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# The Effect of the CLIL Approach on Promoting Multiple Intelligences in the Development of A1 Bilingual EFL Learners' Writing Skills

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## Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) on the development of multiple intelligences (MI) and writing skills among A1 bilingual (Russian-Greek) learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Conducted with five 8-9-year-old students in Greece, the research employs qualitative reflective teaching methods, including lesson design, observation, interviews, and artifact assessment, in order to explore how CLIL fosters MI and literacy. Findings indicate that MI promotion through CLIL positively influences learners' writing abilities, with bilingualism providing cognitive advantages. The study underscores the importance of integrating MI and CLIL to enhance early language education, offering pedagogical implications for multilingual contexts.

**Keywords:** CLIL, EFL, writing, multiple intelligences.



## Introduction

### Language use and learning as lifelong processes

*"[...] when faced with a new language, the bilingual has to learn to juggle with three balls, already knowing how to do so with two, while the monolingual has to learn from the beginning."*  
(Costa, 2020, p. 5)

In today's increasingly interconnected and globalized world, communication and cultural understanding are reshaped amidst the language learning revolution. This revolution encompasses the aspects of a more positive celebration of diversity and multilingualism. Apart from the advantages of language use and learning, with respect to global connectivity and personal growth, they also provide economic and cognitive benefits, increasing self-confidence and improving academic performance (Papadopoulos, 2020; Papadopoulos & Bourogianni, 2024; Papadopoulos & Hathaway, 2024; Papadopoulos & Shin, 2021). According to statistics from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2023), the number of foreign language learners has steadily increased, with approximately 1.5 billion people learning a foreign language worldwide.

Being one of the rapidly expanding segments of the global e-learning market, estimated to reach \$37.6 billion by 2027 (ACTFL, 2023), global language learning proves its significance and contribution to today's globalized world economy. It opens up job opportunities and facilitates career advancement for multilingual speakers.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Language Teaching, learning, and Assessment (CEFR, 2001), elaborated by the Council of Europe, focuses on the teaching and learning context of foreign languages (FL). It views language use and learning as lifelong processes. During their lifetime, people evolve a diversity of general and communicative competencies that enable them to perform tasks regarding personal, public, educational, and occupational domains.

The increase in the number of language learners and their need for skills development directly impact educational practices in language teaching. Policies, curricula, and, generally, all forms of cultural production in education are intended to improve the quality of instruction and learning outcomes. Diverse teaching approaches that enhance learners' academic skills have been developed and applied. In view of this, implementing Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Marsh, 1994) in FL teaching came to the fore in today's multilingual and multicultural society.

### The role of CLIL in FL learning

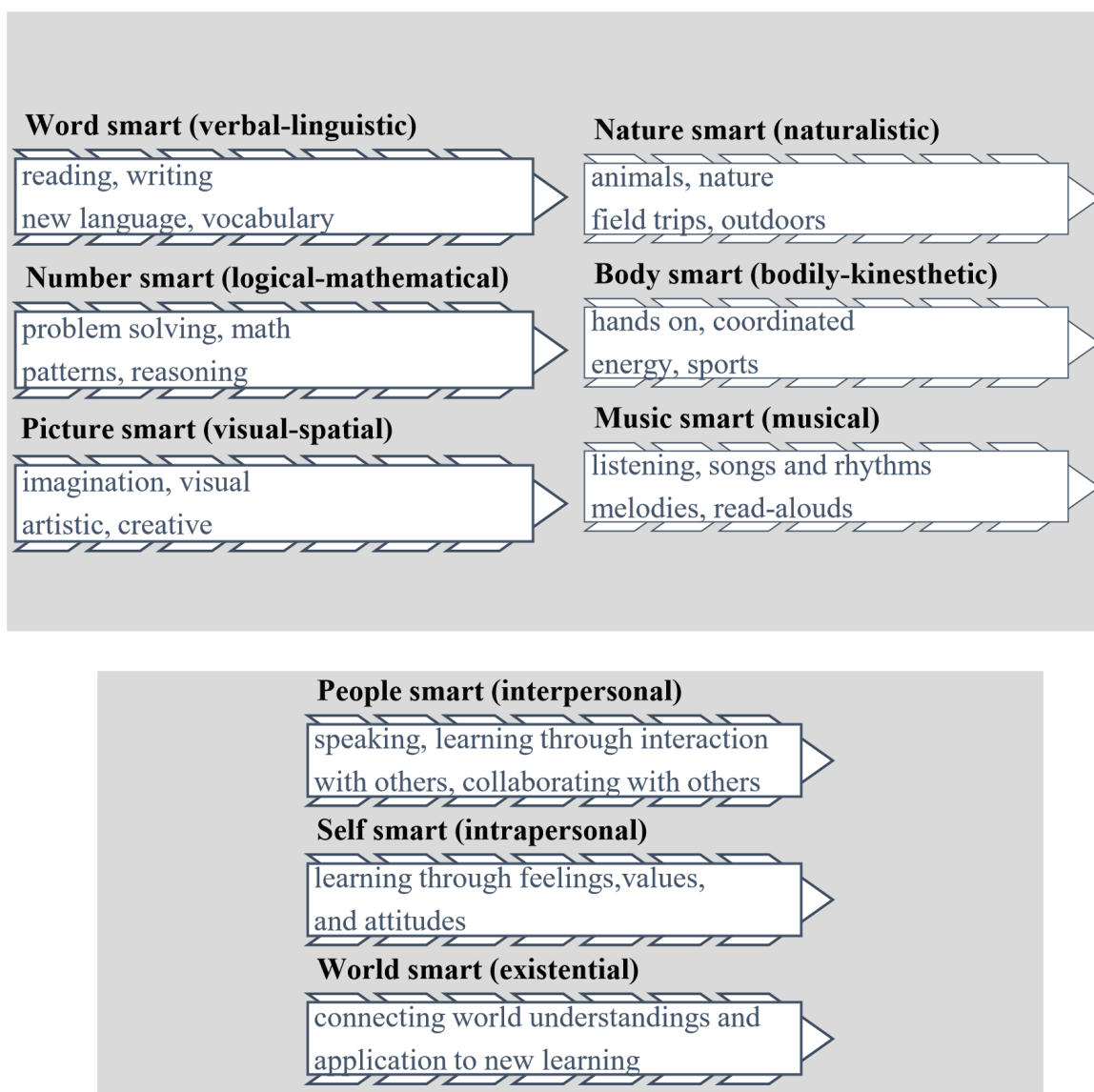
Both Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) and Anastasiadou and Iliopoulou (2017) claim that the main concept of the CLIL approach is twofold. It empowers learners' knowledge in a specific field and improves their FL proficiency. With regard to curriculum, Vasilakis and Zorbas (2024) adopt Coyle's (1999) concept of 4Cs (i.e., communication, content, cognition, and culture). They conclude that construction rather than instruction is the core philosophy behind the CLIL approach. More specifically, the fundamental concept of this approach refers to educational practices that are learner-centered, process-oriented, interactive, and responsive to students' needs and preferences. From this perspective, content is related to acquiring and creating knowledge, learning how learners think (cognition), and gaining intercultural awareness through learning an FL.

