



Co-funded by
the European Union



DESK RESEARCH RESULTS

**CARE - language eduCation for inclusion
of immigrAnt minoRity studEnts**



"Language is the path to belonging."

Partners:

Fundacja Instytut Re-Integracji Społecznej
Ustanova za obrazovanje odraslih Dante
Fundacja REJ
Associació EDUFEM
Escola Teresa Miquel i Pamies
MVideoe

Design:

Ustanova za obrazovanje odraslih Dante

© **CARE project, 2025**

The Desk Research Report s is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by
the European Union



CONTENTS

04 Introduction

06 Poland

17 Croatia

26 Spain

38 The Netherlands

54 Conclusion



INTRODUCTION



Introduction

This desk research report forms part of the CARE project - *language eduCation for inclusion of immigrAnt minoRity studEnts* - funded under the Erasmus+ programme. It explores the national perspectives and real-life application of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in four partner countries: Spain, Poland, Croatia, and the Netherlands. The focus lies particularly on CLIL designed for immigrant minority students, aiming to optimize language acquisition within the school environment of the host countries.

Each national report addresses how language education contributes to the integration of immigrant minority students. The research emphasizes the development and implementation of CLIL as a pedagogical strategy, with special attention to two core aspects of language learning: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), which relate to everyday social interactions, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which refers to language skills required in academic settings. The main goal of the desk research is to gather insight into the authentic use of CLIL and to understand how they are being adapted to meet the needs of both students and educators.

To ensure consistency and comparability across countries, each report follows a common structure. The first section provides a brief overview of the country's immigration context and the role of language education in supporting immigrant students. This is followed by a review of national or regional policies, including any governmental or non-governmental initiatives that promote the use of CLIL or support language development for immigrant students.

The next section addresses CLIL practice in the given country. This includes descriptions of the types of CLIL courses available (such as in primary, secondary, or vocational education), how they are adapted for immigrant minority learners, and what tools, materials, and professional development opportunities are in place for educators. Particular attention is paid to how CLIL courses incorporate BICS and CALP, including any assessment tools and classroom activities used to support these areas.

Each report also outlines common challenges (or pitfalls) encountered in implementing CLIL for this target group. In contrast, good practices and successful strategies are also identified, supported by real-life examples or case studies where available. Feedback from the main stakeholders - teachers, students, parents or community groups - is also collected to give voice to those directly engaged in CLIL education. Finally, each national report concludes with a summary of key findings and offers recommendations to improve the implementation of CLIL courses for immigrant minority students. All reports include references to academic literature, policy documents, and relevant sources.

By compiling these national perspectives, the project aims to develop a shared understanding of how CLIL is used across diverse educational systems and how it can be refined to better serve the needs of immigrant minority students throughout Europe.



COUNTRY REPORT POLAND





Poland

Introduction

National and regional policy reference

CLIL practice

Pitfalls

Good practices

Target groups' feedback

Conclusions

References





Poland - Introduction

Poland's immigration landscape has significantly evolved, particularly following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2022, which resulted in an influx of approximately 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees seeking safety and stability. This shift has transformed Poland from a primarily emigration country to an immigration state, with around 2.5 million foreigners currently residing in Poland with intentions for long-term settlement.

The Polish government has recognized the need for a structured approach to manage this demographic change.

On October 15, main ideas appeared on the list of legislative and programmatic work of the Council of Ministers in a document entitled "Take back control. Ensure Security. Poland's Comprehensive and Responsible Migration Strategy for 2025-2030."

The strategy is intended to set directions for changes in immigration law in terms of, among other things:

- access to Poland,
- access to national and international protection,
- access to the labour market,
- educational migration,
- integration of foreigners

Integration

The strategy describes in detail the integration policy for foreigners, stressing that the process should be two-way. This means both the adaptation of foreigners to Polish norms and the responsibility of the host society to counteract social exclusion and undesirable phenomena such as racism. The document also stresses the importance of education and knowledge of the Polish language for the integration process, as well as the role of cooperation between the government, local governments and social organizations in it. Poland is to pursue an active integration policy, with emphasis on pre-integration in the case of foreigners arriving as part of family reunification to prevent, among other things, the formation of closed communities.

Language education is crucial for the successful integration of immigrant minority students into Polish society. Proficiency in the Polish language enables these students to engage fully in their education and community life. Educational policies are increasingly recognizing the importance of tailored language programs that not only focus on linguistic skills but also incorporate cultural understanding and social integration. This holistic approach helps immigrant students navigate their new environment while maintaining their cultural identity.

Poland - Introduction

Poland's immigration landscape has significantly evolved, particularly following the outbreak of the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is gaining traction within Poland's educational reforms, particularly with the upcoming introduction of the Primary School Graduate Profile in November 2024. It will be followed by an entirely revamped national core curriculum for all school subjects, to take effect as of September 1, 2026. These reforms emphasize cross-curricular content and project-based learning methodologies, creating a conducive environment for implementing CLIL across various subjects.

This new framework will outline the key competencies expected of students completing their public education in Poland. What's more, several publications, released over the past several months by Polish Ministry of Education and the Institute for Educational Research (IBE) to supplement the 'Profile' document, happen to emphasize (1) the increased role of cross-curricular content and the need for requisite methodologies, as well as (2) the value of project-based learning. These changes create a potentially favorable environment for introducing systemic changes and promoting methodologies like CLIL across the system.



Poland - National and regional policy reference

The Polish Education Policy Framework supports the promotion of CLIL, especially as it pertains to immigrant minority students. The recent emphasis on integrating methodologies like CLIL aligns with broader educational goals aimed at enhancing language skills among diverse student populations. However, there are concerns that current policies may not sufficiently address the unique needs of immigrant students within this framework, so they still require some adjustments.

According to some experts working for the Centre for Social and Economic Research, the Polish Education Policy Framework:

- does not realistically refer to the young refugees' language education as it is not based on clear data or analyses, which limits the document's credibility;
- places great emphasis on the requirements for migrants and their adjustment to Polish norms, which in practice is more of an assimilation approach than an integration one. The responsibility for integrating migrants has largely been shifted to employers, non-governmental organizations, and local governments. The promise of differentiating support for individuals from Ukraine and other groups may lead to discrimination;
- assuming contact with the diaspora and support for Polish schools abroad contains good ideas for changing approaches and support, but remains general without practical guidelines for their implementation and a long-term cooperation plan;
- does not assume clear support for digitalization of immigrant students, or it seems unrealistic, especially without additional resources for their implementation, or a clear implementation or cooperation plan (especially in schools).

Several initiatives aim to boost language skills among immigrant students:

- The Polish Ministry of Education has released publications underscoring the need for effective methodologies that support language acquisition through CLIL.
- Various NGOs provide supplementary language courses and cultural integration programs tailored to immigrant families.

These efforts are essential for fostering an inclusive educational environment that supports both academic success and social integration for immigrant minority students in Poland.





Poland - CLIL practice

To the best of our knowledge, there are no comprehensive initiatives to-date, implementing and/or otherwise utilizing widespread use of the CLIL approach (or CLIL-methodology-inspired teaching materials) in the Polish public education system.

