

# CLIL: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Implementation in the Croatian Environment

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Gućec, Valentina

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**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU  
UČITELJSKI FAKULTET  
ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE**

**VALENTINA GUČEC  
DIPLOMSKI RAD**

**CLIL: THE ADVANTAGES AND  
DISADVANTAGES OF  
IMPLEMENTATION IN THE  
CROATIAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Zagreb, srpanj 2019.**

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**UČITELJSKI FAKULTET  
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(Zagreb)**

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**Ime i prezime pristupnika: Valentina Guček**

**TEMA DIPLOMSKOG RADA: CLIL: The Advantages and  
Disadvantages of Implementation in the Croatian Environment**

**MENTOR: doc. dr. sc. Ivana Cindrić**

## CONTENTS

SAŽETAK.....	1
SUMMARY .....	2
1 INTRODUCTION.....	3
2 CLIL .....	4
2.1 INTRODUCTION TO CLIL .....	4
2.2 CLIL IN EUROPE .....	7
2.3 CLIL, CONTENT BASED-LANGUAGE TEACHING (CBLT) AND IMMERSION .....	8
2.4 CLIL IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AUSTRIA .....	10
2.5 CLIL IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CROATIA.....	11
2.6 CLIL TEACHERS .....	13
2.7 BENEFITS OF CLIL.....	15
3 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION .....	16
4 METHODOLOGY.....	17
4.1 PARTICIPANTS .....	17
4.2 INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURE.....	17
4.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	20
5 CONCLUSION .....	25
6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....	26
REFERENCES.....	27
IZJAVA O SAMOSTALNOJ IZRADI RADA.....	30

*Zahvaljujem učiteljici iz Graza koja me svojim primjerom i načinom rada te korištenjem engleskog jezika u nastavi potaknula na dublje proučavanje ove teme te je samim time dijelom zaslužna za ideju ovog diplomskog rada. Zahvaljujem učiteljici iz Zagreba koja je bila dovoljno hrabra pripremiti i iznijeti sat na potpuno nepoznat način, bez nje i njenih učenika ovaj rad ne bi bilo moguće napisati.*

*Veliko hvala mentorici, doc. dr. sc. Ivani Cindrić, na pomoći u izradi diplomskog rada.*

*Zahvaljujem svojim dragim prijateljima, posebno Luciji i Petri, koji su mi velika podrška u životu.*

*Zahvaljujem Domagoju na konstruktivnim razgovorima, strpljenju, motivaciji i puno ljubavi.*

*Na kraju, zahvaljujem svojoj obitelji na potpori i razumijevanju te im posvećujem ovaj rad.*



## SAŽETAK

‘Nema sumnje da je biti obrazovan kroz jezik kojeg se uči najbolje iskustvo stvarnog korištenja jezika kojeg škola može pružiti.’ (Halliwell, 1992, str. 140). Nedavno su se pojavili mnogi pristupi učenju i poučavanju stranog jezika koji podržavaju navedenu tezu, te su u centru pažnje u području obrazovanja. Jedan od njih je i CLIL (Integrirano učenje sadržaja i jezika), koji je tema ovog rada.

Pristup podrazumijeva prirodno učenje jezika koristeći ga kao medij za prenošenje sadržaja učenicima. U ovom radu, strani jezik koji se istražuje je engleski. Naglasak je na primjeni ovog relativno novog načina poučavanja u austrijskim i hrvatskim osnovnim školama. Uzimajući u obzir činjenicu da je ovo istraživanje provedeno u osnovnim školama, rad se fokusira na rano učenje stranog jezika i način na kojeg mladi učenici reagiraju na takav način učenja jezika. Cilj istraživanja je bio istražiti prednosti i nedostatke CLIL pristupa promatrajući dva CLIL sata, jedan u Austriji i jedan u Hrvatskoj.

Rad, kojeg je provela autorica rada, je istraživanje promatranjem u kojem su dva CLIL sata paralelno opisana i uspoređena.

Rezultati pokazuju da su CLIL nastavni sati zanimljivi i izazovni za učenike i učitelje. I jedni i drugi su dobro reagirali, nije bilo jezičnih problema niti problema s pripremom za takav način poučavanja stranog jezika. Učenici su bili izrazito motivirani i uživali su u satu, pogotovo hrvatski učenici, koji nisu navikli učiti jezik na takav način. Međutim, nastavni sat u Hrvatskoj je bio CLIL jezični sat, a ne predmetni CLIL sat, jer je naglasak bio na učenju jezika.

Glavni zaključak ovog rada je da bi se CLIL pristupu poučavanja trebalo posvetiti više pažnje u Hrvatskoj i da bi trebao biti sastavni dio učenja i poučavanja stranog jezika u Hrvatskoj u obliku CLIL jezičnih nastavnih sati.

Ključne riječi: CLIL, osnovna škola, učenje stranog jezika, engleski kao strani jezik

## **SUMMARY**

‘There is little doubt that being educated through the medium of the language you are learning is the best experience of real use of that language that schools can provide.’ (Halliwell, 1992, p. 140). Many approaches to foreign language learning, which support that statement, have emerged recently and have been in focus in the field of education. One of them is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), which is the focus of this thesis.

It implies learning the language naturally while using it as a medium to transfer the content to the pupils. In this thesis, the foreign language in focus is English. It also focuses on an implementation of this relatively new way of teaching in Austrian and Croatian primary schools. Considering the fact that the research was conducted in primary schools, this thesis focused early learning of foreign languages and the way young learners react to that way of foreign language learning. The aim of this study was to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of CLIL approach during two lessons, one in Austria and one in Croatia.

The study, conducted by the author, is an observational research in which two CLIL lessons are parallelly described and compared.

The findings indicate that CLIL lessons are more interesting and challenging for both teacher and pupils. Both reacted well, there were no language problems nor problems with the preparation for that kind of a lesson. The pupils were highly motivated and enjoyed the lessons, especially the Croatian pupils, who are not used to learning that content in their language lessons. However, Croatian lesson was more of a CLIL language lesson because the focus was more on the language.

The main conclusion of the study is that CLIL approach should be given more attention in Croatia and that it should be included into foreign language learning in Croatia as CLIL language lessons.