### Multiple intelligences advancement through CLIL

Given that the conceptual framework of CLIL is based on the cross-curricular approach (Marsh, 2002), learners acquire information from different subjects, process knowledge, and develop critical thinking.

Being a perfect environment for the implementation of CLIL, cross-curricularity supports the development of multiple intelligences (MI), as described by Gardner (1999). He defines them as different frames of mind that must be taken care of in teaching. By constructing tasks that combine content with an FL and accommodate MI, a teacher can render the learning process more enjoyable and efficient, boosting learners' motivation and self-confidence (Dörnyei, 2001). This, in turn, enables researchers to embark on exploring the role of MI in the development of learners' language macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) in a multilingual context arising from social changes brought on by globalization and migration (Council of Europe, 2001).

When developing linguistic macro-skills, learners' types and characteristics should be considered. The figure below illustrates all types of learners and the characteristics intrinsic to each type.



**Figure 1.1** Learners types and their characteristics

Implementing the innovative educational CLIL approach allows for considering all types of learners in class. It enables them to overcome challenges related to their skills development in a specific teaching context.

## Purpose of the study and its relation to the challenges for A1 bilingual learners

Against this background, and inspired by first-hand observation of a specific group of learners, the present research aims to investigate and determine the effect of the CLIL approach on promoting MI in the development of writing skills in the specific group of A1 bilingual Russian-Greek speaking learners.

A1 (Beginner) proficiency level is considered the initial stage in learning an FL and the first indicator on the CEFR scale. In this respect, some areas regarding learners' language skills require extra attention as they relate to the challenges these learners meet. Writing, reading, listening, and speaking abilities, are constituent aspects of the concept of literacy. These abilities enable an individual to make sense of the world and communicate effectively. They involve cognitive and social processes, revealing the social dimension of literacy grounded in Vygotskian thought interpreted by Gee (2000). According to this thought, the social component is pivotal in a child's mental growth.

One of the challenges that beginners encounter is mastering the basic writing skills. In an attempt to compose more complex sentences, A1 learners struggle to employ new vocabulary and overcome difficulties in using English tenses. According to a recent study published in the British Council 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts (2023), 53% of young language learners are confronted with a problem of acquiring vocabulary, while 68% have difficulty comprehending and utilizing grammar.

Additionally, the study seeks to determine whether improvements in writing skills enhance these learners' reading abilities. More specifically, it seeks to determine how much the enhancement of writing improves comprehension of simple texts from the approximate understanding inherent to the A1 level to a more profound and insightful one.

Another issue that deserves a closer analytical approach is to what extent, if any, bilingualism can affect the development of the aforementioned skills. It has been argued that "the cognitive and linguistic processes involved in the acquisition and use of two languages are systematically different from those processes engaged in monolingual language use, leading to detectable changes in language and cognitive outcomes" (Bialystok, 2010, p.559).

The aforesaid assertion converges with the quote from Costa (2020) provided at the beginning of the chapter. The advantage of knowing how to "juggle with two balls," that is, to handle two languages, favors bilinguals compared to monolinguals when it comes to learning a new language. First of all, according to Marian and Shook (2012), bilingualism makes learners fast task-switching thanks to the developed ability to restrain one language while employing another. This cognitive ability requires the bilingual brain to activate attention and inhibition processes. The inhibitory control of language(s) use helps bilingual individuals switch immediately from one task to another, which makes them more responsive to diverse circumstances demanding multi-tasking skills, e.g., solving problems or making decisions. Additionally, communicating in multiple languages enables bilinguals to expand their social circle, become more confident, and accept otherness and cultural diversity more easily (Chen & Padilla, 2019).

However, the challenges that bilinguals meet and the factors affecting learning outcomes are not to be neglected. As Marian and Shook (2012) pinpoint, bilinguals coactivate both languages automatically when considering words. It may lead to constant linguistic competition and induce language difficulties, increasing tip-of-the-tongue states, especially when a new language appears in the foreground. Also, persistent juggling of two languages and switching between them when speaking can impede communication and restrict language variety. With regard to additional difficulties that bilinguals may face, Ma (2023) mentions a lack of authentic, relevant teaching materials or their outdated content, inadequate exposure to a new language, and unequal progress in language proficiency.

Factors affecting bilingual students when learning a new language include age, cognitive abilities, language-learning aptitude, motivation, learning environment, and native language characteristics. They have a great impact on both learners and teachers. For example, the age factor in connection with

students' cognitive abilities and motivation can affect their engagement and persistence in learning and enhance their language-learning aptitude. More specifically, a young learner's inherent ability to acquire new skills can be further developed if his/her memory, attention, and information processing are engaged and enhanced. The positive atmosphere of the learning environment also encourages students' involvement in learning. Finally, students' native language(s) characteristics can affect different components of an FL, such as phonology, morphology, grammar, vocabulary, or syntax.

Qualitative teaching materials and curricula that connect students' needs and interests can facilitate learning. From this perspective, CLIL appears to be an appropriate learning tool supporting bilingual students' education needs and maximizing learning outcomes. Combining language and content approaches, it aims to build learners' knowledge in a specific subject and increase the target language proficiency level. CLIL's 4C components cater to the subject matter to be taught, language use, thinking and learning processes, and intercultural awareness gain. To sum up, the context of the CLIL approach is a favorable environment for bilinguals to exploit their advantages and minimize the challenges they face.

### Expected outcomes

In formulating the expected outcomes, it should be pointed out that this study aims to establish the efficacy of the CLIL approach and its contribution to enhancing A1 bilingual learners' writing skills. The research findings are expected to demonstrate how much multiple intelligences triggered by CLIL may benefit these learners' literacy skills. Besides, a direct and clear linkage between inextricably intertwined learners' reading and writing skills will be ascertained. Last but not least, the findings are supposed to substantiate the obvious advantages of bilingual language learners, who benefit from a higher level of varied skills when learning a new language, given that the optimal teaching framework is found and applied.

In the context of the qualitative reflective teaching method employed in the study, the outcomes will be evaluated using qualitative data collection tools. Initially, the existing level of A1 bilingual Russian-Greek learners' MI will be measured with the help of a semi-structured interview. The collected data (answers to the interview questions) will be assessed and coded on a rating scale from 1 to 4. The figures will be transformed into descriptive evaluation and show learners' strong and weak frames of mind. It will give insight into what types of MI should be paid more attention to when designing a series of lessons for teacher intervention.

