

CLIL revisited: Exploiting a board game to teach poetry

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Abstract: Board games are welcomed in CLIL practices as learners actively co-construct meaning, express their thoughts in creative ways (Alexiou, 2009; Marsh *et al.*, 2001), make comparisons and fully exploit their previous knowledge (Karasimos, 2021). In this study, the pedagogical value of board games was combined with the CLIL methodology through teaching poetry. Cavafy’s famous poem “Ithaca” and the emerging topics associated with ‘other people’s Ithaca’ resulted in the engagement of the students in critical thinking via meaningful activities. The present study was conducted in a 6th grade of 24 students at a primary school in Northern Greece with the aim of measuring the potential of the board game to advance the CLIL approach. A teacher’s observation list was implemented to gather the results of the study. The collected data advocated the hypothesis that the CLIL framework in the form of a board game managed to enrich foreign language learning, enhance the students’ mastery of the content of a poem, improve their critical reasoning and foster tolerance of diversity when the students discussed other people’s Ithacas.

Key words: board games, CLIL, Cavafy, Ithaca, teaching poetry to young learners.

1. Introduction

Linguistic diversity in education has resulted in the emergence of CLIL in the majority of the educational systems in Europe (Eurydice, 2006). Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) comprises dual-focused teaching in that it serves a double aim: to both enhance students’ knowledge in a specific subject and ameliorate their FL (foreign language) proficiency (Anastasiadou & Iliopoulou, 2017). In relation to this issue, Griva & Chostelidou (2017) pinpoint that CLIL boosts learners’ intercultural competence and as a result pluri/multicultural citizenship stressing a triple-focused purpose of CLIL (Sudhoff, 2010).

The implementation of CLIL also includes challenges as CLIL educators have to conform to new methodological approaches, co-operative classroom management and emphasis on linguistic, visual and kinesthetic interaction (Pavesi *et al.*, 2001). Coyle (2008) claims that a CLIL lesson can be effectively designed following four principles (the 4Cs Framework): 1) Content: knowledge and skills related to the topic of a subject to be taught. Learning is not the only focus but it also highlights the significance of aiding the learners to promote their own knowledge and skills 2) Communication: using language to learn and simultaneously learning to use the language. CLIL signifies a threefold role of language: the language of learning; the language for learning; the language through learning. In this sense, communication is prioritised and the emphasis shifts to meaning rather than form (Dalton-Puffer 2007) 3) Cognition: improving both

concrete and high order thinking skills 4) Culture: promoting self-awareness and acceptance of others. Students are urged to consider themselves citizens of the world and understand multiculturalism (Griva & Kasvikis, 2015; Griva *et al.*, 2015).

2. Teaching poetry in a CLIL EFL context

In the past, course designers were unwilling to embed literature to the EFL syllabus as their main preoccupation was to teach standard linguistic forms (Savvidou, 2004). However, nowadays literature is deemed a significant pedagogic instrument as it enables foreign language learners to develop their knowledge about language in all genres and thus, it reinforces learners’ linguistic and communicative skills (Syamsia & Ismail, 2021).

Having elaborated on the usefulness of literature in the EFL classroom, the focus will shift to poetry whose inclusion in language teaching promotes language acquisition, since it can provide instances for self-expression and it involves learners in thinking, feeling and interacting (Tomlinson, 1986). Moreover, poetry is an important linguistic resource which augments learners’ lexical and grammatical mastery (Bates, 2000). Additionally, it renders language learning more creative because poems activate learners’ imagination and emotions (Mart, 2020) providing stimuli for oral discussion and rapport. Elster (2000) claims that poetry contributes to the development of critical reasoning, imagination, and interpretation.

Thus, poetry in the CLIL classroom can be capitalised on as an effective resource in order to improve students’ educational potential in the 4Cs framework. Poems can broaden students’ awareness of their own and other cultures. Moreover, they equip students with appropriate strategies to analyse and interpret language in context with a view to understanding not only how language is exploited but also why (Savvidou, 2004). To this end, poetry aids students’ linguistic development and literary knowledge.

2.1. Educational Games in the CLIL framework

As stated earlier, the CLIL framework requires communicative environments that favour the use of the foreign language as a natural process. According to Baker (2000), *play* is considered to be a natural activity that can be connected with language learning. Consequently, playing games is an efficient way of language acquisition (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2009; Uberman, 1998) in a natural, communicative environment as the CLIL approach demands.