Key words: CLIL, primary school, foreign language learning, English as a foreign language

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Everything in the world today is constantly and rapidly changing. Every field of human interest is evolving more and more and new discoveries are made on a daily basis. The field of education hasn't been left behind. 'Education in a language which is not the first language of the learner is as old as education itself.' (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010, p. 6), so it is not surprising to see how rapidly the area of foreign language teaching and learning is growing. It is well known that speaking a language other than a mother tongue has many benefits, raises intercultural awareness and finally, makes those people citizens of the world. Globalization made it necessary for people to start learning languages other than their mother tongue, which helps with communicating and functioning in a society. Governments of the countries are aware of that trend and they have started taking measures to change the status of foreign language learning in their countries. Eurydice (2006) gives a Canadian example of immersion teaching, in the province of Quebec, where English-speaking families realized that their children need to become fluent in French in order to have better opportunities for employment when they grow up. If we take Europe as an example, high percentage of countries have signed documents that state that children should be learning the minimum of two foreign language from their early age, alongside with their mother tongue, to support the objective that European citizen should possess language skills in at least those three languages (Coyle et al., 2010). This research focuses on English language as a foreign language. Coyle et al. (2010) talk about examples from Basque Country in Spain and Qatar, where children are being taught at least three languages, one of them being English. English is not a language which they speak at home, but it has been recognized as a must-known language for future work and better opportunities. There are many more examples like the previously mentioned one, which shows that there is a lot of focus on how to successfully implement English into educational systems and how to teach it outside established, traditional language lessons. Many different kinds of approaches to teaching a foreign language have risen from that concern, and one of them is CLIL, which stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning. It can refer to any language, age or educational level and by that, it fits within the EU lifelong learning programme (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2011). It is the main topic of this research, alongside with its implementation in two different educational systems – Austrian and Croatian.

## 2 CLIL

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION TO CLIL

There are many definitions of what CLIL is. Perhaps the most popular one was given by Coyle et al. (2010, p. 1):

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content *and* language. That is, in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content, and not only on language. Each is interwoven, even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time.

Or another one by Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff and Frigols Martín (2010, p. 1) which says that ‘CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of content and language with the objective of promoting both content and language mastery to predefined levels.’ Basically, it combines language and content learning in order to present to content through the medium of a foreign language. Dale and Tanner (2012) use a term ‘interwovenness’ to explain CLIL. ‘As a CLIL subject teacher, you interweave language into your lessons; and as a CLIL language teacher, you interweave the subject into your language lessons.’ (Dale & Tanner, 2012). Dalton-Puffer, Nikula and Smit (2010) say that that kind of an education is something rather old, but that CLIL itself is a ‘relatively recent trend’. Deller and Price (2007) talk about an event dating many years back into history, when Greek territory was conquered by the Roman Empire. The Roman families wanted to educate their children in Greek so that they could have better opportunities in the future, especially concerning communities that spoke Greek. This example shows us that that kind of an education was originally used in ‘bilingual or border areas’ (Ioannou-Georgiou & Pavlou, 2011). The term exists from 1994, when Marsh, Maljers and Hartiala (2001) came up with it. They wanted to make an ‘umbrella term’ (Eurydice, 2006) that would gather many different terms which have in common using a foreign language as a medium of learning. Gruber (2017) created a figure which explains the basic principles of CLIL and other terms which have some similarities

with it because all of those refer to foreign language teaching, but also have some major differences (Gruber, 2017).

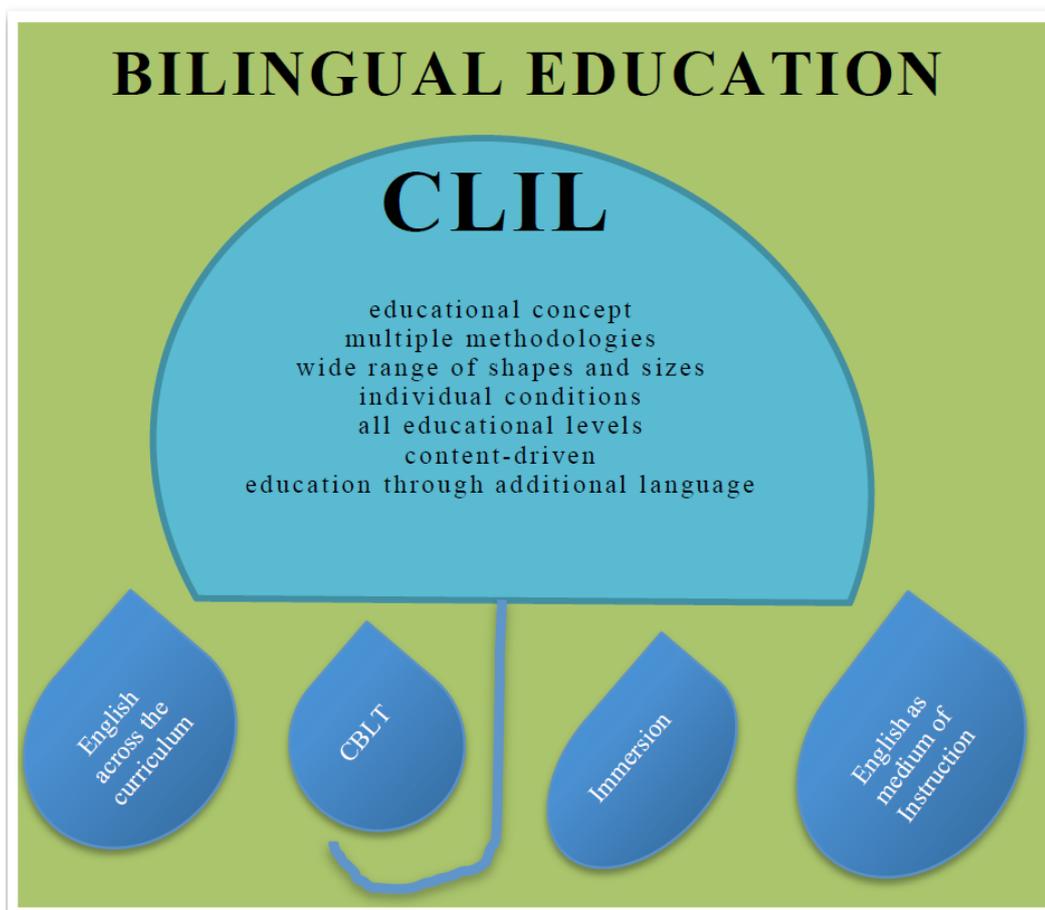


Figure 1. *The CLIL umbrella.* (Gruber, 2017, p. 13).

Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2011) explain how CLIL's popularity is rapidly increasing and that leads to its adaptation within various contexts, which makes it very flexible. They concluded that it needs to be more precisely defined as a term but also as the specific implementations within various educational systems.