Structured participant observation and field notes will provide behavioral, feedback, and descriptive data and shed light on the potential advancement of these students' MI, literacy skills, and the role of bilingualism in FL learning. Also, assessing artifacts (learners' writings) will give a clear picture of the implemented approach's overall effectiveness and impact on the analytical process of reflective teaching. The grades attained by the students will be analyzed on a rating scale from 1 to 6. Transforming these grades into descriptive evaluation will demonstrate whether the expected outcomes were achieved.

### Significance of the study

This study is believed to add some useful data to the existing conventional teaching practices for bilingual learners since the record of MI advancement within the CLIL method will give insight into the ways of holistic development of learners' personalities, including cognitive, communicational, and cultural domains. Moreover, the record of learners' writing progression will allow practitioners to approach writing development as a most demanding language skill from a different, more process-oriented perspective. Finally, the data regarding the specificity of the bilingual mind in allowing it to perceive and produce written English help to explain bilinguals' advantages and difficulties in learning English as an FL. Therefore, the findings will be useful for teachers of English as a second/foreign language working in multilingual contexts.

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

### Early Foreign Language Learning and Bilingualism

#### The Significance of Learning Context

First and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) differ notably: FLA involves children's innate 'mechanisms' activated from birth to age 5, enabling them to acquire their mother tongue (L1), which Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) links to identity. Conversely, L2 is learned later through natural exposure or formal instruction, often in environments where the language is vital for daily life (Oxford, 2003). Ellis (1994) states that both L1 and L2 follow similar developmental stages: silent phase, early production, speech emergence, intermediate, and advanced phases.

#### From Bilingualism to Trilingualism and Multilingualism

Multilingualism encompasses the ability to speak multiple languages, with subsets including bilingualism and trilingualism. Bilingualism can be simultaneous (from birth) or sequential (L2 learned after L1). Research (Cenoz & Genesee, 1998; Bialystok, 2010; Papalexatou & Zorbas, 2018; Zorbas & Papalexatou, 2016; Papalexatou & Zorbas, 2017; Papalexatou & Zorbas, 2015) indicates that balanced bilinguals, even with varying proficiency, possess enhanced cognitive and linguistic resources, countering misconceptions that bilingualism causes delays.

#### Foreign Language Learning

'L2' often refers to language learned in instructional contexts (Krashen, 1985; Ortega, 2012). FL learning typically occurs in classrooms where goals emphasize accuracy, but limited exposure can hinder progress and motivation, especially for young learners. In Greece, English is taught as the first FL from primary school, with success depending on exposure, pedagogical approaches, and family support (Munoz, 2010).

#### English as an FL in Society

English's pervasive role influences all life domains, making its teaching essential in curricula across Europe. Optimal progress requires sufficient exposure and effective methods, with family involvement also crucial.

#### Educational and Cultural Aspects

In multicultural societies, teachers are tasked with fostering intercultural competence—understanding, respecting, and communicating effectively across cultures (Karras, 2021; Bennett, 2001; Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). This involves integrating learners' diverse cultural backgrounds and promoting intercultural sensitivity (Korzilius, Hooft & Planken, 2007).

#### Multilingualism, Multiculturalism, and Plurilingualism

The CEFR (2020) differentiates between multiculturalism/multilingualism—viewing languages and cultures as separate entities—and pluriculturalism/plurilingualism, which sees individuals as resourceful social agents with interconnected linguistic and cultural repertoires. The plurilingual approach (Council of Europe, 2012) promotes developing 'multi-competence' (Cook, 2010), where all known languages influence each other, enhancing cognitive and communicative skills and fostering intercultural interaction. FREPA complements the CEFR by outlining knowledge, attitudes, and skills for plurilingual education (Council of Europe, 2012).

## A1 Bilingual EFL Learners

### The Young Learner

Children's learning styles vary; recognizing these (visual, aural, kinesthetic; VAK) allows teachers to adapt instruction effectively (Mattheoudakis & Alexiou, 2015).

### The A1 Reference Level

The CEFR (2001) defines A1 as the 'Breakthrough' level, where learners can understand basic expressions, introduce themselves, and interact simply if spoken slowly and clearly. The 'can do' statements provide a global view of competencies at this stage.

## Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI)

### Learning as Cognitive Development

Learning theories have evolved from viewing learning as behavioral change (Ramsden, 1992) to understanding it as constructing meaning through social interaction (Cameron, 2001).

### Concept of Intelligence

Gardner (1993) posits intelligence as innate, culturally embedded, and comprising various skills aiding problem-solving across contexts, with linguistic emphasis varying by culture.

### Types of Intelligence

Initially proposing eight intelligences—visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic—and later adding existential intelligence (Gardner, 1983, 1999), Gardner's model highlights diverse learner strengths:

- Bodily-kinesthetic: physical skills (Anastasiadou & Iliopoulou, 2017)
- Musical: rhythm and sound recognition
- Interpersonal: social interaction and empathy
- Intrapersonal: self-awareness and reflection
- Naturalistic: environmental connection and cultural sensitivity
- Existential: philosophical inquiry

### Implications for Teaching

MI theory encourages differentiated instruction, leveraging learners' strengths, addressing weaknesses, and promoting self-awareness and autonomy (Gardner, 1983). It is applicable across ages but faces criticism regarding empirical validation and assessment challenges (Williams & Burden, 1997; White, 2006; Christodoulou, 2009; Waterhouse, 2006).

### MI and Bilingualism/Multilingualism

Limited studies suggest bilinguals may demonstrate higher interpersonal, spatial, linguistic, and logical-mathematical intelligences (Fayyazi et al., 2013; Asadollahfan, 2017), attributed to their diverse linguistic and cognitive experiences, which enhance perspective-taking and problem-solving.

## Assessing MI

The MI Test (Chislett & Chapman, 2005) can identify learners' dominant intelligences. In this study, initial assessment via interview will inform tailored activities aimed at developing writing skills, with subsequent evaluation of MI development through follow-up interviews.

## CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) for Promoting MI

CLIL integrates subject matter with language learning, fostering an environment rich in varied activities—music, movement, problem-solving—that cater to multiple intelligences (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989). Research demonstrates CLIL's effectiveness:

- Yamano (2013) found CLIL accelerates vocabulary and communication skills and promotes global awareness.
- Lasagabaster & Sierra (2009) reported positive learner attitudes.
- Pinner (2013) and Várkuti (2010) observed improvements in linguistic and metalinguistic skills.
- Garcia (2014) and Anastasiadou & Iliopoulou (2017) linked CLIL to enhanced MI development, especially in content areas like history.

However, literature gaps remain regarding CLIL's role in explicitly fostering MI, which this study aims to explore within a bilingual Greek-Russian context for young A1 learners.

## Developing A1 Learners' Writing Skills

### From Controlled to Free Writing

Writing development involves moving from guided, controlled activities—such as copying, matching, and sequencing—to independent, free composition (Zouganeli, 2004; Brewster, Ellis & Girard, 1992). Creative tasks like stories, letters, and summaries enhance expressive ability and awareness of text structure.