2.1.1. Game-based learning

The educational use of games has come to the limelight in recent decades. Current language learning theories support that children learn best through discovery, experimentation in a playful and stress free setting (Griva *et al.*, 2010).

In the literature review, various terms and concepts are coined: ‘*Gamification*’: a set of activities and processes to solve problems by using the traits of a game (Kim et al., 2018), that is using ideas and ways of game thinking so as to create and use playful setting, ‘*Game-based learning*’: indicates the use of games to ease learning (Belim et al., 2014).

The common characteristic in all these concepts is the implementation of components that can be identified in games with the aim of aiding learning and actively engaging students in the learning process (Kapp, 2012).

2.1.2. Educational Board Games

Having stressed the importance of games in education and specifically in CLIL, an attempt will be made to present the contribution of educational board games to the learning process. Educational board games create both learning experiences and a game play context (Hunsucker, 2016) developing students’ learning capacity (Gee, 2003). In this vein, board games can become a tool to reinforce interactional communication and a way to elaborate on content. Furthermore, educational board games activities enhance higher order reasoning, along with social skills when interacting with peers, compliance to game rules, recognition of others’ perspectives and promotion of strategic planning (Mac Kenty, 2006; Schrand, 2010).

The use of board games in a CLIL classroom could prove effective, as the CLIL approach requires interaction among students as equally proficient speakers. In this sense, fluency can be considered more important than accuracy (Mattheoudakis, 2017) and communication is more natural and stress-free. To recapitulate, educational board games can be effective CLIL tools. When playing a game, language can be practiced in different situations while talking about content and in this way games comprise a communicative environment where the 4Cs are elaborated on.

3. Literature review

Several studies attempted to explore the roles of board games as educational media. Rajković et al., (2020) conducted a qualitative research in creating and using board games as educational media in history teaching in Serbia. The participants were 58 students divided into two groups, 13 game-designers and 45 evaluators. Students-designers pointed out that creating a board game was a challenge that required complex intellectual and emotional involvement and acknowledged knowledge acquisition of history through problem-solving. Student-evaluators claimed that the games had assisted them getting insight in acquiring and revising knowledge from a new angle.

As game-based learning seems to be of assistance in the CLIL approach, CLIL educators created the ‘PlayingCLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning Inspired by Drama Pedagogy’ (2015). The playingCLIL method is full of practical, adaptable ideas to support teachers in providing language-rich, interactive and creative experiences for their learners. Moreover,

Karasimos (2021, p. 99) claims that “For any CLIL scenario, there is always at least one board game that offers plenty of options for a more interactive, engaging and fun learning experience”.

To this end, a significant body of research investigated the effectiveness of board games in the CLIL framework. Rivero (2016) conducted a study to assess board games as tools to foster a communicative environment in two groups of grade 4 (aged 9-10) in a Spanish primary school. He reached the conclusion that board games manage to incorporate both content and language, attain interactional communication and activate motivation.

Marin (2017) adopted the CLIL approach to teaching poetry in the 3rd grade of a junior Greek State High School. It was unravelled that through a variety of linguistic, methodological and motivational components, the use of poetry in the language classroom can prove a powerful pedagogical tool.

Vourdanou (2017) presented a CLIL project carried out in the 3rd grade of a junior high school selecting Forster’s “A Passage to India”. The findings pinpointed the impact of the literary text on the learners’ intercultural consciousness.

In a combination of Literature/Ancient Greek Drama, Dertili (2017) employed the CLIL approach in a 3rd grade of a junior high school, investigating the historical associations found in Ancient Greek theatre (Euripides *Helen*), Elizabethan theatre and Modern Greek Poetry (George Seferis’ poem *Helen*). The CLIL method triggered the students’ motivation to learn an FL language, to deepen their understanding of subject content and increase their cross-cultural consciousness.

To the best of our knowledge little research has been conducted regarding the implementation of the CLIL approach to teaching poetry and the effectiveness of board games to foster the 4 Cs focusing on young learners.