The modern age of foreign language learning and teaching brought certain expectations, and CLIL appeared as a response to it when the subject is foreign language learning. It is not a typical language learning method because the language is neither a subject nor something the pupils interact about (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010), but rather what they interact with, so it differs from what is traditionally seen as

language learning. One of the CLIL's key points is that the language is acquired, which means it is learned naturally. Coyle et al. (2010) say that children function well in a classroom where foreign language is 'integrated into other types of learning'. That kind of learning steps away from traditional learning from textbooks, using topics that are not meaningful for the children only for the sake of teaching a language. Dalton-Puffer et al. (2010) mention that CLIL classrooms are a kind of a *language bath* in which 'the learner is pictured as being surrounded by the foreign-language bathwater which somehow stimulates the individual learning process much like hot water in a tub stimulates dermal circulation'.

A very important thing about CLIL is the 4C's Framework. Coyle et al. (2010) explain it as 'content (subject matter), communication (language learning and using), cognition (learning and thinking processes) and culture (developing intercultural understanding and global citizenship).' Content is a base of every kind of CLIL approach, but the focus is not just on giving knowledge to pupils but rather on them thinking about it, discovering and learning in their own individual way, which is the cognition part of the whole process. 'CLIL is not about the transfer of knowledge from an expert to a novice. CLIL is about allowing individuals to construct their own understandings and being challenged.' (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 34). Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2011) state that there is much more to CLIL than just better language skills and knowledge of the content. Content is learned through language, but also vice versa.

It is clear that in CLIL lessons language is not the designated topic of in-class interaction, but at the same time there must be language-related goals to the enterprise alongside the content-subject related ones or else what would be the point of doing CLIL at all?

(Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010, p. 23)

In a CLIL lesson, there might be a problem of a lower level of language knowledge in comparison with the pupils' cognitive level (Coyle et al., 2010). If we take the first grade of primary school as an example, then it is clear that teaching a CLIL science lesson is almost impossible, as they are just starting to learn numbers and colours in their language lessons. It is easy to conclude that lower grades give fewer opportunities

for a successful CLIL lessons than the higher ones, but it is up to teacher to figure out how to implement CLIL even from the first year of learning a foreign language. ‘Ensuring that learners will be cognitively challenged yet linguistically supported to enable new dialogic learning to take place requires strategic and principled planning.’ (Coyle et al., 2010). CLIL teachers who are language teachers will probably be aware of those possible difficulties and will know how to solve them, but content teachers will have to be very careful about that.

Motivation is also frequently mentioned when talking about CLIL. The learner can have low motivation towards the content but high motivation towards the language lessons or vice versa, so combining those two can mean increased level of motivation toward the less liked subject. Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2011) talk about a synergy in CLIL lessons that arises from combining language learning which is communication oriented, the content and the interaction in the classroom, which results in learners’ increased motivation.

## **2.2 CLIL IN EUROPE**

A European Union of more than 27 nation states has no other choice but to be multilingual. Its language policy speaks very clearly:

The European Union actively encourages its citizens to learn other European languages, both for reasons of professional and personal mobility within its single market, and as a force for cross-cultural contacts and mutual understanding. [...] The ability to understand and communicate in more than one language [...] is a desirable life-skill for all European citizens. Learning and speaking other languages [...] improves cognitive skills and strengthens learners’ mother tongue skills; it enables us to take advantage of the freedom to work or study in another Member State.

(European Commission, 2008, Chapter 14)

In 2003, the European Commission gave a recommendation that CLIL “has a major contribution to make to the Union’s language learning goals” (European Commission Communication, 2003, p. 8). Since then, many European countries have taken that

opinion into account and started with that practice in their educational systems in many different ways (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010). It is important to note that CLIL language is not always English, although this language is the most wide-spread in Europe. Coyle et al. (2010) mention CLIL in UK where promoted languages are French, Spanish and German, while Gruber (2017) mentions some acronyms around the world which are similar to CLIL, such as EMILE (French), AICLE (Spanish), CLILiG (German) or CLIL LOTE (Languages Other Than English).

### **2.3 CLIL, CONTENT BASED-LANGUAGE TEACHING (CBLT) AND IMMERSION**

As explained by Dale and Tanner (2012), although content is an important part of whole CLIL philosophy, it is not to be mixed with content-based language teaching (CBLT); which is a whole different term. CBLT<sup>1</sup> focuses solely on the content being taught in language lessons while CLIL implies both content and language. Eurydice (2006) describes it as a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language. This implies a more integrated approach to both teaching and learning, requiring that teachers should devote special attention not just to how languages should be taught, but to the educational process in general. Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2011) say that CLIL simply cannot be seen as a part of any of these language methods because ‘It is neither purely language teaching nor purely content teaching, nor is it immersion education.’ Immersion is also very different from CLIL. Immersion means that there is no focus on a language whatsoever because all the subjects are being taught in another language, and good examples for that are the international schools (Dale and Tanner, 2010). Perhaps the most popular immersion example is the already mentioned French example in Canada that emerged in 1960s, which received so much support that it eventually led to two official languages in Canada, English and French (Coyle et al., 2010). Dale and Tanner (2012) differentiate between some of the key points considering each of those three approaches. Starting with the most obvious one, the teacher, in CBLT and CLIL language lessons those are language teachers, while in CLIL subject lessons and immersion the teachers are subject teachers. CBLT teachers teach language through content, CLIL language teachers teach general language while

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<sup>1</sup> CBLT stands for content-based language teaching.

teaching topics from the subject, CLIL subject teachers teach the language of their subject while immersion is not that concerned with the language because all lessons are taught in a foreign language. The aim of CBLT and CLIL language lessons is to teach language, CLIL subject lessons aim to teach both while immersion focuses solely on the content. CBLT lessons deal with topics that are not part of the curricula, CLIL language and subject lessons follow both the subject and language curriculum and immersion follows only the subject curriculum. If kind of a knowledge those approaches refer to comes into a spotlight, Dale and Tanner (2012) characterize them as CBLT being a kind of an approach which refers to the language knowledge. CLIL language lessons refer knowledge of a subject, CLIL lessons refer to the subject knowledge and knowledge about the language connected with their subject and immersion refers to the content knowledge. As the last difference between them, Dale and Tanner (2012) analysed their attitudes towards learning. In CBLT, the language is learned through content topics, in both CLIL lessons (the subject and the language ones) the content and the language depend on each other, while immersion implies teaching the content without any attention to the language at all. As CLIL is the main topic of this research, close attention must be given to its principles. Coyle (2010) has differentiated between three types of language use in CLIL, which are language of learning, language for learning and language through learning. Coyle et al. (2010) refer to it as the 'language triptych', which gives priority to language acquisition over language learning. However, it can be concluded that in some points it is not easy to determine the real difference between the mentioned approaches, even in theory and especially in practice. Dale and Tanner (2012) visualise those approaches as a continuum, where CLIL can be placed somewhere in between the very content-oriented immersion approach and CBLT which uses the content for the purpose of learning a foreign language. Gruber (2017) also draws conclusions on the basic differences between these aspects. She gives an example of commonly used content-based teaching topic from European English textbooks such as animals or family, which are often sorted under the category of CLIL and concludes that, while both approaches do use content-focused topic, language teachers in CBLT lessons do not enrich pupils' knowledge on the subject matter. What immersion and CLIL have in common is that both approaches focus on fluency and not accuracy of the foreign language. As the main difference, however, Gruber (2017) indicates the time factor.

