-stage*

The learners were asked to work in groups to process the material, in particular, to guess the meaning of the underlined words in the text so that greater exposure to the content and linguistic elements would be achieved. They were also encouraged to translate the

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words into their native languages, create a craft of the Parthenon and recite some facts about the monument. Attention was given to learning the target content vocabulary indirectly through a communicative task.

At the end, the members of each group presented their "product" in class, referring to the various aspects of it in English while using the Greek or Albanian language to linguistically support students who had difficulty understanding some details in English.

#### *Post-stage*

Learners were offered opportunities to consolidate the newly acquired knowledge related to the target content and language. They were encouraged to present pictures, posters, or crafts from other Greek or Albanian monuments in English. Learners with immigrant background could use Albanian to present their work. Greek was also used to support better understanding and clarify some aspects presented in English or Albanian. Moreover, students were encouraged to make comparisons between the Greek and Albanian cultures, organize their thoughts and use the three languages. Finally, each team created a slogan about cultures and the teacher asked them to reflect on it. The goal was for learners to realize that culturally different people can live in the same environment and maintain their cultural identity. These differences are what make life so fascinating. Students should embrace these differences and show respect and understanding towards their own and foreign cultures.

#### **Second Step: Classroom Observation**

The researcher observed a prior lesson developed by the teacher herself to gain a greater understanding of classroom dynamics. The class was informed about the researcher's presence in the classroom and her role while sitting unobtrusively in the back to avoid any disruption.

#### **Third Step: Observation of an English Lesson Based on CLIL and Translanguaging**

The researcher's next step was to observe the teacher carrying out the planned lesson based on CLIL and translanguaging created by the researcher and adopted by her. The researcher's role was more active as she was walking around the classroom observing learners while completing the pre-test and listening to group conversations while performing the tasks. The observations turned out to be quite useful for the fourth step: the interviews. At the end of the lesson, the students completed the post-test, and then answered some questions posed by the teacher.

#### **Fourth Step: Students' Interviews**

The goal of the interview was to select learners' experiences related to the lesson based on innovative approaches and explore if intercultural awareness was successfully

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### **Data Analysis**

The analysis of data arising from the interviews, observations, and pre-and post-tests was one of the most comprehensive processes in this survey. First, the researcher listened to the audiotapes several times and then transcribed them (Creswell, 2014). She read them in detail and tried to discover common threads. Likewise, the analysis of observation data followed the procedures conducted in the interview. The researcher kept some notes after the completion of each lesson. All the engaging issues are brought to light in the section that follows.

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This section presents the findings of the research. More specifically, the observation data, interviews with students, and pre-and post-test results are given.

#### **Observational Data of a Pre-Intervention Lesson**

The researcher sat at the back of the classroom and observed the English lesson. The class teacher conducted a lesson that was not related to the theme that was to be taught in the lesson built on CLIL and translanguaging. She encouraged them to work in groups. She distributed the worksheets after having given learners instructions both in English and Greek. In the end, she asked students to search for some information about Greek monuments and present them in English in the next lesson while using Greek as a supportive tool. She asked the Albanian students to gather information about Albanian historical sights and present them in Albanian and English while using Greek as a supportive tool.

An important observation of this lesson is the amount of attention-related behavior students exhibited. Their behavior varied, as some paid attention to the lesson by doing the tasks and others lost their interest quickly and started chatting. Some students were speaking without the teacher's permission, and one got up from his seat. As a result, the students who wanted to participate in the lesson got upset by the disturbers. The teacher spent some time restoring order.

#### **Observational Data of the lesson based on CLIL and Translanguaging Practices**

In contrast to the previous lesson, which was characterized by low levels of participation and attention, the learners now seemed to be more interested in

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK participating in the CLIL translanguaging lesson. The challenging behavior was replaced by excitement and a positive attitude toward the lesson.

In the pre-stage, the teacher distributed the pre-tests to the students, who seemed confused as they had not completed something similar before. She immediately tried to pacify them by informing them about the purpose of the test and assuring them all the answers would be acceptable. Consequently, a safe learning environment was created, and the learners willingly performed the test.

They were eager to work in groups formed by the teacher. In each group there was at least one Albanian student. Students appeared to happily communicate in English by using terms taught in the lesson like “masterpiece”, “ancient”, “statue” and whole sentences such as “The Parthenon was built to honor Goddess Athena”. Hence, all students consolidated the content and vocabulary taught in the lesson and also mastered using the article “the” in “the Parthenon”, and “the Acropolis”.