### The Process Approach

Writing as a recursive process includes planning, organizing, drafting, revising, and editing (White & Arndt, 1991). Giannakopoulou (2002) demonstrated that process-based methods improve students' strategies and cognitive maturity in writing.

### Writing in a Bilingual Context

Bilingual learners utilize macro- and micro-strategies affected by their language proficiency (Griva & Chostelidou, 2013). Skilled bilingual writers manage coherence and background knowledge; less skilled ones focus on language mechanics. Skills transfer across languages influences overall writing success.

### Assessment of Writing

Evaluation should focus on ideas and content first, then language accuracy (Anastasiadou, 2010). This study will employ activities aligned with the process approach, with progress gauged via formative assessments and qualitative feedback.

## The Link Between Writing and Reading

Writing and reading are interconnected; improving one promotes the other (Cameron, 2001; Iliopoulou, Anastasiadou, Karountzou, Zorbas, 2022). Encouraging learners to analyze text structure and author's choices fosters critical reading skills alongside writing development, especially in bilingual settings.

Overall, this framework integrates theories of language acquisition, bilingualism, MI, and CLIL to inform strategies for developing writing skills in young, beginner-level bilingual learners within a multicultural, multilingual educational environment.

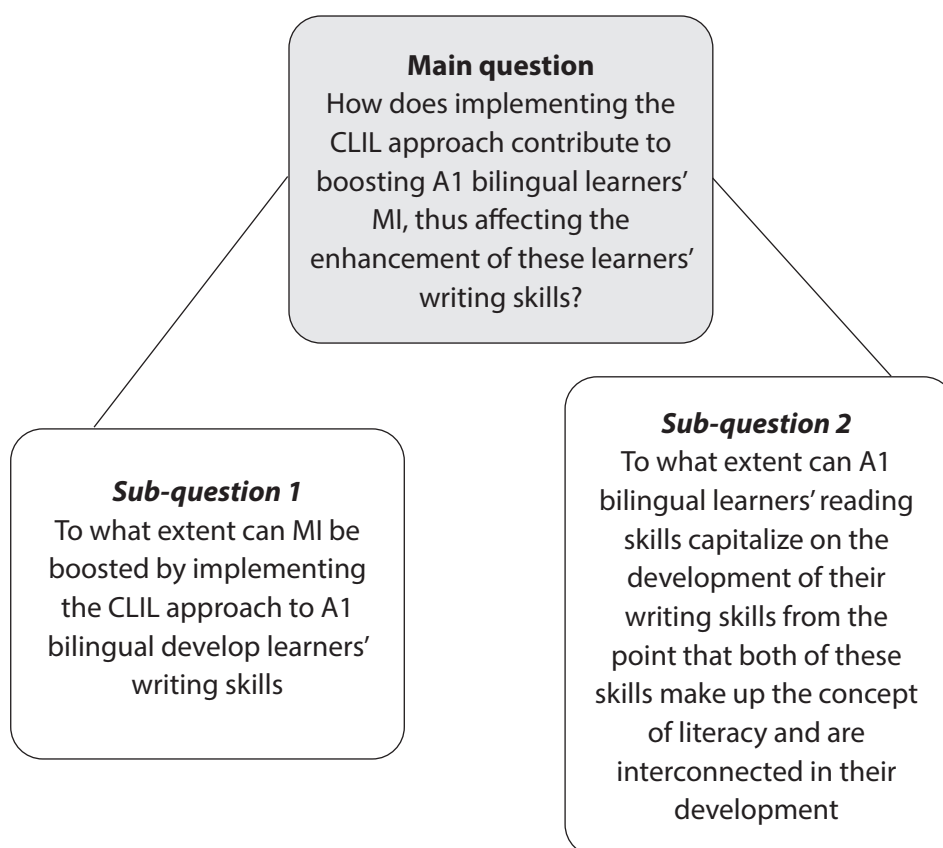
## Research Framework

### Research Questions and Objectives

Building on the literature, the study investigates the relationship between improving multiple intelligences (MI) through CLIL and developing bilingual learners' writing skills. The main research question guides the overall inquiry, while sub-questions explore specific aspects (see Table 3.1). The objectives are:

- To assess the current MI levels of A1 bilingual Russian-Greek learners and identify strengths and weaknesses
- To design eight MI-focused lessons within a CLIL framework
- To implement these lessons, observing teacher responses and student interactions
- To examine how CLIL influences MI development
- To evaluate the impact of MI enhancement on reading and writing skills

**Table 3.1** *The research questions*



- To interview participants to clarify MI and literacy progress
- To analyze findings and draw conclusions narratively.

## Research Strategy

The study aims to support bilingual young learners in acquiring English, specifically focusing on writing skills. As a native Russian speaker working with Greek and bilingual students, I observed bilinguals tend to have richer linguistic repertoires and benefit from diverse cognitive strategies. The research concentrates on 8-9-year-old A1 Russian-Greek EFL learners, chosen because early age is critical for FL acquisition (Hartshorne et al., 2018). Rooted in constructivist and interpretivist paradigms (Schwandt, 1998), the study emphasizes quality experience through carefully planned, multisensory activities within a social environment (Chand, 2024). Its flexible qualitative design captures nuanced, non-numeric data via observation and participant feedback (Creswell, 2014). The reflective teaching method guides inquiry, allowing for ongoing evaluation and adaptation.

## Research Methodology

### Method

A small-scale, qualitative approach employs reflective teaching, focusing on questioning and planning based on theory and experience (Martin, 2003). Data collection includes:

- Field diary with reflections
- Artifact assessment (writing/reading activities)
- Structured participant observation
- Semi-structured interviews

These tools are interconnected, with observations and reflections recorded concurrently, and an additional interview at the study's end. Data analysis utilizes thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022b; Katsillis, Zorbas, Kofou, & Karasimos, 2020) to identify patterns and themes.

### Empirical Phases

- *Planning*: Parental consent was obtained; initial MI assessment was conducted via semi-structured interviews, adapted to young learners. The interviews covered eight MI types (excluding existential), rated on a scale from 1 to 4.
- *Lesson Design*: Eight MI-oriented lessons within the 4Cs CLIL framework were created, covering topics from Literature, Geography, History, Music, and Art. The lessons incorporated multisensory, developmentally appropriate activities, including story-based, art, and project tasks, aimed at activating diverse intelligences (Pantaleoni, 1991; Yule, 1985).
- *Materials*: For example, the first four sessions used the Russian fairy tale "The Twelve Months" (Marshak, 1991), with activities developing vocabulary, speaking, reading, and writing skills through matching, charades, poetry, and letter writing. Subsequent lessons integrated geography quizzes, poem analysis, and process writing, gradually shifting from controlled to free production.
- *Piloting*: Conducted over one week, testing tools like field notes and observation schemes, leading to adjustments in procedure timing and methodology.