The goal of immersion is using the foreign language more than 50% of the school day, while CLIL is implemented into one to two school subjects per day.

## **2.4 CLIL IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN AUSTRIA**

Austria is a country where English is used ‘as a foreign language for international communication’ (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010, p. 3). Therefore, it is not surprising that a large percentage of pupils in Austria learn a foreign language in primary schools and most of them learn English. It is integrated into the curriculum and taught in a cross – curricular way, which implies using English in compulsory subjects like Maths, Science, Art, Music and Physical Education. In Austria, CLIL is known as ‘Englisch als Arbeitssprache<sup>2</sup>’ (EAA), which means that English is being used in a range of situations connected to bilingual education, mostly in various projects. Language is used as a tool to teach content, which means that learning of content and foreign language is happening at the same time (Abuja, 2007). It is used in schools all over Austria, and when CLIL is used in more than 50% of subjects, the school is called a bilingual school. For CLIL to be able to function in an educational system, teacher training is very important. Until 2015, teacher training in Austria there was a three-year pre-service teacher education programme which included gaining 180 ECTS. Then, a new four-year teacher training collage (‘Pädagogische Akademie’) began, which required gaining 240 ECTS. Trainees receive training in all of the obligatory courses as well as a compulsory training in foreign language. Most programmes provide CLIL courses within the framework of methodology courses, so no additional formal qualifications are needed. ‘Since the obligatory implementation of ‘foreign languages from Form 1 of lower primary school with a cross-curricular approach’, initial teacher training has included eight hours of language training with the main emphasis on appropriate methodologies and enhancement of student teachers’ oral language skills.’ (Abuja, 2007, p. 19). This kind of education leads to teachers being able to teach all subjects including a foreign language. Although, it needs to be pointed out that foreign language learning plays a minimal role, as only eight ECTS are devoted to it. Primary school teachers need to possess a range of tools and acquire various techniques to be able to implement CLIL into their teaching. Gruber (2015)

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<sup>2</sup> ‘English as a Working Language’

concludes that CLIL is not implemented enough in Austria at the primary level because teachers often do not have language skills at a level high enough to use foreign language in multiple subjects. Gruber (2015) also points out that it is not enough to have A level skills to teach CLIL properly and that teachers must have an opportunity to cooperate with their colleagues, share material and improve their language skills. Dalton-Puffer et al. (2010) state that the real position of using English as a language of instructions is not completely defined, which is defined as something not typical for the Austrian educational system in general. That meant that it was up to individual schools and teachers to experiment with CLIL and start using it in any way possible, be it through the whole year or a shorter period of time. Dalton-Puffer et al. (2010) describe the overall atmosphere concerning CLIL positive but they also point out that the teachers are not given enough support when facing some problems, such as language, content, materials etc. Despite putting a lot of effort into it, their pays are not higher, their teaching hours have not been reduced. Some even argue that the whole concept of CLIL has been integrated too fast, having teachers who have not been qualified enough for the task as a result (Gruber, 2015). Deller and Price (2010) also suggest that CLIL came so fast that there was not enough time to prepare teacher adequately for the task of delivering it.

CLIL in Austria is something that is well-known and is integrated into the educational system. However, there are many aspects that can be improved, for example setting clearer boundaries, but, according to Gruber (2015), teacher training should be a priority.

## **2.5 CLIL IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CROATIA**

The Croatian National Curriculum (2016) states that there are seven core subjects: Croatian language, Mathematics, Science, Art, Music, Physical Education and Foreign language. Besides those obligatory subjects, there is also an elective one, which is Religion. From the academic year of 2003/2004, it became obligatory to learn a foreign language in the Croatian primary schools (MZOŠ, 2006). “as of 1 August 2003, it starts in the first grade of primary education and is compulsory for all learners. In the fourth grade, learners have the opportunity to choose a second foreign language as an optional subject.” (Buljan Culej, 2014, pp. 40-41). The most commonly offered languages in schools were English and German, although some schools offered Italian

and French as well. Still, the majority of foreign language lessons are English. Bilingual education exists in few secondary schools: The XVIII. Grammar School in Zagreb, the X. Grammar School Ivan Supek, the IV. Grammar School in Zagreb, the XVI. Grammar School in Zagreb. However, not much information is available on CLIL in Croatia since it is still very much unrepresented in both primary and secondary schools, and it is usually more common in private than in public schools. In the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County the only school to introduce CLIL is the private secondary school Andrija Ljudevit Adamić. CLIL was introduced in the school as a part of the EU project „Multilingual education – improving language learning and intercultural skills whose goal is to introduce bilingual teaching. Students have CLIL lessons in English, German and Italian. The subjects that are partly taught in English, German or Italian are Psychology, History, ICT, Politics, Geography, Ethics and Music art. Teachers attended seminars and workshops led by the CLIL experts. The content teachers attended English lessons to improve their language skills. They also attended teacher training seminars during which they were introduced to CLIL methodology and how to teach the curriculum in the foreign language. No data on challenges or benefits the teachers encountered is available on the Internet pages. Foreign language teachers in Croatia can be educated at two different faculties – The Faculty of Teacher Education or The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The teacher that graduate from Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate Primary Teacher Education Programme and the English Language Study at The Faculty of Teacher Education are trained to be a lower primary school class teacher, which means they teach every subject other than a foreign language and a religious subject, but some of them can teach a foreign language as well, English or German, if they have opted for that programme of study. That programme ‘offers a balanced ratio of theoretical and practical courses and make us of all the possibilities to apply theory to practical teaching’ (Bilić-Štefan, Cindrić, Andraka, p. 56). That means that some, but not all of them, are both language and class teachers, but can never work on both positions at the same time. Teachers who graduated from The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences can teach only foreign language, both in primary and secondary schools, but they cannot get employed as class teachers because they were not trained for that. That was a very important part of this chapters because it shows that, unlike in Austria, language and class teacher is not the same. English teachers who graduate from The Faculty of Teacher Education were obliged to attend many young learner-oriented

courses during their studies, but only one dealt with integrated learning which had an aim to capacitate future teachers to organize and conduct a language lesson with the content from other subjects. However, a lot of courses dealt with ELT methodology, such as Creative Teaching Activities 1 & 2, Introduction to ELT Methodology, Teaching English to Young Learners, Culture in Teaching Young Learners, Assessment in ELT, Classroom Practice and Teaching Practice Courses. The question arises if that is enough to make skilled CLIL teachers. That one specialised CLIL course, is, however, still one more than what language teachers graduated from The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences take because courses they take are more language specialised and are even less primary school oriented, although they do attend some methodology courses, too. Overall, both lack in practical courses, especially with integrated learning classes, which would be the best way to see how it really functions. This all leads to the conclusion that CLIL has not been recognized in Croatia to the extent it is in other European countries.