4. The study

Taking into account that balancing the two variables, namely cognitive and linguistic, is fundamental in the CLIL setting for an effective learning process (Coyle et al., 2010), we employed Cavafy’s (1911) famous poem “Ithaca”. This poem and the emerging topics associated with ‘other people’s Ithacas (adventures, problems)’ resulted in the engagement of the students in critical thinking and meaningful activities. In this vein, the design of the board game included questions and challenges concerning learners’ inner self-awareness and acceptance of ‘otherness’.

The purpose of the present study was to measure the potential of the board game to advance the CLIL approach.

To this end, the following research question was addressed:

- To what extent can the board game promote the students’ acquisition of the 4Cs developed in a CLIL approach?

he researchers decided to employ a student’s questionnaire in order to trace their attitudes towards the role of CLIL in developing their competences and skills concerning the 4Cs approach through playing the board game. Additionally, in order to assess the learner’s progress when playing the game, they used an observation list where the learners’ performance in the 4Cs of CLIL framework was recorded. In this paper only the observation list will be elaborated on.

4.1. Why Cavafy? Why ‘Ithaca’?

Cavafy is widely considered one the most distinguished Greek poet of the 20th century. His poems focus on dialogue, creativity, exchange and reflection. They incorporate dense but understandable verses which render them easily readable. His poems include a gamut of meaningful symbols. He always keeps a safe critical distance from the content of his poems and therefore his poetry can induce diverse interpretations. Another highly-effective strategy he uses is the possibility of a critical perspective by implementing a theatrical situation (Lambropoulos, 2021).

Cavafy wrote one of his most well-known poems, Ithaca in 1911. The poem incorporates easily readable vocabulary, syntax, rhythm, symbolisms which encourage students to reach their own interpretations through interaction. Most importantly, the topics that surface stimulate student’s critical thinking.

5. Methodology and design

5.1. Participants

A case study was conducted in the sixth grade of a primary school in Northern Greece consisting of 24 students - fourteen females and ten males, whose competence level of English was identified as A2, A2+ (CEFR, 2011). There were no students facing any learning difficulties. All learners have been taught English, since the first grade and they attend extra lessons in private language schools in the afternoons. In general, most of the students were fast learners who live in an affluent socio-economic and cultural environment. The majority of them had participated in text dramatization, visual arts as well as theatrical education and painting and they had already developed projects about human rights.

5.2. CLILing through a board game

The title of the board game was “Ithaca, an Incredible Journey”. An attempt was made to design a board game that could challenge children to use the English language, by interacting in small groups creatively and actively: a) by sharing ideas in motivating ways and constructing meaning through scaffolding b) by understanding themselves as citizens of the world c) by exploring and enriching their own pluricultural experiences d) by enjoying learning in a fun context for

meaningful communication and without feeling any pressure. Cavafy’s poem and the emerging topics associated with ‘other people’s Ithaca’ resulted in the engagement of the students in critical thinking and meaningful activities. In this vein, the design of the board game included questions and challenges concerning learners’ inner self-awareness and acceptance of ‘otherness’ (see 5.3).

The purpose was to measure the potential of the board game to advance the CLIL approach. The game rules, the set up, the objectives were discussed and all students agreed to play the board game as a fun activity.

5.3. The intervention

The intervention was divided in three phases:

The pre- phase

In the pre-phase, which lasted four teaching hours, visual means were used in order to familiarize learners with certain words and phrases they were going to employ in the poem as well as the question cards or the challenge cards.

Most of the poem vocabulary was known but through brainstorming the learners interacted with the teacher and peers. This phase aimed at developing, acquiring and practising unknown vocabulary and simple common functions of the foreign language (two teaching hours).

The basic process of the game was the same as traditional games and it was adapted with the students’ input through brainstorming. Language used in playing board games, like ‘it’s my turn, lose a turn, throw the die, etc’ was reviewed, as well (one teaching hour).

Hands-on-activities were adapted to boost the creativity and motivation of the students. They coloured illustrations of Poseidon, Laistrygonians, Cyclops and Athena, the goddess of wisdom to decorate the board. Finally, paper boats (see 5.3) were made to be used as their pawns (one teaching hour).