- *Implementation*: Over approximately one month, lessons were delivered, with systematic data collection: lesson plans, field notes, structured observations (using guides based on Griva & Kofou, 2017), and a final semi-structured interview. Observations focused on teaching process, use of aids, and group formations. Notes recorded behavior, interaction, and teacher responses, ensuring participant anonymity.
- *Data Analysis*: Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2022b) steps, identifying patterns related to MI development and literacy skills. The final interview examined perceived MI and literacy improvements, bilingual influence, and the role of CLIL.

## Validity and Bias Mitigation

To ensure objectivity, triangulation was employed—using multiple data sources (Patton, 1999). Careful planning, categorization of questions, and participant feedback minimized researcher and response bias. Summaries and cross-checks enhanced reliability.

## Research Site and Participants

The study took place at a private English school in Kalavryta, Greece. Five participants (two boys, three girls), aged 8-9, were selected via convenience sampling, based on availability and relevance to research questions (Dörnyei, 2007; Bryman, 2012). All are bilingual Russian-Greek students, with English at A1 level. Participants' profiles:

- *Vitaly (9)*: Immigrated at 2; motivated; struggles with tense and sentence structure in writing.
- *Alina (9)*: Born in Greece; enjoys English; challenges with articles and spelling.
- *Veronica (8)*: Born in Greece; visual learner; difficulty with sentence structure.
- *Vlad (8)*: Immigrated at 2; less motivated, less confident; prefers bodily-kinesthetic activities; struggles with writing.
- *Valia (9)*: Born in Greece; auditory learner; has basic Russian writing skills; finds punctuation and grammar challenging.

Small sample limits generalizability (Guthrie, 2010), but provides meaningful insights for this contextual study.

In summary, this research employs a qualitative, constructivist approach to explore how MI development via CLIL can enhance bilingual learners' writing skills. Through carefully designed lessons, observations, interviews, and thematic analysis, it aims to provide nuanced understanding while addressing potential biases and ethical considerations.

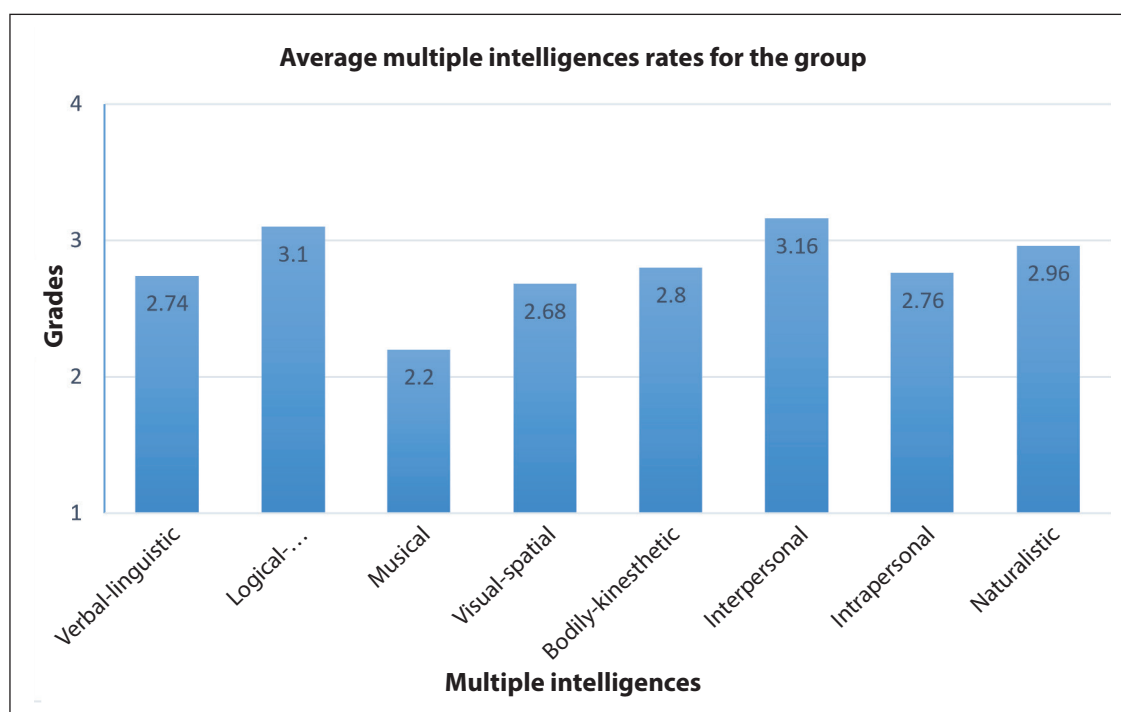
## Data Analysis and Results Presentation

### Findings from the Pre-Intervention Interview

The interview comprised eight sections, each with 4-6 questions, assessing students' multiple intelligences (MI) on a scale from 1 (very weak) to 4 (strong). Results indicated interpersonal intelligence as the strongest (mean 3.16), followed by logical-mathematical (3.1) and naturalistic (2.96). Weaker areas included bodily-kinesthetic (2.8), intrapersonal (2.76), verbal-linguistic (2.74), with visual-spatial (2.68) and musical (2.2) being the weakest. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 detail individual and group MI ratings. These insights informed the design of eight MI-oriented CLIL sessions.

**Table 4.1** Average MI rates for each participant

Multiple intelligences	Students				
	Vitaly	Alina	Vlad	Veronica	Valia
Verballinguistic	3.6	3.3	2	2.3	2.5
Logical mathematical	3.25	3	3.75	3	2.5
Musical	3.2	2.2	1	1,4	3.2
Visuaspacial	2.4	2.2	2.2	4	2.6
Bodilykinesthetic	3.75	2.75	3.75	2	1.75
Interpersonal	3.3	3.5	3	3	3
Intrapersonal	2.4	3.2	2.8	2.6	2.8
Naturalistic	2.8	2.8	3	3	3.2

**Figure 4.1** Average MI rate of the group

## Observation Findings

### General Observations

#### Learners' Performance

Thematic analysis revealed that engaging, creative activities fostered a transition from controlled to free writing, progressing from word-level tasks (e.g., matching pictures and words, copying sentences) to process writing involving drafting and redrafting about topics like seasons or museum blogs. Repetition of grammar and vocabulary improved spelling and structure. Vitaly and Veronica notably improved tense use; Alina and Valia enhanced spelling and articles; Vlad progressed but faced peer collaboration challenges.

### Reading Development

Students' reading skills improved through genre awareness, phonological skills (e.g., rhyming, identifying stanzas), and phonemic awareness (blending, segmenting, substituting sounds). Vitaly and Alina showed increased fluency; Veronica, Valia, and especially Vlad demonstrated significant gains in comprehension and text processing.