## **2.6 CLIL TEACHERS**

The success of the whole CLIL method and of a particular CLIL lesson depends to a great extent on the teachers. That is why many authors who are interested in CLIL topics have been investing a lot of their thoughts into the question of the teachers who became the medium of presenting that kind of teaching method to the world. Deller and Price (2007) present two types of teachers that can be involved in CLIL: English teachers and subject teachers. English teachers find themselves in a situation where they have to present the subject matter to the pupils. Depending on the country and different teacher training and education systems, some of them may have studied subjects other than English, but many of them haven't. Although those who have studied other subjects, for example some of the English teachers in Croatia who graduated from the Faculty of Teacher Education, may be more familiar with the content, if they have been working as a language teacher for a longer period of time, the question is are they really 'up-to-date with the current syllabus.' (Deller & Price, 2007, p. 15). Those teachers who have studied just language find themselves in a position where they know very little about the content of a subject. Subject teachers, although having the knowledge of a subject matter, can face some serious problems in terms of lacking experience and confidence when using English to teach. Some of

them may even have problems with the language, in terms of not being able to express themselves correctly but also having problems with ‘giving input through another language, or helping their students with the language’ which ‘certainly affects their confidence as well as their ability’ (Deller & Price, 2007, p. 16).

It is obvious that teaching a subject in a foreign language is not the same as an integration of language and content ... Language teachers and subject teachers need to work together ... [to] formulate the new didactics needed for a real integration of form and function in language teaching.

(de Bot, 2002, p. 32)

It is obvious that it is not just about learning the language if you are a subject teacher and learning the subject if you are a language teacher, there is much more that needs to be done. Coyle et al. (2010) talk about teachers’ cooperation. CLIL unites teachers who are professionals in different fields of education. For the shift in learning and teaching to happen, they have to work together and be supportive of each other, but receive enough support as well. Coyle et al. (2010) mention that recently there has been a growth in number of CLIL teacher education programmes, but they point out the need for the specific types of programmes. They should be international, based on available research on CLIL topic, available online but also classes that would be held in person, gathering language teachers and language teacher and everyone else who could be involved in the process, encouraging them to become more skilled in an area in which they are not experts. Coyle et al. (2010) confirm that CLIL teacher education is starting to change in a positive way, paying attention to the things that are important for them to know in order to become a fully skilled CLIL teacher. They gave an example of CLIL science teachers, who should be encouraged to develop their language skills in order to be able to use it as a medium in their lessons, but, even more importantly, they should get a deep insight into how learning through a language other than a mother tongue influences on the whole process of learning science.

Factors such as these require teachers to move out of a traditional ‘comfort zone’ and enter into a more complex and less secure space, which has implications for teacher confidence and can lead to teachers feeling anxious in their new role.

(Coyle et al, 2010, p. 91)

That is why the goal is not only to make sure there are new CLIL classes but to assure their quality as well. Coyle et al. (2010) give example from Netherlands, where inspection teams visit schools to see if they have satisfied all the needed standards and, if they have, they become recognized CLIL schools at a national level.

## **2.7 BENEFITS OF CLIL**

Dale and Tanner (2012) name many benefits of CLIL. The fact that by 2004 more than 70% of the state members of the European Union implemented CLIL in some way in their education (Eurydice, 2006). As already mentioned, those ways were very different, but a positive thing of recognizing CLIL started to happen. The ones that will benefit the most from this kind of an approach are, of course, the pupils, but there are benefits for the teachers and schools as well. CLIL learners are highly motivated. The learning feeling is changed in a positive way because a great component of every learning process has been altered – the component of the language. The feeling of learning new words, new expressions and new ways how to say something while simultaneously learning about something meaningful and life-related can develop a strong sense of achievement among the pupils. They get to understand and communicate about wider range of topics, topics that are to some extent familiar to them and they can build on their previous knowledge. In that way, both content and the language become much more relevant to them because they can find sense in what they are learning. CLIL learners receive realistic input but also activate (understand) it using visual and audio aids such as pictures and CDs. Their interactions are meaningful because they do not concentrate on the grammar of the language but on the meaning of the content they are learning. They develop intercultural awareness because they explore various topics from various subjects, but they can also communicate with learners in different cultures through different projects. Teachers and schools also benefit from the process of dealing with CLIL practice. Teachers and whole school can think about approach to languages taught in that school and, consequently, some major changes in teaching foreign languages may happen. Language teachers are exposed to new topics, which changes their usual scope of topics they teach in language lessons, while subject teacher get the opportunity to improve their language skills while at the same time learning about their subject from

a language perspective. It also brings language and subject teacher together because their cooperation is essential for a good CLIL language lesson and CLIL subject lesson.

### **3 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION**

The general aim of the present research was to gain insight into positive and possible negative sides of implementing CLIL into one of the compulsory subjects in one Austrian primary school in Graz and in one Croatian school in Zagreb. As already mentioned in this thesis, Austrian primary school teachers mostly teach English language alongside all other subjects, so there are not any mayor barriers of conduction some CLIL lessons from time to time. The case is different in Croatia. As already mentioned in Chapter 2.3. CLIL in Croatia, every class has their class teacher who teaches compulsory subjects like Mathematics, Art, Physical Education, Science, Croatian and Music, and another teacher that teaches English (foreign) language. That would imply that not every class teacher is a language teacher and vice versa, which means that real CLIL cannot be implemented into Croatian primary school system like it can be in the Austrian system. Nevertheless, there are some other approaches already mentioned in this thesis that are very similar to CLIL philosophy, for example CBLT or CLIL language lessons, which can be implemented, considering the situation in Croatian schools. This research wanted to see how the pupils react to those kinds of lessons, are there any problems with following the content, are they more or less motivated. The focus was mostly on the pupils but the teacher's feelings and attitudes towards lessons and CLIL were also taken into consideration. The research was conducted by observing one Mathematics CLIL lesson in Graz and one Science CLIL lesson in Zagreb. Both lessons were planned knowing that they would be observed for the purpose of this research.