Moreover, when they had to write in three languages (English, Greek, and Albanian), for example, where Athena lives, some Greek students were wondering which language the third one was, while the Albanians were observed to joyfully and proudly reply it was Albanian. The Greek students enthusiastically repeated and learned the sentence uttered by the students who spoke Albanian. The latter seemed to be proud as they acted as teachers and it was they who taught something new to their other classmates.

In the previous lesson, the teacher assigned homework for Greek students to find information about Greek monuments and the Albanians Albanian monuments. Each group chose one monument to write about in three languages and present it in class. Finally, the teacher posed questions in Greek to allow learners to express themselves: “Is there any similarity or difference between the Greek and Albanian culture?” “How does the Albanian language sound to you? Is it easy to learn?” “Are you aware of your culture?” and “Are you really open to people coming from different cultures?”

Impressive answers for the researcher were: “We searched for information about Albania and realized that clothing, food like ‘tomato salad’ and music are similar to the Greeks’,” “Albania seems to be not as rich as Greece, but it has beautiful monuments like Greece,” “The statue in Skanderberg Square reminds me of the statue of Alexander the Great in the port of Thessaloniki,” “Maybe for Albanians Greek is also difficult,” “I like learning about other cultures and their history; everyone is special”.

The researcher realized that the learners had developed intercultural awareness because they realized the characteristics of their own culture and the others’ by making comparisons between the Greek and the Albanian culture. So, the teacher directly asked them how they felt about being able to draw comparisons between two cultures and they responded “pride and sensitivity toward the otherness”.

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**Pre-and Post-Tests**

Considering that these tests addressed a young audience, seven multiple-choice questions comprised the first part as they were easier to complete (Leung, 2006). The questions were of general content regarding Athens, what “acropolis” means, what the biggest ancient building in the Acropolis is etc. The second part consisted of an open-ended question to provide the participants with greater expression to state their views (Dörnyei, 2003), in which the students were asked to guide a friend from another country who will visit them in Greece this summer.

It should be noted that remarkable progress was made between the two measurements. As the pre-and post-tests reveal, the translanguaging CLIL lesson had a great impact on students’ knowledge of the cultural heritage and the target vocabulary. In particular, the correct answers to most questions (1, 2, 4, 5) of the post-test were more than twice the answers of the pre-test.

Questions	Pre-test: Number of correct answers (%)	Post-test: Number of correct answers (%)
Question1		13
	(40%)	(100%)
Question2	4	11
	(30%)	(85%)
Question3	10	13
	(75%)	(100%)
Question4	5	10
	(40%)	(75%)
Question5	4	11
	(30%)	(85%)
Question6	12	13
	(90%)	(100%)
Question7	13	13
	(100%)	(100%)

Table 1. Data of the learners’ responses in the pre-and post-tests

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Likewise, the findings of the open-ended question in the second part of the test (Table 2) show a significant difference between the pre-and post-tests concerning the length of the sentences and the wide vocabulary used. In contrast to the pre-tests where the students' answers were short and their vocabulary was limited, longer sentences and the content vocabulary acquired through translanguaging and CLIL practices were used.

<b>Some extracts from the learners' texts</b>	<b>Some extracts from the learners' texts</b>
<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> learner: <i>"We can visit Parthenon. It is a beautiful building."</i>	1 <sup>st</sup> learner: <i>"We can visit the Acropolis and its temples like the Parthenon. It was created in honor of the goddess Athena."</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> learner: <i>"I would take her to Acropolis. It is a famous sight in Greece."</i>	2 <sup>nd</sup> learner: <i>"I think that I would take her to the Parthenon in the Acropolis because it is a masterpiece of Ancient Greek architecture."</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> learner: <i>"I am happy. You will visit me this summer. We will go to Parthenon."</i>	3 <sup>rd</sup> learner: <i>"The Parthenon is a huge monument in Athens and we can go there. Phidias carved a gold and ivory statue of Athena there. Romans moved it and Greece wants it back"</i> .