### MI Advancement

Interventions targeted all MI types, especially strengthening weak areas: verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial, and musical. Observation suggested growth across these domains (see Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2** *MI advancement gleaned from the learners' performance*

<b>Verbal-linguistic</b>	The students enriched their active vocabulary and activated many passive vocabulary items, using them actively through writing and speaking. They gained a better understanding of the grammatical patterns practiced during the intervention. Integrating the topics from the History, Geography, and Literature syllabuses enhanced the students' comprehension of the written text in English and made them more independent and competent writers.
<b>Logical-mathematical</b>	Engaging in activities intended to develop the specific type of MI advanced the students' critical thinking and ability to make comparisons.
<b>Musical</b>	Music, songs, and chants availed all the students, not only auditory learners. Music was an intriguing starting point when dealing with history topics or pieces of literature. It enhanced their memory retention of content and new vocabulary and helped them to concentrate better. Singing and saying the chant boosted the students' collaboration and engagement, even of the least motivated learner, Vlad.
<b>Bodily-kinesthetic</b>	'Acting out' phrases in charades assisted in developing the students' creativity and problem-solving skills. It advanced their cognitive abilities (understanding of contexts and word meanings), strengthened their vocabulary, and honed nonverbal communication skills, such as gestures and body language.
<b>Visual-spatial</b>	The pictures used in the lessons helped transform abstract ideas into realistic ones (e.g., months with characteristics of humans in the fairy tale). The images in the lessons with history and geography content facilitated the students' recall of facts and provided visual stimuli for texts and activities.
<b>Interpersonal</b>	Pair, teamwork, and student-teacher collaboration were promoted throughout all intervention procedures. The communicative approach, implemented in numerous speaking activities (including a cooperative art project) and peer correction in process writing, augmented the students' social skills.
<b>Naturalistic</b>	The designed lesson series helped the students relate content with nature and different cultures. For example, Geography & History Corner and the Russian fairy tale offered insight into the natural environment and cultural specificity in different parts of the world.
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	The holistic approach of the intervention enabled the students to realize their strengths and weaknesses. It can contribute to further improving their macro-linguistic skills and developing their personality.

### L1 and L2 Use

The use of L1 and L2 during lessons was monitored (see Table 4.3). The teacher provided guidance across cultural, content, and linguistic aspects, mainly using English but resorting to L1/L2 when necessary.

**Table 4.3** *L1 and L2 use gleaned from the observation guide*

<b>Communication</b>	Frequent code-switching between L1, L2, and L3 induced language difficulties and impeded communication, leading to tip-of-the-tongue states.
<b>Reading/comprehending an English text</b>	When reading, in order to feel more secure, all five students insisted on a word-for-word translation into Greek or Russian. They often resorted to L1 and L2 for clarification when performing activities. Vlad's lack of self-confidence seemed to be a hindrance to L3 use.
<b>Constructing/producing a piece of writing</b>	More competent writers in L1 and L2, Vitaly, Valia, and Alina, adopted a sentence-by-sentence approach when structuring their writings. They tended to activate background knowledge and adjust the message more efficiently. During the intervention, they seem to have advanced macro-components in writing – putting ideas into a coherent sequence. Less competent writers in L1 & L2, Vlad, and Veronica, struggled with micro-components – their writing process was interrupted by spelling control. However, a significant improvement was observed at the end of the intervention.
<b>Assimilating new information concerning grammar, vocabulary, word formation, syntax</b>	All five students quickly assimilated new grammar and vocabulary, primarily when associating them with images. Vitaly and Alina used synonyms more efficiently, while Vlad had difficulty selecting the correct vocabulary item. All participants' syntax was influenced by L1 and L2, sometimes leading to wrong word order when structuring sentences.
<b>Cognitive/metacognitive abilities</b>	All five students were flexible in utilizing cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Visual and auditory aids assisted them in memorizing new vocabulary and making contextual guesses. Also, all the participants were able to plan, monitor, and use the information offered to them. They were fast task-switchers. The inhibitory control helped them switch immediately from one task to another.

### *The Teacher's Role*

The teacher guided, explained, provided feedback, and monitored activities, fostering all four macro-skills within a CLIL framework emphasizing interaction and collaboration, supported by visual/auditory aids like pictures, music, and hands-on materials.

### *The Teaching Process*

Lessons integrated listening, speaking, reading, and writing, encouraging student interaction through pair/group work, peer correction, and collaborative projects like weather wheels. Visual and auditory stimuli enhanced motivation and engagement.

### *Field Notes Insights*

#### *Participants' Behavior and Interaction*

Observation of behaviors highlighted the importance of activity design in MI development. Adjustments were made to accommodate individual needs; for example, involving Vlad in singing or movements increased his participation. The process of developing writing skills evolved from uncertainty to confidence through collaborative tasks, with peer interaction fostering motivation and understanding. Bilingualism facilitated cognitive and linguistic development, with students recognizing improved language awareness and stronger social bonds.

### Teacher's Reflection

Self-assessment and reflection revealed discrepancies between planning and real-time execution, especially in time-consuming stages like peer editing. Language use was primarily in English, with L1 and L2 invoked mainly when communication broke down, emphasizing the importance of maintaining target language immersion.

## Artifact Assessment

### Writing Activities

Assessment on a 1-6 scale showed significant improvement, with group mean rising from “good” (3) to “excellent” (5.6). Figure 4.2 depict individual results; Figure 4.3 shows overall progress.



Figure 4.2 Assessment of writing activities for each student

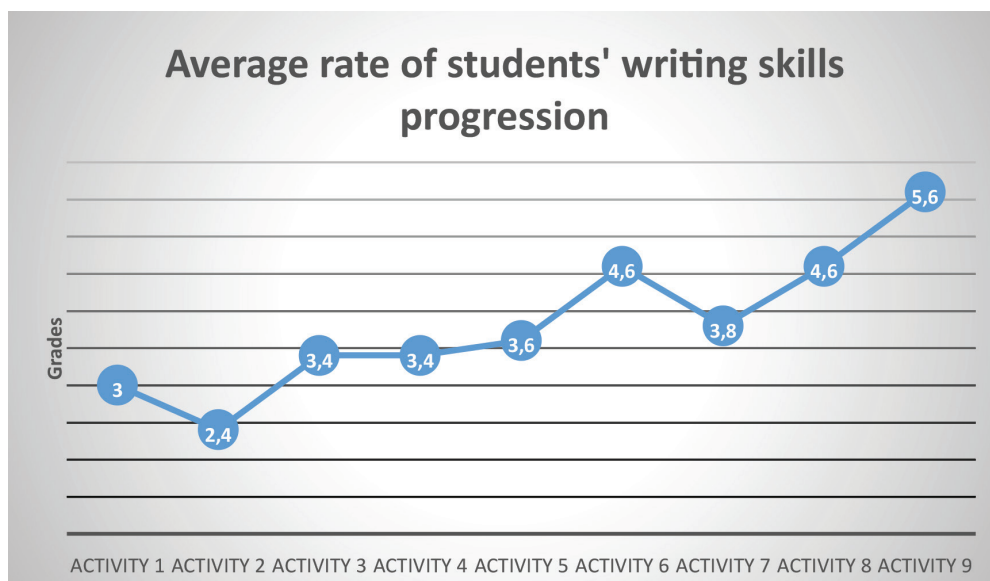


Figure 4.3 Average rate of students' writing skills progression

### Reading Activities

Grades indicated growth from “very good” (4) to “excellent” (5.8). Figure 4.4/4.5 illustrate individual and group improvements.