In recent years, attempts to implement CLIL-informed methodology and/or teaching materials in Poland's educational system (public and non-public) are most visible in the area of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), particularly at the first educational stage (which includes learners in grades 1–3, aged 6–9), and – to a lesser extent, in the upper-primary segment (i.e. learners in grades 4–8, aged 10–15).

A significant portion of core English language textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education for use in the public sector incorporate elements of the CLIL approach. Suggested activities primarily address Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) by introducing topics such as rudimentary nature studies, early mathematical education, as well as arts. Such activities may include teaching the division between primary and secondary colours or the life cycle of a butterfly (viz. 'Bugs World' course series, published by Macmillan).

In English language lessons for grades 1–3, teachers are frequently encouraged to use project-based methods and activities, thus arguably implementing selected BICS-oriented strategies.

Examples of English language textbooks that incorporate elements of the CLIL methodology include 'New English Adventure' (levels 1–3) published by Pearson, 'Bugs Team' (levels 1–3) published by Macmillan Education, or 'Explore Treetops' (levels 1-3) by Oxford University Press.

In contrast, the use of CLIL methodology in teaching English to older students is fairly restricted as of yet. Elements of CLIL are largely limited to bilingual classes, which are an option for selected students in grades 7 and 8 (aged 13–14/15). In these classes, certain curriculum content from subjects such as mathematics, geography, history, or biology is taught in English. This approach partially aligns with the principles of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). However, such opportunities are available to a relatively small subset of primary school population, primarily learners from larger cities, where teachers of non-language subjects have the necessary qualifications to teach their subjects in English.

In bilingual classes for grades 7–8, teachers of non-language subjects typically rely on their own materials or simply use bilingual glossaries of subject terminology available online. Two examples of CLIL-inspired practical publications are: [1] "Bilingual Geography 8" - a handbook dedicated for geography teachers, [2] "CLIL jako nowatorska metoda nauczania - Zeszyt ćwiczeń" – both by Aleksandra Zaparucha.



Poland - CLIL practice

The application of the CLIL methodology in teaching immigrant students in Poland is notably absent. The current practices seem to follow a simple pattern.

Teachers identify immigrant students with a significant deficit in Polish language proficiency and refer them to ad hoc remedial classes. These classes are typically conducted by Polish language teachers, either individually or in small groups.

For Ukrainian, Russian or Belarussian students, such classes are usually limited to teaching the Polish alphabet and assisting them in understanding commonly used phrases in Polish-language textbooks, such as language found in task instructions. The use of the CLIL methodology in this context is not observed. Teachers rarely utilize textbooks designed for teaching Polish as a foreign language, and these materials do not incorporate CLIL elements either.

Due to significant staffing shortages and underfunding in primary education, Polish as a foreign language courses for immigrant students are necessarily remedial and time-limited. Consequently, any sort of CLIL-inspired methodology remains absent in this segment.

To the best of our knowledge, there are currently no systemic, professional development opportunities for teachers of Polish as a foreign language that would promote the use of the CLIL methodology.

In the context of teaching English, as previously mentioned, elements of this methodology are being utilized. Teachers can access training sessions offered by teacher development centers and international publishers.

Historically, one of the early adopters and ardent promoters of CLIL methodology was Ewa Kołodziejska (now retired), who in turn had been mentored by Stuart Simpson.

Another well-known advocate for the CLIL methodology in foreign language teaching within the TEFL community is Aleksandra Zaparucha. Her dedicated website provides information and materials on the implementation of CLIL. As was already mentioned above, she is also the author of several publications for learners and teachers, and is also very active on social media with her dissemination activities (viz. her video tutorials, e.g. "The What and Why of CLIL" or "Getting started with CLIL content" – both available on YouTube).



Poland - Pitfalls

There are numerous obstacles to implementing the CLIL methodology in foreign language teaching, particularly in teaching Polish as a foreign language.

One of the primary challenges is the low awareness of the CLIL methodology among Polish as a foreign language teachers, who often lack familiarity with its principles and applications.

Additionally, the limited availability of training opportunities and educational materials dedicated to CLIL makes it difficult for educators to effectively adopt this approach.

Staffing shortages further exacerbate the problem, as does the lack of sufficient funding to organize comprehensive, long-term courses that would allow the full potential of CLIL to be realized.

Another significant barrier is the time pressure faced by both teachers and students. Immigrant students are often required to acquire basic Polish language skills within a very short time to function at a fundamental level within the Polish education system. Consequently, lessons tend to be ad hoc and focused on immediate, short-term, measurable curriculum outcomes.

Furthermore, the widely reported high mobility of immigrant students adds another layer of difficulty. Many students interrupt their education to return temporarily to their home country, while others move within Poland due to practical or economic reasons, thus constantly changing schools.

Poland - Good practices

In the context of CLIL methodology, one of the notable good practices is its apparent application in teaching English to students in grades 1–3. However, when it comes to teaching Polish as a foreign language to immigrant children, no instances of using this methodology have been identified.

Poland - Target groups' feedback

Beyond the previously mentioned practices of teaching English using the CLIL methodology, there are no known educators or students utilizing CLIL for teaching Polish as a foreign language.

Teachers of Polish as a foreign language often point to a lack of time, insufficient educational materials, and significant financial constraints as major barriers to implementing such methodologies.

Students and their parents recognize the benefits of even a basic knowledge of Polish. They highlight that the ability to communicate in Polish not only improves their daily functioning but also enables children to achieve better academic performance at school. They are not familiar however with CLIL, or any other methods of developing Polish language skills.

Poland - Conclusions

The implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Polish schools, particularly for immigrant minority students, presents both opportunities and challenges. Given the recent influx of Ukrainian refugees and the hiring of assistive language-based education teachers, there is a significant potential to enhance language education through CLIL methodologies. However, several modifications to the current educational framework are necessary to effectively address the needs of these students.

Opportunities for CLIL in Polish schools

- 1.The hiring of additional language-based education teachers post-war has created a more supportive environment for immigrant students. These educators can facilitate CLIL methodologies by integrating Polish language instruction with content subjects, thus improving language acquisition in a contextualized manner.
- 2.The Language Education Policy Profile for Poland supports the integration of CLIL into the curriculum, emphasizing its role in bilingual education. This policy framework encourages schools to adopt methodologies that enhance language skills among diverse populations, including immigrants.
- 3.The upcoming revisions to the national core curriculum will emphasize project-based learning, which aligns well with CLIL practices. This approach encourages collaboration and active engagement, allowing immigrant students to learn Polish while participating in meaningful content-driven projects.
- 4.The National CLIL-VET Report highlights the importance of incorporating CLIL into vocational education, which is particularly relevant for many immigrant students seeking practical skills for employment. By integrating Polish language training into vocational subjects, schools can enhance both language proficiency and employability.