Table 2. Data of the learners' scripts in the pre-and post-tests

## Interviews

The findings of the student interview data indicate that the CLIL translanguaging lesson had a great impact on the students' attitudes. The vast majority of the learners reported positive emotions regarding the lesson. They mainly liked participating in various creative activities involving three languages. Specifically, they said that "Learning English in that way was interesting, unique, and fun." When they were asked to specify what they thought was interesting, they referred to their active participation in cooperative tasks: "I liked working and making presentations in English and Albanian with my friends" Moreover, learners were attracted by the audiovisual material "The videos were playful and I easily answered the questions about the activities". It is noteworthy that when the Albanian students were asked how they felt in this lesson, they stated: "I felt different. Never used Albanian during a school lesson", "I felt like a teacher", "Even learned new Albanian words"

Concerning the extent to which intercultural awareness was achieved, the qualitative analysis of the student interview data revealed that the learners, beyond the cultural knowledge they obtained, significantly developed their intercultural awareness as well. They could spot the similarities between Albanian and Greek culture "Albania has its

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history and culture like Greece", "Both countries have similar music and food", "Albanians are hospitable like Greeks" as well as differences "Albanian is a difficult language", "Albanians are Muslims. Greeks are Orthodox." Furthermore, they developed sensitivity and empathy toward *otherness* "They are culturally different people, but this does not mean that we cannot be friends," "Before I say something, I should put myself in the others' shoes and try not to offend them."

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this section is to produce a fruitful discussion of the findings regarding the research questions and the hypothesis to give a comprehensive understanding of the research as a whole.

### **Discussion of the 1st Research Question**

"How do Greek students and learners with an immigrant background experience a translanguaging CLIL lesson in an EFL class?" the findings reveal that the learning process was deemed enjoyable by all the participants in the research. First, the multisensory learning environment created through authentic materials such as videos, stories, power-points, and paper crafts produced strong motivation for students to positively change their attitudes towards the English lesson. Any disruption in the classroom was replaced by excitement, happiness, and eagerness to participate in the activities. This observational data is in line with a survey conducted with secondary CLIL students from various countries (Bentley & Phillips, 2007), where students were in favour of learning English in a CLIL lesson because they constructively learned subject content through pictures, diagrams, the use of computers, and their friends. As a result, the current CLIL lesson gave students multiple opportunities to use the target language spontaneously because the teacher had created a relaxed environment so that students could unconsciously learn English through content.

Undoubtedly, the learners' native languages applied in the lesson constituted a key factor in enabling young students to hold a positive attitude towards the implementation of such a lesson too. The students with an Albanian background were encouraged to share their linguistic repertoire and felt more included in the classroom. Greek students who were not well-acquainted with diversity came across a new linguistic identity and familiarized themselves with the Albanian culture. Moreover, Greek students developed their English competence by using Greek as a supportive tool and cooperating with their classmates in various tasks using languages such as English, Greek, and Albanian. Consequently, according to what learners reported, a safe conclusion to draw is that their self-confidence was increased, and students' relationships were empowered.

These outcomes are in line with the findings provided by Lightbrown and Spada (2021), and Arthur and Martin (2006), who supported that such inclusive multilingual practices

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increase students' involvement in in-class activities and build strong relationships among students, with long-lasting implications for their academic and social growth.

### **Discussion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Research Question**

"Do Greek students and learners with an immigrant background who are involved in a translanguaging CLIL lesson show progress in English learning by using their native languages as supportive tools?", the data clearly illustrates that students' performance in the target language was high. Concerning language competence, the translanguaging CLIL lesson provided students with opportunities to improve their writing skills and sub-skills such as production, variety of vocabulary, and a more complex syntax. In contrast to the pre-test, where students' answers were short with limited vocabulary, resulting from the students' post-tests, they used a wider range of content vocabulary, acquired through the communicative activities, and their L1 was used as a supportive tool in their learning process. Moreover, they used longer sentences and correct spelling and grammar. For example, they became aware of the definite article "the" before historical monuments such as "*The Parthenon*."

These findings are consistent with previous studies (Jexenflicker & Dalton Puffer, 2010, in Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010; Maillat, 2010), indicating that students who participated in CLIL lessons achieved better scores in the target language in opposition to those who received the traditional method of instruction and teaching. Furthermore, studies (Morales et al., 2020) on translanguaging showed that such practices enhance learners' well-being as all the languages are confirmed as equal and offer students' motivation to participate more in the target language and achieve better results.