The while-phase:

The main phase of our study, involved three-teaching hours based on the poem ‘Ithaca’. Students, while playing the board game, constructed meaning by employing both concrete thinking skills and higher order ones, developed cross-cultural awareness and interacted with their peers. Not only were learners provided with a break from regular classroom routines but they were also motivated to study the poem and discover their views and values about interesting topics as well as their peers’ opinions. This phase was carried out in two basic sub-sections:

Introduction of the board game: The purpose of this section was to help the students understand the process and the rules of the board game. Language used in playing board games was revised, a description of the board game was given, the rules were set, instructions about playing were provided, the objectives were explained and all the learners’ questions were answered before the game.

Title of the board game: “Ithaca, an Incredible Journey”

Players: 2-4

Playing time: 45-90 minutes

Requirements: The educator should design the board, print the questions and challenge cards, make 4 paper boats with the verses of the poem hidden inside them.

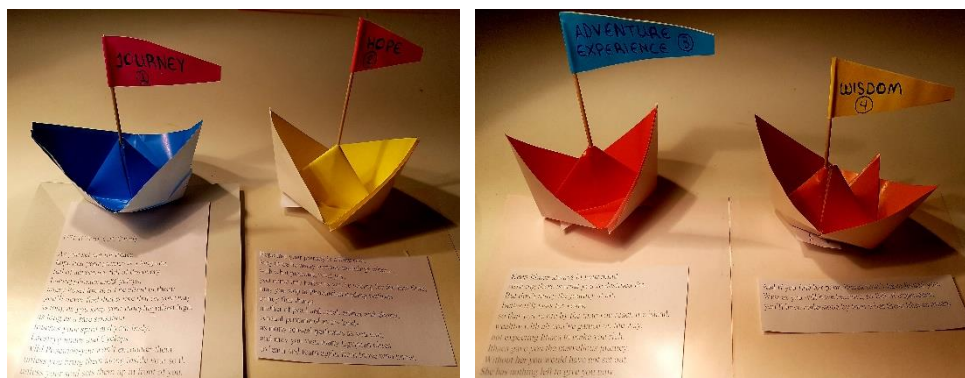
Thematic aims: Speaking skills, vocabulary, semantics.

Cognitive aims: Problem solving, critical thinking skills, inferencing.

Cultural aims: Understanding their own culture and accepting diversity.

Pedagogical aims: cooperative learning, learning by doing.

Material: printed game rules, 17 challenge cards and 28 question cards, a die, paper boats to be used as pawns with the students’ name written on them, 4 paper boats ‘sailing’ on the board with the verses of the poem hidden inside them (the 1st paper boat is called “Journey”, the 2nd one Hope, the 3rd Adventure - Discovery, the 4th Wisdom), a board depicting four islands of: Poseidon, Laistrygonians, Cyclops and Athena, the goddess of wisdom.





Game Rules:

1. Each partner rolls the die; whoever has the highest number goes first, the rest follow.
2. If you land on a question square, pick up a question card and discuss with your team.
3. If you land on a challenge square, pick up a challenge card and discuss with your team. When you finish, open the challenge square and follow the instructions.
4. Restriction: You can't cross the bridge to the next island if your team has not discussed a challenge theme.
5. Place the question/challenge cards at the bottom of the pile when you finish.

6. The first person to make it all the way to the end of the board landing right on ‘Ithaca’ square wins the game.
7. If you use the Greek language, you miss your turn.

Do your best and have fun.

Question cards:

1. Do you learn from your mistakes?
2. Do you feel guilty for your mistakes?
3. What is most important to you in your life?
4. What’s most important to you in life?
5. The world ends in a year! How would you spend your time?
6. You want to get better everyday! Bravo!
But better than everyone around you, or better than the person you were yesterday?
7. Who believes YOU can succeed? Do you?
8. Think of a hero in your life! Who is it? Why?
9. Are you afraid of life? Are you afraid of the difficulties?
10. When you fail at something.... what do you usually say to yourself?
11. In your opinion, what is success?
12. What do you prefer: to risk success or to protect yourself from failure?
13. You try and fail....Will you try over and over again?
14. You are 30 years old and you are famous.
What would you want to be famous for?
15. If you were rich, what would you do?
16. Which is more important: the journey or the destination?
17. Think of your life with no goals! How would you be?
18. Do you believe you can achieve your goals? Why?
19. What are your goals?
20. What do you need to get your goals completed?