Poland - Conclusions

Challenges and necessary modifications

1. Limited focus on Polish Language is recognized. While CLIL is popular for teaching English and other foreign languages, there is a notable gap in its application for teaching Polish as a second language. Current policies need to encourage schools to implement CLIL specifically for Polish, ensuring that immigrant students receive adequate support in their language development.
2. The existing school curricula must be adjusted to include clear guidelines on how to effectively implement CLIL for Polish language instruction. This includes developing appropriate teaching materials that cater to the linguistic needs of immigrant students and ensuring that assessments reflect their unique learning contexts.
3. There is a pressing need for specialized training programs for teachers working with immigrant students under the CLIL framework. Professional development should focus on effective strategies for integrating content and language instruction tailored to the diverse backgrounds of these learners.
4. Establishing partnerships with bilingual schools in other countries can provide valuable insights and resources for implementing effective CLIL practices in Poland. Such collaboration can enhance teacher training and curriculum development efforts.



The potential for implementing CLIL methodologies in Polish schools to support immigrant minority students is significant, especially in light of recent educational reforms and increased teacher support. However, addressing the current limitations — particularly regarding the focus on Polish language instruction — will require substantive modifications to national policies and school curricula. By enhancing teacher training and fostering an inclusive educational environment, Poland can better meet the needs of its diverse student population and facilitate successful integration for immigrant learners.

Poland - References

Section 1: core curriculum reform publications (selected)

- „Profil Absolwenta i Absolwentki Przedszkola i Szkoły Podstawowej” (MEN/ IBE 2024) – working version; available at:
<https://ibe.edu.pl/images/badania/Profil%20Absolwenta/Profil%20absolwenta%20i%20absolwentki%20do%20konsultacji.pdf>, last access: Jan 15, 2025
- "Projektowanie uniwersalne w edukacji. Poradnik dla nauczycielek i nauczycieli" (IBE 2024)
- "Vademecum. Nauczyciele klas I-III" (IBE 2024)
- Sawicka K., Świtajska M., Wójcik A. (24 October 2024) Poland's migration strategy for 2025-2030 and its (potential) effects on the employment of foreigners in Poland, available at
<https://hrlaw.pl/en/articles/poland-s-migration-strategy-for-2025-2030-and-its-potential-effects-on-the-employment-of> , last access: Jan 15, 2025
- Chmiel O., Klakla B., Kulesa A., Poland's Migration Strategy for 2025-2030 – Expert Commentary, available at <https://case-research.eu/publications/polands-migration-strategy-for-2025-2030-expert-commentary/>, last access: Jan 15, 2025

Section 2: international EFL textbooks featuring CLIL content

- Lochowski T., Bruni C. *New English Adventure 1*, Pearson
- Read C., Soberon A, *Bugs Team 2*, Macmillan Education
- Howell S., Kester-Dodgson L., *Explore Treetops 3*, Oxford University Pres

Section 3: CLIL implementation and dissemination in TEFL context

- Zaparucha A. (2017), *CLIL jako nowatorska metoda nauczania - Zeszyt ćwiczeń*, Biblioteka Cyfrowa Ośrodka Rozwoju Edukacji, available at: <http://bc.ore.edu.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=986&from=publication>, last access: Jan 15, 2025
- Zaparucha A., <https://clilmatters.com/about/> , last access: Jan 15, 2025
- Zaparucha A., (2019) "Getting started with CLIL content and language Integrated Learning", available at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://m.youtube.com/watch%3Fv%3DkeaDAfu5mVM%26t%3D0s&ved=2ahUKEwjKPD0hfiKAxWLVPEdHeTOKm8QwqsBegQIIRAG&usg=AOvVaw0owik9yMKgFONEQzU3uZk_, last access: Jan 15, 2025
- Zaparucha A. (2020), "The What and Why of CLIL", available at: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.youtube.com/watch%3Fv%3DCoJBbmfsChU%26pp%3DygUKI3Nob3JOY2xpbA%253D%253D&ved=2ahUKEwiojgmeh_iKAxVL6wIHhYsXBFAQwqsBegQIDxAG&usg=AOvVaw2AdZnVJB9-7umZOKN865M2 , last access: Jan 15, 2025
- Zaparucha A. (2022), *Bilingual Geography 8 WB SOP*, Stowarzyszenie Oświatowców Polskich



COUNTRY REPORT CROATIA



Croatia

Introduction

National and regional policy reference

CLIL practice

Pitfalls

Good practices

Target groups' feedback

Conclusions

References



Croatia - Introduction

Croatia has experienced an increase in immigration, influenced by its EU membership and strategic position on migration routes. The country saw a positive migration rate in 2022, largely due to the liberalization of the labour market and the influx of immigrants, including asylum seekers, refugees, labour migrants, and ethnic Croatians returning from diaspora communities.

Integrating immigrant minority students into the education system has become a growing priority. Language education is a cornerstone of this integration, with proficiency in Croatian being vital for social, cultural, and academic inclusion. Schools play a key role in fostering linguistic competence among immigrant students, often through targeted programs like Croatian as a Second Language (CSL). However, challenges persist, including a lack of tailored resources, teacher training, and systemic approaches to multicultural education. Despite these obstacles, there is increasing recognition of the importance of multilingual and intercultural competencies for both immigrant and native students in fostering social cohesion.



Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has gradually gained traction in Croatia, aligning with EU priorities on multilingualism and innovative teaching methods. CLIL involves teaching academic subjects in a foreign language and is seen as a method to improve foreign language proficiency while maintaining subject learning. In Croatia, its application is still limited and often confined to pilot projects or specific schools, particularly in regions with strong bilingual traditions, such as Istria and Rijeka.

In the context of integrating immigrant minority students, CLIL has potential. It can support linguistic integration by combining Croatian or another foreign language with subject learning, fostering both language acquisition and academic achievement. However, to maximize its impact, there needs to be broader systemic support, teacher preparation, and alignment with integration policies.

Croatia - National and regional policy reference

Croatian national and regional policies primarily focus on providing education in minority languages for national minorities rather than explicitly promoting CLIL. The education system for national minorities is structured around three models: instruction entirely in the minority language, bilingual education, and additional lessons for cultural and linguistic maintenance. These efforts aim to preserve linguistic and cultural identity and facilitate integration into Croatian society. Initiatives, such as preparatory Croatian language classes for immigrant students, are implemented to support language acquisition for those unfamiliar with the Croatian language. However, these policies do not explicitly integrate CLIL as a framework. Instead, the focus is on the practical organization of language instruction and the support of minority cultures through dedicated educational programs.

The Ministry of the Interior, in collaboration with the Ministry of Science and Education, is working on the inclusion of immigrants through its programme of learning Croatian language, history and culture. The programme is conducted in all schools that are attended by immigrant children, including nine secondary education schools. If asylum-seeking children do not know or do not have sufficient ability in the Croatian language, they attend pre-enrolment language classes in the school that they are assigned to.

Steps have also been taken towards education and professional training of teachers to help them support learners with an immigrant background. Special attention was paid to citizenship education, projects and collaboration with non-government organisations to ensure intercultural education and human and citizenship values. EU funds are used to support migrants with better services and education staff with better training, with a common goal of better and more efficient integration of migrants in Croatian society.