The researcher wanted to see how the pupils react to CLIL lessons, especially in Croatia because they are not familiar with them, and to see if that kind of language learning could be possible within Croatian National Curriculum. The focus was on their ability to understand and follow the content, their level of motivation and interest for the topic. Also, very important thing to focus was were the teachers. The researcher

aimed to explore the teachers' attitude towards CLIL, how difficult was it to find a suitable material and to create the lesson.

Finally, the main points to explore were how CLIL lessons function in both systems and can and should they be a part of foreign language learning in Croatian educational system.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 PARTICIPANTS**

The participants were 16 pupils of a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in St Peter's Primary School in Graz, Austria and 15 pupils of a 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Davorin Trstenjak Primary School in Zagreb, Croatia. The pupils were all 9 or 10 years old. All of them started learning English as a foreign language in their first grade. Their teachers have been with them since grade 1. They were also participants of this research, as they were being observed as well. The research in Graz was conducted in January 2018, right after they returned from their winter break and the research in Zagreb was conducted in March 2019. It is important to point out that the Austrian teacher is a native English speaker, but speaks German fluently as well. That is the main reason why she tends to use English in various subjects very often, considerably more often than her colleagues. The Croatian teacher is only their language teacher, graduated from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. She usually structures her lessons according to the national curriculum and never integrates content from other subjects into her language lessons.

### **4.2 INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURE**

The instrument used was qualitative observation which 'offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations.' (Cohen, L., Manion, L & Morrison, K, 2007, p 396). The researcher's role was passive and non-intrusive. Observations were entered on an observation form taken from Dale and Tanner (2012). The checklist is called 'How 'CLIL' are you' and consists of six parts: activating, guiding understanding, focus on language, focus on speaking, focus on writing and assessment, review and feedback. The researcher described every aspect in details in the diary while observing both lessons. The main focus of this study was

how much pupils' profit from that kind of language learning, how motivated are they and is it hard for the teachers to prepare for CLIL lessons

The teachers were given no instructions at all, apart from the fact that it has to be CLIL lesson. The teacher from Graz chose Mathematics and the teacher from Zagreb chose Science. She took the content from it and adapted it for her language lesson while in Graz, the teacher took the language and used it during her Mathematics lesson. The researcher sat in the classroom during the 45-minute lesson and took notes.

The teachers were given complete freedom when choosing a topic for the lesson, the researcher gave no instructions or made any suggestions.

The teacher from Graz chose a Mathematics lesson, although she has never done a Mathematics lesson in English before, so that was something completely new for the pupils and for the teacher as well. The topic was measuring. The lessons started with questions such as 'How tall are you?', 'How tall is your best friend?', 'Who is the tallest student in your class?' She wrote the word who, what, when, where and why on the blackboard (they knew those words from their English lessons). She invited them to form the learning circle, something that she used to do quite often. That was a circle they made on the carpet and where they would always learn something new. She had many pictures and toys in her bag (such as big and small spider) and with help of that material, they repeated opposites (big/small, inside/outside, up/down, heavy/light). They also used the spider toy for counting its legs. They came to the opposites long/short. The last thing she had in her bag was a pencil case. She asked them if they remembered the song about a pencil case. They replied affirmatively. The song was naming various things that can be found in one pencil case and the last one was a ruler. They had a specific movement for each thing. She encouraged them to use whole sentences. She asked them: 'What can you do with a ruler? Can you check what time it is? Do I look at my ruler for that?' They came to the word measure and she told them to remember that word. They concluded that they do measure something with a ruler, but they measure time with the clock. Then they had to discover what can be measured with a ruler. The teacher drew a ruler on a mini blackboard and explained centimetres and millimetres, roughly. She did not go into detail. They all brought their rulers to the learning circle. She mentioned IKEA (life-relatedness) and asked if they have ever been there. She took out a paper ruler from IKEA and many other rulers of different colours and sizes. Then she started explaining millimetres, centimetres and metres, but in detail this time. 'If I have 2 centimetres, how many millimetres do I have in

between?’ She motivated them to start measuring and exploring so that they would come up with a conclusion, which they eventually did. Then, the teacher gave them a task to measure their table. ‘How long is your table? How wide is your table?’ She introduced the terms ‘wide’ and ‘long’. She gave no further instructions, so they all got pretty different results (although their tables are all the same). She showed them how to do it properly and she pointed out that it is extremely important to be very precise. She glued a very long paper ruler onto their door so that they can measure themselves and make a list afterwards to see who is taller than whom and who is the tallest (she referred to the warm-up questions from the beginning of the lesson).

At the end of the lesson, they took their books and went back to the learning circle. They opened their books to page 80 and started solving the tasks.

The teacher from Zagreb had chosen a science lesson for her first CLIL lesson ever, but the pupils’ as well. She had announced the ‘special lesson’ a week before it happened. The pupils were very excited about the lesson and visibly highly motivated. For introduction, they played a hungry shark game. They had to guess a given word by guessing each letter of it. They easily guessed that the word was science. They knew that it can be translated into Croatian as ‘znanost’, but that it also means ‘Priroda i društvo’, a science group of subjects in the Croatian National Curriculum. The teacher revealed the title, which was ‘Life of plants’. She asked them if it was easy to move plants and if it could survive in her palm (the word ‘palm’ was unknown to some of them so she put her palms together when asking the question). They concluded that a plant needs to have a certain type of conditions for it to be able to grow, which led to the next question about a plant getting the water it needs. They came to the conclusion that a plant does not have a mouth; it drinks water with its roots. The next question was about sun, they knew that it gets the sun through its leaves. She announced that she was going to show them a picture (displayed on a PowerPoint Presentation) showing parts of a plant. They got 20 seconds to take a good look at it and after that she distributed worksheets they had to fill in. Next, she showed them a picture of a plant life cycle and told them to look at it clockwise, which she additionally explained. They were talking about expressions like soil, germination, photosynthesis and pollination. She asked them what other animals besides bees pollinate the flowers and eventually they found out that even bats do that. Finally, they were looking at a picture of Carbon Dioxide and Oxygen cycle. She showed them two videos; one about how a bean grows and other about the growth of a flower. Finally, she distributed their final

task. They each got a worksheet called ‘Life Cycle of a Flowering Plant’ and their task was to cut out the key words and glue them at the right place in the cycle. As they were checking the worksheet, she was solving in on the blackboard with the help of one of the pupils. They got a plant word search for homework.