21. If you had 3 wishes, what would they be?
22. What are your strengths?
23. What are your weaknesses?
24. What do you think you need to improve in?
25. What do you think makes life meaningful?
26. What’s your biggest dream in life?
27. What is one thing you can do today to make tomorrow better?
28. What is your worst fear?

Challenges:

1. A new student from another country comes in your class. How do you react?
2. You meet a blind person. Have you ever thought of his/her feelings? How will you treat him/her?
3. A student complains of being bullied. What can you do? What do you say?
4. Your classmates tease someone because he is fat/different. What can you do?
5. Have you ever ignored a friend in need? Why?
6. A new student is isolated. What will you do?
7. A disabled person in your school has trouble fitting in. What will you do?
8. You think: I’m going to fail the maths test... Think positively!
9. How do you react to the difficulties of life? Would you like to withdraw or fight with wisdom?
10. You offer something to your classmate. He/she refuses to take it because of his/her religious beliefs. Are you angry?
11. “I always treat others as I would like them to treat me”. Do you follow this rule in your life?
12. Meeting new and different cultures and civilizations makes us wiser. Do you agree? Of course, you do! But the challenge is: You meet two classmates, one from Europe and the other from Africa. Do you react differently? Do you think there are superior and inferior civilizations?
13. If we do NOT achieve all our goals when we finally reach our Ithaca....

Are we unsuccessful? Should we feel that we have failed in our lives?

14. A person in your school is dressed differently, according to his/her religion?

Would you like to meet him/her and learn more about his/her civilization and beliefs? Or do you ignore him/her...?

15. Is learning an ongoing process with no end? What do you think?

16. Someone calls you ‘ugly’ or ‘fat’. How do you react?

17. Have you ever said: “I understand how you feel”?

Playing the board game and interacting

The main purpose of this phase was to involve students into the board game and make them communicate. Through playing, students were provided with the opportunity for being engaged in an authentic learning environment and their willingness to participate resulted in higher motivation.

The game was set to last 45-90 minutes depending on the learners’ skills. The researchers as facilitators provided help where needed. There were six groups of four players, including the most talkative or shiest ones as games encourage interaction among diverse students. Therefore, all learners participated and had the same opportunities to interact.

During playing the game, successful communication with reasonable suggestions and appropriate arguments rather than accurate use of the language was emphasized (Mattheoudakis, 2017). Young learners’ skills to cope with unknown content in the foreign language were impressive. The poem and the emerging themes provoked their affective reactions and therefore the content was more cognitively challenging.

Students were able to interpret the text and construct meaning on the basis of their own experience. They managed to analyse the poem at a deeper level and explored its messages and symbolisms. This approach to teaching literature through playing made literature accessible to young learners, which was beneficial for their linguistic development and in this sense the text was a stimulus for personal growth activities.

As a final activity learners filled in a self-assessment and evaluation of the board game.

The post phase

Practicing and consolidating

During this stage, emphasis was placed on helping learners practice and consolidate the meaning, the content, the main ideas of the poem, its symbolisms, language functions and the important mediating role of language. The aim of the tasks was to enable the students to cooperate and communicate in the target language, as well as making decisions, solving problems and co-deciding on issues emerging from the poem. Activities, such as-brainstorming, mind

mapping, exploratory learning activities, playful activities on digital applications and multi-literacy resources were included. Additionally, the purpose of the tasks was to encourage students to understand the existence of diverse perspectives of an issue using their critical reasoning and research dexterities, to enrich their intercultural consciousness and their creative thinking. Finally, the activities enhanced the learners’ imagination and rendered them autonomous readers who assumed responsibility of their own learning (Appendix I).

6. Research methodology

6.1 The observation list

In order to assess the learners’ competence when playing the game, an observation list was employed where the researchers recorded the participants’ performance in relation to different aspects of content and language, their intercultural awareness and also the efficacy of the board game in encouraging collaborative learning and ensuring a communicative framework. More particularly, the researchers evaluated whether the learners could successfully elaborate on the 4Cs of the CLIL framework through playful activities that aid the learner to focus on the learning process and acquire linguistic knowledge (appropriate lexis, grammatical structures, to mention but a few) in a relaxed environment.