Croatia - CLIL practice

Implementing CLIL courses for immigrant minority students in Croatia is still in its early stages. Ongoing efforts are focused on developing comprehensive strategies and training programs to effectively integrate CLIL into the educational framework, to improve language proficiency and academic success among immigrant populations.

A good practice example comes from the Prelog Secondary School, where Croatian and German language teachers collaborated using the CLIL method to teach German literature. The specific example involved Goethe's novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther". This integrated approach fosters creativity and develops both BICS (through interactive and group tasks) and CALP through in-depth discussions, textual analysis, and cross-language comparisons. During a 90-minute session, students discussed the novel in both Croatian and German. Students used German question-and-answer cards to interact with peers and review key facts about Goethe and the novel. Students compared Croatian and German quotes from the novel identified matching pairs and discussed strategies for understanding the text given. The collaboration enhances students' language and literary skills while providing teachers with a valuable professional development experience.

Croatia - Pitfalls

While education outcomes in Europe are often high compared to the rest of the world, the inclusion of vulnerable groups remains an important challenge in many European countries. Students from ethnic minorities and immigrant families are frequently left behind by education systems. In Croatia, vulnerable groups' participation and learning outcomes consistently trail those of the rest of the population at all levels of education.

The overall significant challenge in developing and implementing the CLIL curriculum in teacher education lies in its integrative nature. Except for primary school teachers for lower grades, teachers in Croatia are usually trained to teach a single subject, either a non-linguistic subject or a language. Even when teachers are trained to teach both a non-linguistic subject and a language, training for integrated teaching of language and non-linguistic content is not widespread.

CLIL materials for a specific subject and teaching unit do not exist, especially not for Croatian curricula. Therefore, selecting and creating materials represents one of the greatest challenges in CLIL, and teachers spend hours searching the internet for suitable materials.

Croatia - Good practices

A case study conducted in high school classes at the private Andrija Ljudevit Adamić Secondary School in Rijeka was based on three research questions:

- What are teachers' attitudes toward CLIL?
- What challenges and obstacles do teachers face in implementing CLIL?
- What are teachers' opinions on measures to improve CLIL?

Eight CLIL teachers who teach non-linguistic subjects participated in the study. During the initial education of the teachers, they did not receive CLIL training or complete a dual-subject language teaching program. When they started using the CLIL method, all teachers attended workshops on CLIL methodology and visited schools abroad that implement CLIL. All teachers agreed that they focus on content and are aware they should pay more attention to the language but avoid overburdening students. Lesson preparation should include language outcomes, although teachers often do not focus on language. Conversely, Croatian language teachers who teach content are not trained for this and find it difficult to teach their subject. When selecting materials, teachers consider the average language level of their class. Authentic texts are rarely suitable, so students primarily learn from scripts prepared by the teachers themselves. Adapting CLIL curricula is further complicated by the lack of national guidelines for implementing the methodology, and teachers are not provided with sufficient time for implementation. Writing and adapting CLIL curricula to align with the national curriculum requires significant time and collaboration among all school teachers.



The study revealed that teachers need professional-pedagogical, linguistic, and practical support for implementing the CLIL methodology. Although they completed CLIL methodology courses as part of the project, the lack of continuous professional support and national guidelines for CLIL implementation results in teacher insecurity and a lack of standardization.

Croatia - Target groups' feedback

Implementing CLIL in Croatia has been the subject of various studies, providing insights into the perspectives of educators, students, and parents. These studies indicate that while there is overall support for CLIL among educators, students, and parents in Croatia, challenges such as increased workload, the need for specialized training, and varying levels of support from parents based on socioeconomic factors remain.

Educators working with immigrant students using CLIL emphasize the importance of fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment to support integration and learning. They prioritize building trust with both students and their families, often using personalized approaches like pre-arrival meetings and tailored classroom activities to ease transitions. Challenges include language barriers, cultural differences, and limited resources for teaching Croatian as a second language.

Teachers highlight the effectiveness of experiential activities, visual aids, and preparatory language classes, though they note that the current duration of such programs is insufficient. Efforts to promote socialization through group activities, creative arts, and games have shown positive results. However, educators express the need for additional training in intercultural competence, better access to multilingual teaching materials, and systematic support to address the diverse linguistic and educational needs of immigrant students.

Teachers advocate for the establishment of a national center for CLIL to provide expertise, formalize its implementation, and coordinate training programs, along with workshops to enhance linguistic and pedagogical skills and foster collaboration.



Croatia - Conclusions

Croatia guarantees national minorities education in the language and script of the national minority in pre-school education and through three different models in both primary and secondary education. To determine the interest in this form of education, trends at all three levels of education of national minorities in Croatia were monitored – measured by the number of students, classes, institutions and teachers involved in education programs for persons belonging to national minorities. The analysis of the results shows a growing trend of interest in the pre-school and primary school level of education and a declining trend of interest in the secondary school level of education. Despite the challenges, teachers maintain positive attitudes toward CLIL, valuing its contribution to professional development and lifelong learning.

Overcoming language and cultural barriers, providing specialized teacher training, and adopting innovative approaches that integrate language and content are essential for the successful implementation of CLIL for immigrant minority students in Croatia.

In addition, universities offering teacher education, especially those with dual-degree programs in foreign languages and non-linguistic disciplines, should include a CLIL-focused course in their teacher training. This would equip students with practical skills for CLIL classrooms. Additionally, professional exams for CLIL trainee teachers should be interdisciplinary, conducted by both language and content methodology instructors, ensuring well-rounded preparation in both areas.