### **4.3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The goals of those lessons were different, naturally, not just because the chosen subjects were different but because types of lessons were different. The goal of the lesson from Graz was to introduce pupils to measuring, numbers of units and recalculation. It was an introductory lesson, something pupils were not familiar with. In Zagreb, the goal was to try out CLIL approach during one lesson in an educational system in which that kind of a content and language teaching is not implemented. The teacher chose a topic already familiar to pupils, so, basically, content-wise, it was a repetition of previously acquired knowledge, but this time, the lesson included a medium of an English language.

Overall, the goals were accomplished, as both lessons were quite successful. The results are best described when following the statements from ‘How ‘CLIL’ are you?’ checklist (Dale & Tanner, 2012, pp. 15-18).

At the start of a lesson, both teachers activated previous pupils’ knowledge. Both teachers prepared specific warm-up activities, referring to their previous knowledge but also preparing them for what they were about to learn. What is interesting to mention is that Austrian teacher started with repeating some language structures needed for the lesson. She later explained to the researcher that she wanted to make an introduction with a content from their English lessons and switch to a Mathematics lesson as smoothly as she could so that they would not even notice what they were learning and what language they were using. Croatian teacher had previously announced a ‘special lesson’ they were about to have. Therefore, the pupils were already very excited and highly motivated, without even knowing what the lesson was going to be about. She used a lot more material than her colleague from Graz, such as PowerPoint presentation, graphic organizers (diagrams, tables) and videos. Both of them used visual aids in form of pictures and picture cards, but the teacher from Graz used a lot of real objects such as many different kinds of rulers. As the participants

were young language learners, both teachers were already familiar with using mime and gestures, connecting words with movements so that pupils would grasp the meaning easily and the pupils were already used to that.

Both teachers worked actively with their learners on developing their thinking skills. If they were not sure about the answer, whether because they really did not know the answer or because they did not know how to express themselves in English, they would encourage them and provide them with as much support as the pupils needed. Almost 99 % of time, they would get at least some kind of an answer from pupils. If the pupils answered in their mother tongue, the teachers would repeat that in English ('Oh, you mean to *measure*...') and continue with their lessons.

When focusing on language, both teachers used mostly English. However, they would switch to their mother tongue, but only when they felt it was absolutely necessary. They tried to find the similarities between English and German/Croatian and presented it to the pupils. As both lessons included various subject-specific terminology it can be concluded that pupils had no problem with following the content and understanding the meaning of unfamiliar words. The Science lesson had a lot of new words which were above their knowledge level, but the teacher used all the expressions that were mandatory for the topic (for example Carbon Dioxide or Oxygen). When introducing a new word, she always checked their understanding, and when they confirmed, she would refer to their knowledge from the Science lessons. Usually, when she asked for the meaning of a new word, she would first give a Croatian equivalent. Then she encouraged them to give an explanation of the word in English and helped them while doing that. Both teachers encouraged spoken output during their lessons. They also encouraged the pupils to communicate in English.

The language the teachers used was very natural, meaning that their language constructions were very advanced and above their level of knowledge, but the pupils had no problems with that, as they had already been used to that kind of language.

If the focus is on writing, some differences can be noticed. Croatian lesson contained much more writing activities, as the teacher gave them many worksheets. Whenever they were writing something, they had the words that had to be used either on the blackboard or on their worksheets. Austrian teacher did not insist on writing. When they were solving a task from their German books, they did that in German. She did not bring any additional English material.

Both teachers need to prepare for the lessons. In Austria, the teacher told the researcher that her goal was to introduce the pupils with the key terms (measure, millimetres, centimetres, meters) so that they had something they could build on in their next lessons. She also wanted to repeat asking questions in English, comparison of adjectives and, last but not least, get them to communicate in English.

The pupils were highly motivated and showed no problem in expressing themselves in English on that subject. Although they had never done a Mathematics lesson in English before, they were not surprised by that lesson because they often have Science, Art and Music lessons in English.

The teacher did not encounter any kinds of problem while preparing for the lessons. She was also highly motivated and she said that she would continue implementing CLIL in her Mathematics lessons. In Croatia, however, the teacher needed some preparation before the lesson. She asked the researcher to provide her with some literature on CLIL, because she was not fully familiar with the term. Also, she had to find the most suitable materials, research about their Science lesson in the Croatian class book on that topic and, maybe even the most important one, consult with their class teacher. Lots of suitable materials can be found on-line, especially on this very popular CLIL topic, so that was not a problem for the teacher. Prior to planning a lesson, she had to contact the class teacher, meet with her and see which topics they had been learning about recently so that she could choose the one she finds the most interesting, as there were no guidelines on choosing the topic for the CLIL lesson. She also went through the literature on CLIL that the researcher has sent her. She put a lot of effort into that lesson and that was obvious during the lesson in the way that the pupils reacted.

It can be concluded that both observed lessons have had positive effects on both language and content learning. It was clear that the pupils profited and gained knowledge from attending those lessons. Language-wise, both teachers had an advantage of being language experts, one of them even being a native speaker. Therefore, they did not have any problems with communicating with the pupils in English, both teacher and pupils in both classes are used to that, so it was not a new element. The language they used was very natural. Some very advanced structures have been used, way above pupils' level of language skills. It has already been mentioned that it is to be expected that the cognitive level of learners will be higher than their language level (Coyle et al., 2010), which was the case in both lessons.

When the content of both lessons is being scrutinized, there are some big differences. Austrian Mathematics lesson presented a content that was new for the pupils. It was an introductory lesson into measures and measuring, which was something they had never done in their Mathematics lessons before. As it was new, the teacher was careful with the amount of content which she was about to present, taking into consideration that Mathematics CLIL lesson may be, for some of the pupils, harder than Mathematics Science lesson, for example. The teacher was very careful when explaining the content and she did not use any of the vocabulary that was out of their vocabulary range. The base of her content presenting was a repetition – she wanted them to fully grasp the meaning of terms ‘measure’ and ‘measuring’ and maybe to get them to use it themselves correctly by the end of the lesson. Content-wise, it can be concluded that the Austrian lesson did not include a broad range of vocabulary and new content presented to the pupils, but it was a valuable base which they would use to build on their knowledge on that topic in their following lessons. Content usage was a lot different in the Croatian CLIL lesson. To begin with, it was not even expected for it to be the same since the Croatian teacher had no experience with CLIL method at all. The researcher provided her with some literature, but she was not obliged to go deep into the whole CLIL philosophy. She was asked to take a topic from any subject and adapt it in a way that it becomes a lesson taught through English language. As she is a language teacher, she had to consult with their subject teacher. The content that she presented during her lesson was much broader. There are two key factors for that: it was a Science lesson and it was a topic that the pupils were already familiar with. She did not limit the lesson to a vocabulary they should know from their language lessons, she presented the exact same vocabulary from their Science textbook. Coyle et al. (2010, p. 34) states that ‘limiting or reducing the content to match the linguistic level of the learners’ should be avoided. There was a lot of new vocabulary but the pupils did not seem too burdened with it. However, the question that should be asked is if their reaction would be the same if it was their first encounter with the topic during their education? The teacher used the topic that they have learned about recently, although she was not given the instruction to use a topic that was already familiar. She used it to make it easier for the pupils to follow the lesson. Although it can be seen as a lesson of repeating the knowledge, as the pupils sometimes have with their subject teachers, the goal of a CLIL lesson should not be taking topics they have already learned about and teaching them in a foreign language. The lesson can, however, be