Regarding the *content*, in the first column, the researchers assessed the learners’ comprehension (understanding and learning of relevant knowledge). Concerning *communication*, in the second column, the focus shifted to the evaluation of the participants’ ability to communicate their thoughts and opinions concerning the game/lesson content. In relation to *cognition*, in the third column, the learners’ critical reasoning skills were put under the lens along with their problem-solving capacity. Regarding the *culture*, in the fourth column, the participants’ intercultural awareness and tolerance of diversity was explored.

Three different signs were decided upon corresponding to the learners’ performance:

good (+), poor (-), average (~).

NAME	CONTENT and LANGUAGE	COMMUNI- CATION	COGNITION	INTERCUL- TURAL AWARE- NESS

6.2 Data analysis

6.2.1 Presentation and interpretation of the observation list

The recorded results were collected in the following table:

	CONTENT/ LANGUAGE	COMMUNICA- TION	COGNITION	INTERCUL- TURAL AWARENESS
GOOD	16	12	20	22
AVERAGE	6	10	2	2
POOR	2	2	2	0

Content and language:

Sixteen students managed to integrate content knowledge with language competence. Most learners did not face difficulties in understanding the discourse related to the content of the poem maybe because the embedded topics were easily inferred. They used the provided grammatical structures and vocabulary to convey their interpretations and some of them managed to produce more complex utterances.

Six students had difficulties in expressing the exact meaning of their thoughts and opinions. They were able to use only simple grammar structures but they improvised their own grammar and vocabulary where necessary. Although, they had understood the content, their linguistic skills were not improved a lot. However, they were highly motivated and interacted with the others.

Only two students could not use the target language easily, having difficulties in expressing themselves. Even though, they had understood the content, they needed help in most of their attempts.

Communication:

Half of the participants (12) used language to air their views, their focal preoccupation being both fluency and accuracy. These students used the language to learn while learning to use the language in a fun and relaxing way. One of the rules of the game was to use English, while using Greek was penalised. Twelve learners had no difficulties in expressing themselves with fluency and accuracy in the target language when playing the board game.

Almost half of the students (10) could communicate their opinions, however they simplified their thoughts a lot producing some unfinished utterances and tried to convey meaning using other phrases. Some of these students were occasionally reminded of the English-only rule.

Two students had difficulty in expressing their thoughts. They used short and simple sentences to communicate although they wanted to contribute more to their team.

Cognition:

The vast majority of the students (20) were able to construct meaning by employing both concrete thinking skills and higher order ones, that is by using abstract reasoning. They presented various concepts practising their critical thinking skills, proving they had understood the content of the poem and its deeper meanings and symbolisms. The problem-solving cards were answered with no hesitation, conveying positive meanings and the acquisition of the content was mirrored in their responses. Even students who were weaker in communication and language managed to practise critical thinking skills and problem solving.

A meagre proportion of the students (2) partly practised their critical thinking skills having difficulty in accounting for their answers.

Two students could reply correctly using short answers but without any justification.

Culture:

Most of the students (22) exhibited acceptance of otherness. They realised that people in other countries experience different situations that make them react and think differently. In this way, they interpreted their own culture too and considered themselves as citizens of the world.

Only two students answered the challenge-question cards briefly and maybe their linguistic competence in the target language caused these short answers.

In conclusion, students participated actively and teamwork was exceptionally successful. The learners’ understanding of the content was achieved; their engagement in higher order cognitive processing was exceptional; most students’ linguistic development was promoted; their interaction in the communicative context and the development of appropriate communication skills were fostered; learners’ acquisition of intercultural awareness was advanced. Therefore, it can be deduced that the research question was substantiated.

7. Discussion

The board game, designed on Ithaca, proved to be an important tool providing hands-on skills and knowledge development for learners. The game created a challenging atmosphere, and also provided a non-threatening, playful, yet competitive environment in which the focus was on enriching content, critical thinking, problem solving and respect of otherness. These findings are in accordance with Griva *et al.* (2010) who prioritise a stress-free setting for facilitating learning. Besides, learners, while trying to collaborate, felt free to use the language and made useful mistakes to signal where remedial work was necessary.