### **Discussion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Research Question**

"Do Greek students and learners with an immigrant background who are involved in a translanguaging CLIL lesson develop intercultural awareness?" Clearly, all students engaged in the lesson based on translanguaging and CLIL practices increased their intercultural communication awareness. Data from the interviews revealed, the learners came into contact with the Greek and Albanian culture and could spot similarities and differences between them regarding their history, traditions, language, and religion. They acquired knowledge of daily life in different cultural contexts and seemed to respect and comprehend people of other cultures. Furthermore, they realized that people from different cultures and languages can co-exist in an educational setting and subsequently in society at large. Hence, intercultural awareness was raised to a higher level through these innovative practices. These findings are consistent with those of Csillik and Golubeva (2019), who applied translanguaging practices at a preschool in the USA and observed that the young learners gained cross-cultural knowledge and developed intercultural awareness through playful activities and emerging students' linguistic repertoires.



## **Discussion of Hypothesis**

The results of this study confirm the initial hypothesis that the EFL class is the ideal *topos for* developing multicultural and intercultural awareness as well as developing significant values such as tolerance, respect, and understanding toward their own and other cultures. English has gained momentum in many educational settings as it is a lingua franca, or common language, which can connect students from different linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. Once again, the findings imply that learners through CLIL and translanguaging practices in an English lesson can not only improve their English skills by using all their linguistic repertoires, as the post-tests indicate (see 4.3), but they can also be interculturally sensitive as indicated by the interviews: by utilizing three languages, English, Greek, and Albanian, the students could interact with each other in three languages, make comparisons between the Greek and Albanian cultures by using mainly English, and show empathy toward ‘otherness’ by raising multicultural and intercultural awareness.

## **Implications to Research and Practice**

The results of this study can contribute to the field of school and highlight the significance of using multicultural practices such as CLIL and translanguaging in the constantly changing Greek educational environment. It is the first of its kind to examine the experiences of Greek language learners in an EFL setting that includes CLIL and translanguaging and uses three languages, specifically English, Greek, and Albanian, to develop learners' intercultural awareness as well as particular language learning characteristics.

The findings indicate that a) students experienced the translanguaging CLIL lesson enthusiastically, b) developed content knowledge related to the history subject, c) enhanced their linguistic skills in English by making use of their native languages as supportive tools for their learning, and d) developed intercultural awareness and favored an opening toward different cultures. These findings correspond with the CEFR (2020) where English should strengthen bonds among people of different cultures and encourage students to share their opinions on various subjects in a multilingual setting.

Therefore, the study may inspire teachers to implement such effective multilingual approaches in the EFL class or help educators to reflect on their teaching methods, revise their views on foreign language education, and improve them. They may be aware of how important it might be for learners to feel safe in a learning environment that draws on their cultural and linguistic background to help them improve their English language skills. They might view English as a means of intercultural exchange and as a language that unites people everywhere.

## **CONCLUSION**

Increased mobility of immigrants and refugees worldwide has contributed to the creation of culturally diverse societies and has thus rendered intercultural education a

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key tool to help learners become aware of cultural differences. CLIL, along with translanguaging practices, are effective pedagogical approaches that can instill values such as cultural sensitivity, awareness, understanding, appreciation openness, and respect.

The participants of this study experienced the translanguaging CLIL lesson favorably as they were engaged in interactive and communicative activities using three languages, namely, English, Greek, and Albanian. Students obtained content knowledge of the subject of history in a developmental and strategic manner, and improved their linguistic skills in English by using all their linguistic resources as supportive tools for their learning. Moreover, they consciously interacted with other cultures since they were expressed either orally by repeating new words in other languages or in writing by producing translingual texts. Thus, the classroom turned out to be a safe place where all learners' languages were welcome and intercultural awareness could be raised (Wei, 2011).

Given the fact that there is no other research in the Greek context that explores students' experiences in a translanguaging CLIL lesson by incorporating three languages, it is hoped that this study has created a fertile ground for further investigation of the cognitive, constructive, and affective benefits of CLIL and translanguaging in education.

### **Further Research**

Suggestions for further research stem from this study. Firstly, more translanguaging CLIL projects should be launched on a wider population and for a longer time to find out if students' English skills will be developed further along with getting more sensitive to cultural issues. Moreover, steps should be taken to improve the existing curricula by providing examples of effective practices from materials applied in multicultural educational contexts. For example, various translanguaging CLIL lesson plans can be suggested so that teachers can either adapt or adjust them to their students' needs in a multicultural learning environment. This suggestion may prove quite beneficial for teachers, as they will feel more comfortable and secure in applying such innovative practices in their teaching context. In addition, teachers should be offered training programs and practical seminars to be better equipped for teaching in culturally and linguistically diverse environments.

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