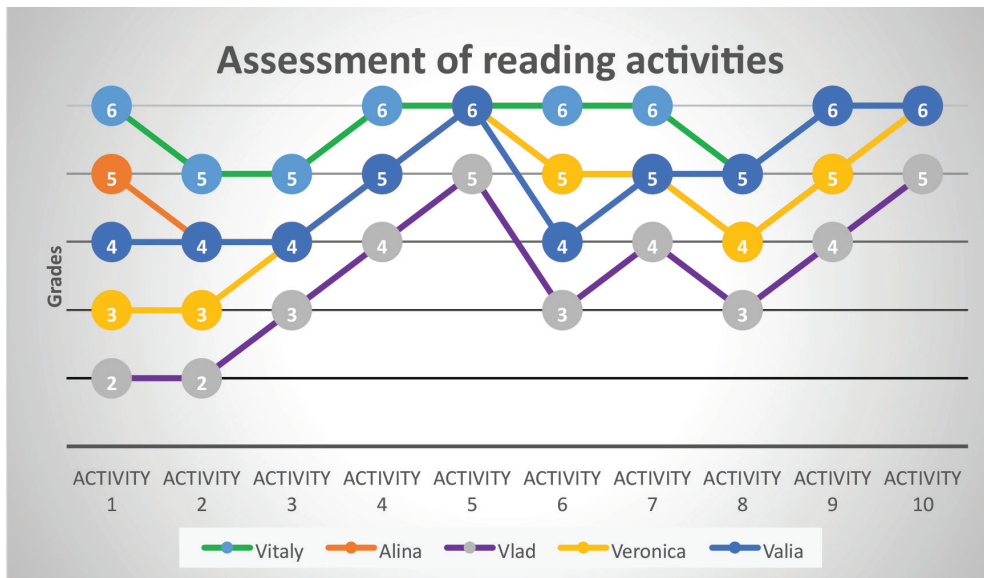


Figure 4.4 Assessment of reading activities for each student

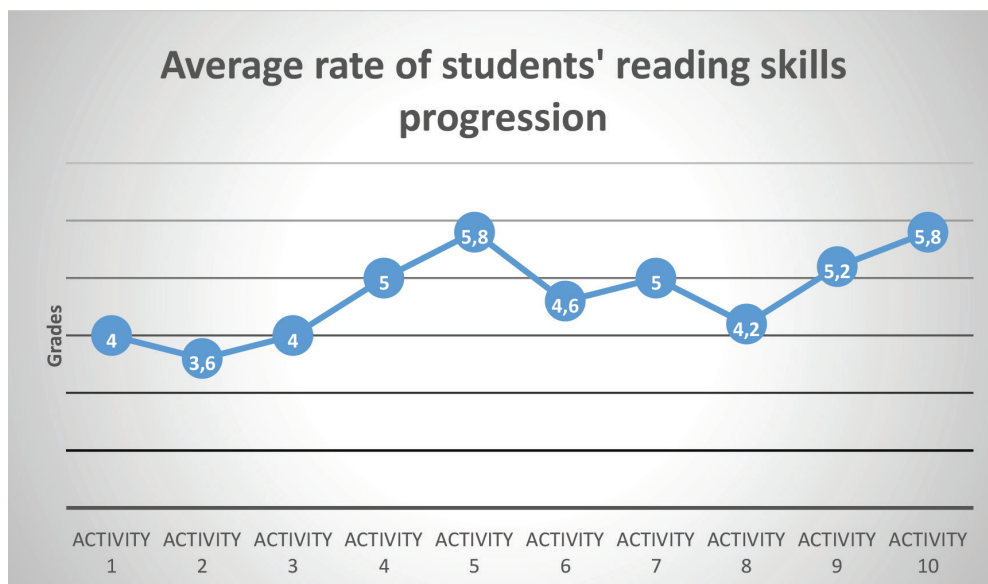
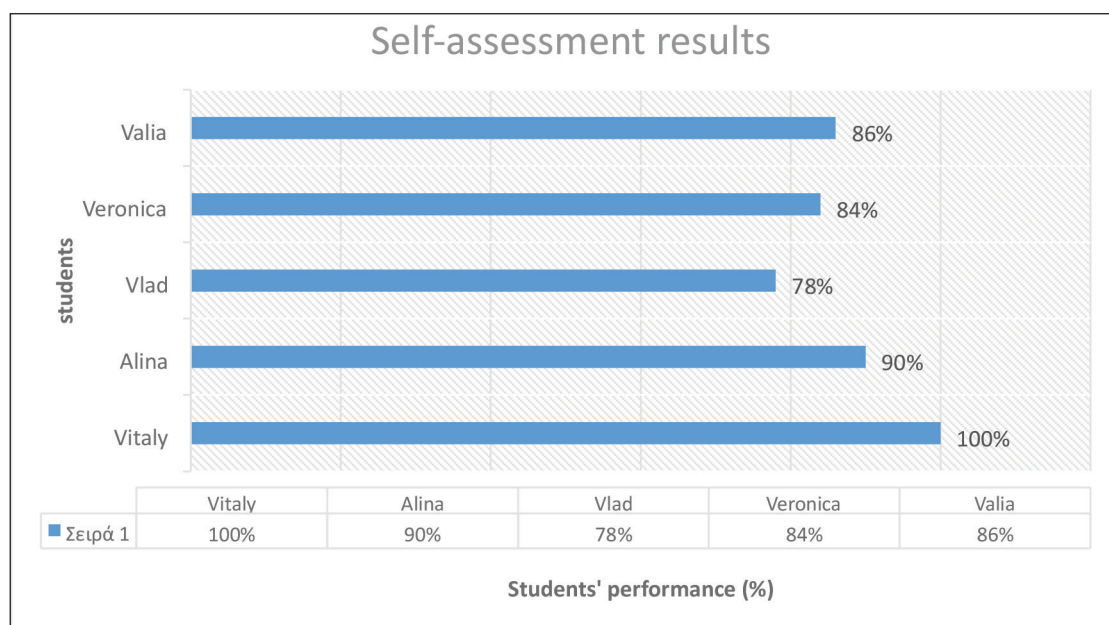


Figure 4.5 Average rate of students' reading skills progression

### Self-Assessment

Students' self-evaluations (Figure 4.6) revealed high levels of material comprehension: Vitaly achieved 100%, Alina 90%, Vlad 78%, Veronica 84%, and Valia 86%.