Croatia - References

1. Baksa, T. & Ivančok Varga, Ž. (2020, November 16). *CLIL in teaching Croatian and German at Prelog High School [CLIL u nastavi hrvatskog i njemačkog jezika u Srednjoj školi Prelog]*. škole.hr. <https://www.skole.hr/clil-u-nastavi-hrvatskog-i-njemackog-jezika-u-srednjoj-skoli-prelog/>
2. Bježančević, S. (2023). Trends in the Education of National Minorities in Croatia [Trendovi u obrazovanju nacionalnih manjina u Hrvatskoj]. *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Splitu*, 60(1), 253-278. 10.31141/zrpf.2023.60.147.253
3. Croatian Parliament [Hrvatski sabor] & Government of the Republic of Croatia [Vlada Republike Hrvatske]. (2024). *Report on the implementation of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and on the expenditure of funds provided in the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia for the year 2023 for the needs of national minorities [Izješće o provođenju Ustavnog zakona o pravima nacionalnih manjina i o utrošku sredstava osiguranih u Državnom proračunu Republike Hrvatske za 2023. godinu za potrebe nacionalnih manjina]*. https://www.sabor.hr/sites/default/files/uploads/sabor/2024-10-03/164805/IZVJ_USTAVNI_ZAKON_PRAVA_NAC_MANJINE_2023.pdf
4. Dobrača, I. & Kolić Marković, A. (2023). *CLIL method in teaching computer science as an example of good practice [CLIL metoda u podučavanju informatike kao primjer dobre prakse]*. škole.hr, <https://www.skole.hr/clil-metoda-u-poducavanju-informatike-kao-primjer-dobre-prakse/>
5. Erasmus Plus Courses Croatia. (2024, July, 5). *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Tools for Teachers: Elevating Student Achievement - Erasmus Courses Croatia - KA1 Teacher Training in Split, Dubrovnik*. https://erasmuscoursescroatia.com/courses/content-and-language-integrated-learning-clil-tools-for-teachers-elevating-student-achievement/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
6. European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). (2018, March 7). *Croatia: Education for better immigrant integration*. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news/croatia-education-better-immigrant-integration>
7. European Website on Integration (2024). *Governance of migrant integration in Croatia*. (2021). https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/country-governance/governance-migrant-integration-croatia_en?utm_source=chatgpt.com
8. Government of the Republic of Croatia, Office for Human Rights and National Minorities (Vlada Republike Hrvatske, Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina). (2024). *Upbringing and education in the language and script they use [Odgoj i obrazovanje na jeziku i pismu kojim se služe]*. <https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/nacionalne-manjine/polozej-i-prava-pripadnika-nacionalnih-manjina-u-republici-hrvatskoj/odgoj-i-obrazovanje-na-jeziku-i-pismu-kojim-se-sluze/621>
9. Učiteljski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Osnovna škola Ivana Gundulića Zagreb, Sveučilište u Mariboru & Sveučilište sv. Ćirila i Metoda Skoplje. (2019, January 30). *A collection of good practice examples: Literacy development and language learning for disadvantaged young learners [Zbirka primjera dobre prakse: Razvoj pismenosti i učenje jezika za učenike mlađe dobi u nepovoljnom položaju]*. https://project-deal.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Zbirka_primjera_dobre_prakse_DEAL-IO1_hrv_2.pdf
10. Vodopija-Krstanović, I. (2020). Content And Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): Benefits, Challenges and Measures [Integrirano usvajanje stranoga jezika i sadržaja (CLIL): Prednosti, izazovi i mjere]. *Metodički vidici*, 11(11), 69–90. <https://doi.org/10.19090/mv.2020.11.69-90>
11. Wankiewicz, P. (2024). *Croatia: A Decade in Review and Its Impact. From EU Accession to Joining the Eurozone and the Schengen Area*. European Institute of the Mediterranean. https://www.iemed.org/publication/croatia-a-decade-in-review-and-its-impact-from-eu-accession-to-joining-the-eurozone-and-the-schengen-area/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
12. World Bank. (2019, July). *National Development Strategy Croatia 2030 Policy Note: Education and Skills*. <https://hrvatska2030.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Education-and-Skills.pdf>



COUNTRY REPORT SPAIN





Spain

Introduction

National and regional policy reference

CLIL practice

Pitfalls

Good practices

Target groups' feedback

Conclusions

References



Spain - Introduction

Spain has historically been a prominent destination for immigrants due to its strategic location, economic opportunities, and cultural ties with Latin America and North Africa. The country hosts a diverse immigrant population, including economic migrants, refugees, and students, contributing to its rich multicultural diversity.

Language education is a cornerstone of integration efforts in Spain. Educational programs prioritize the development of both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS), essential for everyday communication, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), required for academic success. The Spanish government and regional authorities implement specific language support programs for immigrant students, with special attention to regions with co-official languages such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia.

Spain stands out as a leader in implementing Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Many schools across the country, particularly in bilingual and trilingual regions, have adopted CLIL programs to enhance language skills acquisition. These initiatives often focus on teaching subjects like science or history in English, in addition to Spanish and regional languages. The CLIL approach is recognized as a key strategy for promoting multilingualism and educational inclusion, establishing itself as a valuable tool for supporting immigrant students in Spain (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).



Spain - National and regional policy reference

As previously mentioned, Spain actively promotes CLIL in regions such as Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia. These regions integrate the CLIL approach into their school curricula to support multilingualism, utilizing English alongside Spanish and the co-official regional languages. Although national policies support CLIL, its implementation heavily depends on regional educational authorities, resulting in varying levels of adoption and emphasis across the country.

While national CLIL policies are not specifically targeted at immigrant students, regional initiatives often include provisions to address their linguistic needs. For instance, in Catalonia, immigrant students may receive instruction in both Catalan and Spanish, facilitating their integration into the regional education system. Some regions also offer additional language support classes to help immigrant students develop BICS and CALP (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2022).

In Spain, various programs and organizations work to enhance the language skills of immigrant students. Government efforts include specialized language acquisition programs in schools, such as the "Language Immersion Program," which provides intensive support for non-native speakers. Additionally, non-governmental organizations, such as the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, offer supplementary educational and linguistic workshops to promote the inclusion and academic success of immigrant and minority communities.

Although Spain's commitment to CLIL and language education is evident, challenges remain in ensuring equitable access to these programs for immigrant students. Regional disparities in resources and program availability can create gaps in support, highlighting the need for coordinated efforts at both the national and regional levels.



Spain - CLIL practice

Spain offers CLIL courses at the primary, secondary, and vocational education levels. These courses typically focus on teaching subjects such as science, history, and technology in English, alongside Spanish and regional languages. Trilingual education is a common practice in autonomous communities with co-official languages, such as Catalonia and the Basque Country.

CLIL courses in Spain are increasingly being adapted to support immigrant students through the integration of additional language support programs. These include preparatory classes focused on learning Spanish and co-official languages, ensuring that students can effectively participate in multilingual classrooms.

Professional development opportunities for teachers are also available, such as workshops and certifications in bilingual education. Programs like the "[Specialization Course in Bilingual Education](#)" equip educators with effective methodologies for implementing CLIL, including specific strategies to support immigrant students.

CLIL courses utilize a variety of tools and materials, including bilingual textbooks, digital platforms, and visual resources. Specific resources, such as scaffolding techniques and differentiated instruction plans, are designed to address the needs of immigrant students and language teachers. These courses are structured to develop both BICS and CALP. For instance, group discussions and role-playing enhance social communication, while project-based learning and subject-specific vocabulary activities strengthen academic language skills (Mehisto et al., 2008).

Examples of Activities:

- BICS: Pair work, real-life scenario simulations, and interactive games.
- CALP: Research projects, report writing, and scientific data analysis.

Assessments:

Spain employs formative and summative assessments to measure progress in BICS and CALP. Examples include oral presentations, written exams, and self-assessment tools to track linguistic and academic development.





Spain - Pitfalls

In Spain, the implementation of CLIL in classrooms with immigrant students presents several challenges, with linguistic barriers being one of the most significant. Many of these students have varying levels of proficiency in both their native language and Spanish, making the learning process more complex. This disparity can lead to cognitive overload, as they must simultaneously acquire academic content and a new language. Additionally, limited academic vocabulary can hinder their comprehension and participation in the curriculum. Another challenge is the need for greater teacher training, as not all educators have specialized preparation in multilingual teaching strategies adapted to the CLIL approach.