Additionally, the designing of the board game proved to be an effective tool of learning. It helped learners to connect information. Game elements, rules, questions, problems, situations under consideration and discussions with partners about the content were appropriate vehicles

for learning. Moreover, the board itself constituted a visual metaphor. Consequently, learners organised information in a conceptual framework and the board game seemed ideal to accommodate various learning styles ameliorating at the same time a plethora of players’ abilities. These results are in line with (Hunsucker, 2016) who highlights the potential of board games to foster learning in a game setting.

Members of the various teams did not feel singled out for ignoring an answer. In addition to enhancing critical thinking and problem solving, the specific team-based board game helped learners build communication skills which complies with (Mac Kenty, 2006) who put forward the recognition of other people’s opinions. These notions are also in line with Marin (2017) who acknowledged the pedagogical importance of using poetry within the CLIL component in the classroom.

In addition, it can be said that the CLIL framework in the form of a board game managed to enrich foreign language learning, enhance the students’ mastery of the content of a poem, improve their critical reasoning and foster the mentality of tolerance of diversity when the students discussed other people’s Ithacas. This statement complies with Dertili (2017) who implemented an ancient tragedy and a poem to enhance Knowledge, FL mastery, critical comparison and cross-cultural understanding.

8. Conclusion

In order to contribute to the need for more research on the contribution of board games to implement the CLIL approach in the classroom, the present study examined the extent to which a board game revolving around poetry facilitated the promotion of the students’ 4Cs, that is FL mastery, content acquisition, communication and cultural consciousness.

It was found that the students seem to have gained intercultural awareness (culture), critical reasoning (cognition), language competence and content acquisition (content) and collaborative learning (communication) through the combination of Poetry and English.

Overall, the findings disclosed the impact of the game board on the learners. The poem and its interrelated meanings contributed to the motivation and reinforcement of the game activities and improved the learners’ performance in English. Thus, the findings pointed to the importance of implementing board games and the CLIL approach in the Greek state classroom.

The major limitation of the present study is that it involves a small scale research which gauges the contribution of board games to boost the students’ competence in the 4Cs of the CLIL approach. A larger scale study involving more teaching sessions and more participants might yield more generalisable data.

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APPENDIX I

TASKS IN THE THIRD PHASE

Task 1: The Poem-Ithaca by C. Cavafy

The printed poem was given to the students. At this stage, learners’ real or literary experience of the main themes and context of text was elicited in a brainstorming discussion about the poem, the poet, the title, the structure, the students' feelings and views on the topic.

Task 2: Linguistic exploitation

Students, divided into groups, completed linguistic activities by recalling pre-existing knowledge. They guessed the meaning of the unknown words and checked if their guesses were correct in an online dictionary.

Task 3: Grammar exploitation

The aim of the task was to enable students to interact combining information from the text and using grammatical and lexical structures. Learners completed conditional sentences in an online digital application.

Task 4: Symbolisms of the poem

Learners, divided in groups, cooperated, discussed and completed exercises about the adventures and the discoveries in the poem. Their attempted to find the symbolisms and as a creative activity they formed their own questions about the symbolisms to be answered by other teams.

Task 5: The important mediating role of language

The students were urged to compare various translations of the poem in English in order to assess the difficulties of preserving the unique style, choice of words and most of all the meanings conveyed in the poem.

The Poet

Task 1: Meeting Cavafy

Students, in teams, were asked to find information about the poet, photos, videos and complete the ‘timeline’ of the poet in a digital online application.

Task 2: The Poems

In a digital application (thinglink), they pasted Cavafy’s various poems, added videos, music, photos and created ‘Our Poems Collection’. They proceeded to the analysis of the poet’s favourite themes and language choices.

My Ithaca - Their Ithaca

Task 1: My ‘Ithaca’

First, students worked in pairs and discussed what ‘Ithaca’ stands for them. Then, the question was answered individually by creating a character in a comic strip so that they could be relaxed and present their views easily.

Task 2: Other people’s Ithaca

On the occasion of World Anti-Racism Day and World Colour Day, which are celebrated together with the World Poetry Day, paintings by refugee artists were shown to students. Students were encouraged to activate their critical thinking, to challenge stereotypes, to redefine the meaning of Ithaca and by activating their empathy to think that in addition to the personal search journey there is also the survival journey for some people.

Task 3: Other people’s Journey

The students interacted in their team, activating their imagination to create comics and to creatively capture the path of the refugees to ‘Ithaca’.