**Figure 4.6** *Self-assessment results*

## Post-Intervention Interview Findings

The final semi-structured interview explored MI development and bilingual impact.

### *MI Development*

All students acknowledged CLIL lessons enhanced their MI, especially verbal-linguistic (vocabulary, reading comprehension), logical-mathematical (attention, comparison skills), musical (through songs and chants), interpersonal (collaborative tasks), and naturalistic (linking content to nature and cultures). For example, Vitaly improved tense use; Alina appreciated vocabulary repetition; Vlad linked writing progress to group work; Veronica used comparisons with images; Valia noted enhanced visual-spatial skills. They also reported increased confidence in their language abilities and self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses.

### *Bilingualism Impact*

Participants agreed L1 and L2 facilitated understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and word formation. They used translation strategies to aid comprehension and structure sentences, often translating from Greek or Russian into English. For instance, Vitaly noted similarities between English and Greek/Russian words; Valia discussed related words across languages. However, code-switching sometimes caused delays, such as tip-of-the-tongue states, hindering fluency (Alina). Overall, bilingualism supported cognitive processing but occasionally complicated communication.

## Interpretation and Discussion of Results

This section explores the study's findings in relation to existing literature, assessing whether the main research question—how CLIL influences multiple intelligences (MI) development and writing skills among A1 bilingual Russian-Greek learners—and its sub-questions are supported. It offers plausible explanations and discusses pedagogical implications.

## MI Development through CLIL

The study aimed to determine if CLIL lessons, designed to target all types of intelligence per Gardner (1983), could enhance MI. The intervention incorporated diverse activities—music, movement, visual aids, and cultural content—aligned with Coyle’s (1999) 4Cs (content, communication, cognition, culture). Results confirmed that these varied approaches fostered critical thinking, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, visual-spatial, interpersonal, naturalistic, and intrapersonal skills, leading to enriched vocabulary, grammatical understanding, and holistic personality development. Findings align with Ackert (2007), Yamano (2013), Garcia (2014), and Anastasiadou & Iliopoulou (2017), supporting the notion that CLIL can promote MI and literacy.

However, aligning with Christodoulou (2009) and White (2006), the study underscores the complexity of MI assessment, emphasizing that reliable evaluation demands longitudinal, holistic observation due to the subjective nature of measuring different intelligences. The challenge remains in precisely quantifying MI development through qualitative methods, but overall, the data suggest CLIL positively influences MI.

## Literacy Skills Development

Results corroborate Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (1992), and Cameron (2001), indicating that engaging, meaningful activities support a transition from controlled to free writing, emphasizing process over product. The intervention focused on content-driven writing, fostering recursive writing strategies as per White and Arndt (1991), and involved careful planning, drafting, reviewing, and editing, in line with Giannakopoulou (2002). All five students showed significant gains, improving from “good” to “excellent” in writing performance, with increased grammatical accuracy and spelling.

Simultaneously, reading skills improved markedly; students developed genre awareness, phonological skills, and reading fluency, confirming Cameron (2001), Griva, and Chostelidou’s (2013), who posit that writing proficiency enhances reading skills. The group’s average reading performance also reached “excellent,” reinforcing the interconnectedness of reading and writing development.

## Impact of Bilingualism

Pre-intervention interviews aligned with Fayyazi et al. (2013), indicating high interpersonal and logical-mathematical MI, but lower verbal-linguistic and musical intelligences—possibly due to small sample size. Post-intervention observations showed participants quickly assimilated new vocabulary, demonstrating cognitive flexibility and task-switching abilities consistent with Marian and Shook (2012). However, frequent code-switching during instruction sometimes caused language interference, leading to delays and tip-of-the-tongue phenomena, which Marian and Shook (2012) also describe.

Participants often relied on L1 and L2 to understand L3 texts, indicating limited L3 proficiency. Variations between more and less competent writers in L1 and L2 reflected differences in micro- and macro-writing components, supporting Griva and Chostelidou (2013). The lessons also enhanced attention, memory, and comparative skills across languages.

## Conclusion

Overall, findings affirm that MI can be stimulated through CLIL, which in turn improves writing and reading skills among bilingual learners. The study supports Costa’s (2020) view that bilinguals, with their rich language background, are better equipped for language learning and personality development. These results underscore the pedagogical potential of CLIL in fostering MI, literacy, and bilingual competence, although careful, longitudinal assessment remains essential for accurate evaluation.

## Conclusion

This research integrates a comprehensive literature review, insights from language learning theory and educational psychology, and qualitative data to examine early FL education for bilingual students. The literature emphasized key aspects of bilingual early language development, with Gardner's MI theory providing valuable understanding of literacy skills in multilingual contexts. The study specifically investigates the writing development of L3 among Russian-Greek bilingual students, many of immigrant families, using structured observations, field notes, and interviews. These methods yielded rich insights into the effectiveness of the CLIL framework in enhancing writing skills.

Findings demonstrate that CLIL fosters a positive chain reaction: content-language lessons bolster MI, which in turn enhances overall language abilities. Specifically, the approach proved highly effective in improving students' writing, a challenge identified by participants, whose positive opinions underscored CLIL's role in MI and literacy development. Students recognized the reciprocal influence of their three languages, concluding that bilingual advantages outweigh difficulties, aligning with observational data. Despite these promising results, limitations exist, notably the small sample size of five participants, which affects reliability and limits generalizability. The study's scope was also confined to a private school, preventing comparative analysis with monolingual peers, and the limited duration restricts broader applicability.

The relevance and novelty of this study lie in its interdisciplinary approach, merging language learning theory, educational psychology, and practical teaching strategies in a multilingual setting. It is the first to examine the combined impact of CLIL, MI, and literacy development at the beginner level within a bilingual context, filling a notable research gap. Its insights can inform future research and teaching practices.

Practical implications include promoting a holistic, cross-curricular approach that nurtures linguistic, cognitive, cultural, and social growth by tailoring materials to individual needs. Teachers should balance content and language learning, ensuring they complement each other to optimize outcomes. Incorporating cultural content fosters tolerance, intercultural sensitivity, and critical thinking, supporting acceptance of diversity. Emphasizing equal opportunities, educators must actively engage diverse learner profiles, recognizing that language acquisition benefits all, not just verbally inclined students.

To improve literacy, strategies such as process writing, peer and self-assessment, and recursive writing approaches are recommended to motivate learners and reduce anxiety, laying a foundation for advanced skills. Additionally, leveraging multilingualism through translanguaging activities can enhance engagement, facilitate code-switching, and develop language proficiency, particularly benefiting bilingual learners' reading and writing abilities.

Overall, this study highlights the potential of CLIL in bilingual early education, advocating for comprehensive, inclusive, and culturally responsive teaching practices that harness the benefits of multilingualism and innovative pedagogies to foster literacy and language development.

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