Cultural differences can also impact the adaptation of immigrant students to CLIL classrooms in Spain. Many come from education systems with different teaching methodologies, which can make it difficult for them to adjust to classroom dynamics. A lack of cultural representation in the curriculum may lead to disengagement and challenges in connecting with the learning process. Furthermore, classroom norms, such as active participation and collaborative work, may be unfamiliar to some students, creating additional barriers to integration.

Discrepancies between the education systems of students' home countries and the Spanish system can further complicate their experience in CLIL programs. A lack of curricular alignment can create gaps in prior knowledge, making it difficult for students to keep up with the content taught in CLIL lessons. Additionally, assessing students' progress in a language they are still acquiring may not accurately reflect their true understanding of the subject matter. In many autonomous communities, the availability of resources for CLIL education varies, and some schools may lack bilingual materials, appropriate technology, and specialized teacher training to adequately support an increasingly diverse student population.

Socioeconomic factors also play a key role in the integration of immigrant students into CLIL programs in Spain. Economic hardship in many families may limit access to educational resources at home, affecting students' academic performance. Social integration can also be challenging due to experiences of isolation or discrimination, which may undermine students' confidence and willingness to participate actively in class. Additionally, financial and logistical barriers may prevent students from accessing extracurricular support, such as after-school programs or tutoring.

For this reason, ensuring the effective implementation of CLIL in Spain requires a comprehensive approach that combines linguistic and pedagogical support with cultural inclusion strategies, education system adjustments, and measures to promote the social integration of immigrant students.



Spain - Good practices

Scaffolding language and content provides structured support to students in Spain as they develop both their Spanish language skills and subject knowledge. This method involves breaking down complex concepts into manageable steps and gradually reducing assistance as students gain confidence.

For example, in a primary school geography class, students learned about ecosystems using bilingual resources. The teacher provided glossaries with key terms in both Spanish and the students' native languages, along with visual aids such as diagrams and videos. Activities included matching vocabulary with images, creating labeled drawings, and presenting group projects. This approach helped students grasp complex terminology while simultaneously learning new content. Similarly, in a primary school in the Region of Murcia, teachers implemented CLIL in social and natural sciences classes by using bilingual glossaries, visual aids, and hands-on activities. These strategies facilitated students' understanding of complex terminology while enhancing their content knowledge.

A culturally inclusive curriculum enhances engagement and relevance by integrating elements from students' cultural backgrounds into CLIL lessons. In Spain, teachers can include multicultural examples and activities to foster an inclusive learning environment. In the Basque Country, the inclusion of students' cultural elements in CLIL lessons has been promoted. For instance, in a primary school science class, students explored the importance of good nutrition by sharing the types of food typical in their cultural backgrounds. This activity not only helped them understand the topic, but also encouraged cultural exchange and awareness, reflecting the diverse communities present in Spanish classrooms.

Technology plays an increasingly significant role in CLIL education in Spain by providing interactive and engaging ways to teach both language and content. Digital tools and online platforms offer multimedia resources, gamification, and opportunities for virtual collaboration, making learning more dynamic and accessible. Many Spanish schools are incorporating educational apps, online dictionaries, and interactive exercises to support both language development and subject learning. In Cantabria, for example, schools have adopted these digital tools extensively, ensuring that students have access to modern and varied educational resources.

Spain - Good practices

Peer collaboration and tutoring are effective strategies for supporting immigrant students in CLIL classrooms across Spain. Pairing them with fluent Spanish-speaking peers can accelerate language acquisition while fostering a supportive learning environment. In a primary school CLIL mathematics course, students worked in diverse teams to solve real-world problems, such as budgeting for a school event. Native-speaking students acted as mentors, assisting their immigrant peers in understanding mathematical terminology while working together to find solutions. Similarly, in a secondary school in the Community of Madrid, this approach reinforced academic learning and promoted social integration, aligning with Spain's inclusive education policies.

Integrating visual and kinesthetic learning methods can be particularly beneficial for immigrant students, especially in the early stages of language acquisition. Non-verbal teaching strategies, such as visual aids, gestures, and hands-on activities, make complex concepts more accessible. In a CLIL art course in Spain, for instance, students explored geometric shapes and symmetry through hands-on activities like creating origami designs and painting patterns. Throughout the lesson, the teacher emphasized key terms and phrases in Spanish, reinforcing vocabulary practically and engagingly. A similar approach was observed in Andalusia, where CLIL art classes used these strategies to make learning more accessible and engaging for students at different language proficiency levels.





Spain - Target groups' feedback

Educators play a crucial role in implementing CLIL methodologies and are often the first to observe their impact on immigrant students. Many teachers report that CLIL fosters greater engagement and motivation, particularly when lessons incorporate interactive and visually rich materials. Moreover, the use of real-life contexts makes learning more relevant and enjoyable for students. However, educators also face challenges in balancing the dual objectives of teaching content and language, especially when students have different proficiency levels. To address these difficulties, teachers emphasize the need for continuous professional development in CLIL-specific strategies, such as scaffolding and multilingual resource development. They also highlight the importance of having more multilingual and culturally inclusive materials to better support diverse classrooms.

From the perspective of immigrant students, CLIL has a significant impact on both their language acquisition and overall learning experience. Many students feel more confident in their ability to communicate in the national language, as CLIL lessons integrate visual resources, hands-on activities, and collaborative projects that aid in vocabulary retention and concept comprehension. Despite initial difficulties in adapting to a new teaching style and curriculum approach, students generally appreciate the opportunity to learn both the language and subject content simultaneously. Furthermore, peer collaboration plays a key role in their learning process, as working with fluent classmates enhances both their academic progress and social integration.

Parents of immigrant students also provide valuable insights into the broader impact of CLIL beyond the classroom. Many observe noticeable improvements in their children's language skills, which benefit their academic development and facilitate their integration into society. They also appreciate initiatives that strengthen the home-school connection, such as multilingual newsletters and opportunities to participate in classroom activities, as these make them feel more involved in their children's education. However, some parents express the desire for CLIL courses to incorporate more content related to their cultural backgrounds, ensuring that their children feel seen, valued, and represented within the learning environment.

The Regional Government of Andalusia established the Plan for the Promotion of Multilingualism, leading to the creation of a network of over 400 bilingual schools. This plan was recognized with the European Language Label in 2006 for its contribution to multilingual education. Furthermore, the study "CLIL in Andalusia" analyzes the region's transition from monolingual to multilingual education.

Spain - Target groups' feedback

In the Community of Madrid, bilingual programs have been implemented in over 300 public schools, both primary and secondary, offering numerous subjects in English. This program is notable for its rapid expansion in recent years. Additionally, the study "Content and Language Integrated Programmes in the Madrid Region: Overview and Research Findings" provides an overview of this initiative.

In La Rioja, projects such as the Linguistic Innovation Projects in Schools and Bilingual Sections have been established to enhance foreign language learning. The study "First Steps of CLIL in a Spanish Monolingual Community: The Case of La Rioja" describes these initiatives.