built on the prior knowledge from the lesson that was not CLIL. Coyle et al. (2010) suggest that it can be done in a way in which the teacher gives a short introduction in which they can summarize the most important things from their subject lesson but through a CLIL language.

This brings us to a factor of motivation, which is also very important for a successful CLIL lesson. The pupils were highly motivated in both cases, especially in the Croatian case where it was something completely new. It was announced a week before and they were excited about it whole week. When it ended, they were sad because they have really enjoyed it. The pupils in Austria were not that excited, but did anyway clearly enjoy the lesson. As their teacher is also their class teacher, she has the advantage of implementing a CLIL lesson in their weekly timetable whenever she finds suitable. On a daily bases, she goes from one CLIL lesson to a subject lesson, sometimes more than once in a day, and she does it so smoothly that the pupils do not even notice that they are learning in a foreign language. Coyle et al. (2010) state that CLIL lessons are more authentic and that it increases the learners' motivation towards it. Ioannou-Georgiou and Ramirez Verdugo (2011) conclude that the fact that those lessons combine foreign language and content are more challenging for the pupils which increases their level of motivation. Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2011) also talk about a visual support during a CLIL lesson which increases pupils' motivation as well.

Another thing that should be discussed are materials. The Austrian teacher used lots of it in form of pictures, toys, real life objects. In the final part of the lesson, she used their Mathematic textbook, which is in German, but she explained all the tasks in English. The Croatian teacher could not rely on their textbooks at all because it was a language lesson and not a subject one. Therefore, she created all the materials used by herself. The advantage was that she has chosen a topic which is a very popular CLIL topic (a Life of a Plant, including Photosynthesis). Coyle et al. (2010) mention that exact topic. They talk about Internet as a resourceful place for materials, but the teacher must first select what is suitable for the pupils taking into consideration their age, previous knowledge and their interest in the topic. It can even be pointed out that the language teacher already has ready-made material from their textbook, but it is really not ready to be used in a CLIL classroom because, first of all, it is written in the pupils' mother tongue. The teacher can use it in a sense to determine the direction of her lesson, and maybe use some pictures, but the Internet offers a lot more, especially on

that well-known topic. However, Coyle et al. (2010) express their concern about the availability of the content materials when a topic that is not a popular CLIL topic is taught. In cases like that, teachers are forced to adapt anything they find to the level of their pupils, and that may take a lot of time. If we take a look at some of the English language textbooks that are being used in Croatian classrooms, there are not many pages used for CLIL. Here and there a minor task can be found under the title of 'CLIL', but it is up to teachers will if he/she wants to pay more attention to it.

Therefore, appropriate teaching materials and, in the case of materials from publishing houses, detailed teacher guidance including background information on topic, language and methodological (principles/techniques) features is of great importance to ease teachers' workload and thus to further support CLIL implementation.

(Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou, 2011, p. 111)

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Overall, it may be concluded that both lessons were very successful and that the pupils profited from it, both taking language and content into a consideration. CLIL functions really well within Austrian Curriculum because it is very flexible and gives the teachers a lot of autonomy. However, that also represents a problem because some teachers choose to dedicate the lowest amount of time possible to it.

In Croatia, the only possible way to implement CLIL would be CLIL language lessons performed by language teachers. There is an educational reform in progress in Croatia which is called 'Škola za život' ('School for Life'). New curriculums have been passed which will be gradually applied from the next academic year of 2019/2020. It mentions that lexical structures should be chosen according to its connections with other subjects and cross-curricular topics (MZO, 2019). Most probably, CLIL approach will not develop any further than a few CLIL topics or tasks per year which will be included in the textbooks, but it is questionable if the teachers will devote any time to it at all.

When it comes to foreign language learning, it is important to explore and research any possible way, approach and method that can make it more effective. The final conclusion of this research is that CLIL has not yet been given enough attention in Croatian primary schools and that we have a lot to learn from an Austrian example.

## **6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study covered a small number of participants, only one class of pupils in Croatia. For any generalizations and more significant conclusion to be made, it would be necessary to expand the study to more lessons and more schools. In that we, the results would be more realistic and it would show the real advantages and disadvantages of CLIL lessons in Croatian educational system. It would be appealing to investigate differences in implementing between different teachers, schools and even different regions of Croatia and to promote CLIL approach by that large-scale research.

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## **IZJAVA O SAMOSTALNOJ IZRADI RADA**

Izjavljujem da sam ja, Valentina Gućec, studentica integriranoga preddiplomskoga i diplomskoga sveučilišnog studija primarnog obrazovanja s engleskim jezikom na Učiteljskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu samostalno provela aktivnosti istraživanja, te istraživanja literature i samostalno napisala diplomski rad na temu: **CLIL: THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION IN THE CROATIAN ENVIRONMENT.**

Zagreb, srpanj 2019.

Valentina Gućec

Potpis:

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Sveučilište u Zagrebu

Učiteljski fakultet

**IZJAVA**

Kojom izjavljujem da sam suglasan da se trajno pohrani i javno objavi moj rad  
**naslov**

CLIL: The Advantages and Disadvantages of Implementation in the Croatian  
Environment

**vrsta rada**

diplomski rad

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**u javno dostupnom institucijskom repozitoriju**

Učiteljskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

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i javno dostupnom repozitoriju Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu (u skladu s odredbama Zakona o znanstvenoj djelatnosti i visokom obrazovanju, NN br. 123/03, 198/03, 105/04, 178/04, 02/07, 46/07, 45/09, 63/11, 94/13, 139/13, 101/14, 60/15).

U Zagrebu, 11. srpnja 2019.

Ime i prezime

Valentina Gućec

Potpis

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