The Valencian Community has developed various CLIL implementation models tailored to the specific needs of its schools. Moreover, the article "CLIL Implementation in Spain: An Approach to Different Models" offers a detailed analysis of this process.

In Extremadura, Bilingual Section Projects have been implemented since the 2003-04 school year, aiming to promote bilingual education in primary and secondary schools. Additionally, the study "CLIL in Three Spanish Monolingual Communities: The Examples of Extremadura, Madrid, and La Rioja" analyzes these initiatives.



Spain - Conclusions

Spain demonstrates a strong commitment to implementing the CLIL approach at the primary, secondary, and vocational education levels, particularly in bilingual and trilingual regions. Language education policies emphasize multilingualism but lack specific national strategies explicitly aimed at minority immigrant students within the CLIL framework. CLIL courses in Spain effectively integrate content and language learning, supporting the development of both BICS and CALP. Despite these strengths, challenges remain regarding equitable access to CLIL programs, regional variability in implementation, and the limited availability of resources specifically designed for immigrant students.

It is recommended to develop a coherent national strategy that integrates the CLIL approach and provides specific support for minority immigrant students, ensuring consistency across all regions. It is important to strengthen teacher training programs by incorporating specialized methodologies for working with immigrant students in CLIL contexts, while also encouraging participation in professional exchange programs and continuous development workshops. Additionally, it would be beneficial to design and distribute resources and materials specifically tailored for these students, addressing both their academic and social language needs. Regarding assessment practices, an adaptive framework should be implemented that considers the linguistic and cultural diversity of immigrant students. Promoting collaboration between schools, local communities, and non-governmental organizations is essential to offer additional language support and cultural integration programs. Finally, regular evaluations of CLIL programs should be conducted to identify areas for improvement and replicate best practices at the national level.





Spain - References

- Dalton-Puffer, C. (2011). **Content-and-language integrated learning: From practice to principles?** *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31(1), 182-204. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190511000092>
- Mehisto, P., Marsh, D., & Frigols, M. J. (2008). **Uncovering CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning in bilingual and multilingual education**. Macmillan Education.
- Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional. (2023). **Programa de Inmersión Lingüística**. Recuperado de <https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/>
- Generalitat de Catalunya. (2022). **Plan de educación intercultural**. Departamento de Educación de Cataluña. Recuperado de <https://educacio.gencat.cat/>
- Fundación Secretariado Gitano. (2021). **Programas educativos y lingüísticos para la inclusión de estudiantes inmigrantes**. Recuperado de <https://www.gitanos.org/>
- Council of Europe. (2020). **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (Companion Volume)**. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. Recuperado de <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>
- European Commission. (2019). **Key competences for lifelong learning**. Publications Office of the European Union. Recuperado de <https://ec.europa.eu/>



COUNTRY REPORT THE NETHERLANDS



The Netherlands

Introduction

National and regional policy reference

CLIL practice

Pitfalls

Good practices

Target groups' feedback

Conclusions

References





The Netherlands - Introduction

The Netherlands has long been a destination for migrants due to its prosperity and religious tolerance. Immigrants make up 10.8% of the population, with their children accounting for another 10%. Historically, the Dutch encouraged post-war immigrants, particularly guest workers, to maintain their cultures, offering easy citizenship and minimal pressure to assimilate. However, by the 1990s, challenges such as poor labor market performance and struggles in education among immigrant communities raised concerns about persistent socio-economic disadvantages, often linked to limited Dutch language proficiency and societal knowledge.

The introduction of civic integration courses in 1998 aimed to address these gaps. However, the 2000s brought heated debates on integration issues like unemployment, school performance, and cultural differences, leading to restrictive policies targeting family migration and emphasizing

Describe the role of language education in integrating immigrant minority students.

Language education plays a vital role in integrating immigrant minority students in the Netherlands, particularly through several key Dutch approaches and systems.

a) Newcomer Education (Nieuwkomersonderwijs) – The Dutch education system provides specialized language classes for newly arrived immigrant students through dedicated newcomer classes or schools. These intensive Dutch language programs typically last 1-2 years, preparing students for mainstream education while also teaching cultural orientation and basic subject matter.

b) NT2 (Nederlands als Tweede Taal) – This structured approach to teaching Dutch as a second language is specifically designed for non-native speakers. In schools, NT2 instruction combines language acquisition with content learning, helping students develop both academic and social language skills necessary for success in Dutch education.

c) ISK (Internationale Schakelklas) – These international transition classes serve as a bridge between arrival and mainstream Dutch education for teenage immigrants. They focus intensively on Dutch language acquisition while maintaining academic development in other subjects, typically lasting 1-2 years depending on individual progress.

d) Integration with Regular Education – Dutch schools employ various strategies to support language learning while students participate in mainstream classes such as extra language support during regular classes, individual tutoring, dual-language approaches that value both home language and Dutch Collaboration between language teachers and subject teachers.

e) Family Support – Dutch schools often provide language support services for parents through: Adult language classes; Translation services for school communications; Parent meetings with language support; Cultural mediators who help bridge communication gaps.

The Netherlands - Introduction

f) Local Context – The approach varies by municipality and school, but generally aligns with Dutch integration policies emphasizing active participation in society, understanding of Dutch cultural norms and values, development of practical language skills for daily life, maintenance of connection to home culture and language,

- **General implementation of CLIL in the national education system.**

The implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the Dutch education system has specific distinctive characteristics (see Table below).

In the Netherlands, CLIL is primarily implemented in secondary education, particularly in VWO (pre-university) and HAVO (senior general secondary) tracks. These programs are often labeled as "tweetalig onderwijs" (TTO, bilingual education), with English as the primary additional language of instruction. The Dutch CLIL system follows guidelines established by the European Platform and Nuffic (the Dutch organization for internationalization in education). Schools must meet specific quality standards to receive official TTO certification, including: 1) At least 50% of subjects taught in English; 2) Required level of English proficiency for teachers (Cambridge C1 level minimum); 3) Integration of European and International Orientation (EIO); 4) Regular quality monitoring and assessment.

Common CLIL subjects include History, Geography, Biology, Mathematics, Physical Education, Arts and Culture. These subjects are taught in English while maintaining Dutch language arts and some other subjects in Dutch. Dutch schools implementing CLIL provide: Specialized teacher training in CLIL methodology; Professional development opportunities; Support for obtaining required language certificates; Collaboration opportunities between language and subject teachers.

The regular evaluations ensure program quality through: Student language proficiency tests; Program audits by Nuffic; Monitoring of academic achievement in both content and language; Parent and student satisfaction surveys.



The Netherlands - National and regional policy reference

National CLIL Policy in the Netherlands

The Dutch national CLIL framework operates through a structured system where the Ministry of Education provides official recognition and guidelines for bilingual education (TTO) programs, while Nuffic serves as the national coordinating body responsible for setting standards and providing accreditation. Schools implementing CLIL must meet specific requirements to receive and maintain their TTO certification, though the government provides flexibility within established quality parameters. The national policy primarily supports English, German, and French as CLIL languages, with English being the predominant choice. This framework is reinforced through a comprehensive quality assurance system that includes regular school inspections, required teacher qualifications and certifications, monitoring of student achievement, program evaluations by Nuffic, and collaboration with universities for research and development.

Regional CLIL Implementation across the Netherlands

At the regional level, CLIL implementation varies significantly based on local needs and demographics. Border regions, particularly those near Germany, often emphasize German-language CLIL programs, while urban areas typically focus on English-language CLIL to serve their international populations. Some regions develop specialized programs tailored to local industry or economic needs. T

Examining the Dutch CLIL policies reveals a notable gap in specific provisions for immigrant minority students. The existing CLIL policies primarily focus on Dutch native students learning content through English or other European languages, with limited explicit consideration of immigrant minority students' needs. The TTO (bilingual education) framework is largely designed for academically strong students in VWO and HAVO tracks, potentially creating accessibility barriers for many immigrant students.

The current policy framework lacks: 1) Specific provisions for using CLIL to support immigrant students' integration; 2) Guidelines for incorporating students' home languages in CLIL programs; 3) Clear pathways for immigrant students to access bilingual education programs; 3) Recognition of multilingual competencies immigrant students already possess; 4) Refer to governmental and non-governmental initiatives, assistance or support aimed at improving language skill of immigrant students.

The Dutch Language Support Initiatives can be systematized into governmental, non-governmental and municipal ones.

The Netherlands - National and regional policy reference

The Table below shows the diverse specifics with more detail.

No	Type of Language Support Initiative	Name	Details/Specifics
1.	Governmental Programme	ISK (Internationale Schakelklas)	Government-funded transition classes for newly arrived immigrant students aged 12-18
		LOWAN	Government organization providing support and resources for newcomer education
		NT2 (Nederlands als Tweede Taal)	Official Dutch as a second language program in schools
		VVE (Voor- en Vroegschoolse Educatie)	Early childhood education program with language support components
		Integration Programs (Inburgering)	Mandatory language and integration courses for adult immigrants, indirectly supporting student success
		Schakelklassen	Bridge classes for primary school students needing additional language support
2.	Non-Governmental Support	Language Buddies	Peer mentoring programs organized by various organizations
		Voorleesexpress	Reading support program connecting volunteers with families
		Taalmaatjes	Language partner programs run by various local organizations
		Het Begint met Taal	National organization supporting language volunteer initiatives
		Stichting Lezen & Schrijven	Foundation supporting literacy including programs for immigrant students
3.	Municipal initiatives		Local language cafes and conversation groups
			After-school homework support with language components
			Summer school programs focusing on language development
			Library programs specifically designed for immigrant children
			Community centers offering additional language support



The Netherlands - National and regional policy reference

Next to the above, there is Educational Institution Support, which can entail:

- University student volunteer programs;
- Extra tutoring programs;
- Parent-child language programs;
- Cultural mediator services;
- Bilingual teaching assistants in some schools, etc.

The Netherlands - CLIL practice

In the Netherlands, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) is primarily implemented in the following types of educational institutions: Primary, Secondary, Vocational and Higher educational institutions.

CLIL in primary schools is relatively limited but growing. It is usually implemented through bilingual primary education (Tweetalig Primair Onderwijs - TPO) programs. The Focus is to introduce young learners to English (or another foreign language) while teaching subjects like art, physical education, or science. The objective is to develop early bilingualism and intercultural awareness in students. Typical Subjects, where it can be observed and fulfills the expectations/needs are arts, music, physical education, and sometimes social studies or basic science concepts are being interwoven in the language mastery.

CLIL is most widely adopted at the secondary school level, particularly in bilingual education (Tweetalig Onderwijs - TTO) programs in a) Pre-University Education (VWO), where the focus is on academic CLIL subjects with a strong emphasis on preparing for international studies or careers.; b) Senior General Secondary Education (HAVO, where the TTO programs also exist, year are often with a focus on applied and practical CLIL instruction. There is the opportunity for Certification, where students in TTO programs may obtain Cambridge English certificates or participate in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program.

CLIL is less common in vocational education but is gradually being introduced to align with the demands of globalized industries. The focus is on English-taught vocational courses related to fields like hospitality, tourism, healthcare, or business. The objective is to equip students with the language skills needed for international employment and cross-cultural workplace settings. Some examples are tourism schools adopting CLIL for teaching subjects like customer service, international business communication, or culinary arts.



The Netherlands - CLIL practice

- CLIL courses are **adapted for immigrant minority students**.

CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) courses in the Netherlands are increasingly being adapted to meet the needs of immigrant minority students, though the primary focus often remains on bilingual or English-taught education.

The CLIL courses differ between those addressing language barriers, those which tackle cultural sensitivity with the content provided; ones that use multilingualism as a strength and CLIL courses that embed Peer and Community Support and make use of technology in any way they can.

- **Teacher preparation and professional development opportunities** for implementing CLIL.

Teacher preparation and professional development for implementing CLIL in the Netherlands focus on equipping educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to integrate content and language learning effectively. Pre-service training programs for aspiring CLIL teachers typically include modules on bilingual education, language pedagogy, and strategies for scaffolding academic content in a second language. Universities and teacher training colleges often collaborate with bilingual schools to provide practical teaching experiences, allowing future educators to apply theoretical knowledge in real classrooms. This combination of academic preparation and hands-on practice ensures that teachers are well-versed in CLIL methodologies and the challenges of teaching in linguistically diverse settings.

- **Tools and materials used to teach CLIL courses**, particularly for immigrant students – focus on the needs of language educators and students.

Teaching CLIL courses in the Netherlands, particularly for immigrant students, relies on a variety of tools and materials designed to meet both content and language learning objectives. Language educators often utilize multimodal resources, including bilingual textbooks, online platforms, and visual aids, to make academic content accessible to students with diverse language proficiencies. Interactive tools like videos, simulations, and virtual labs are commonly used to create an engaging learning environment and bridge language gaps. For younger students, educators incorporate storytelling, games, and picture dictionaries to develop basic vocabulary and comprehension while fostering an enjoyable learning experience. Digital tools such as apps for language learning, subtitled educational videos, and translation software also play a key role in supporting linguistic needs, particularly for newly arrived immigrant students.



The Netherlands - CLIL practice

Additionally, teachers use scaffolded instructional materials like sentence frames, graphic organizers, and step-by-step guides to support students in building Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Authentic materials, including newspapers, podcasts, and case studies, are often adapted to align with students' linguistic levels, providing them with opportunities to engage with real-world content in the target language. Collaborative tools like shared digital whiteboards and language portfolios allow students to actively participate in their learning while developing interpersonal communication skills. To address the cultural and linguistic diversity of immigrant students, some educators employ culturally responsive teaching materials, ensuring the inclusion of relatable examples and multilingual support where necessary. These resources, combined with targeted teacher training and adaptive classroom practices, create an environment conducive to both language acquisition and academic success.

- **CLIL courses address both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (social communication) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (academic language skills).**

In the Netherlands, CLIL courses effectively address both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) by fostering immersive, context-rich environments that balance social and academic language development. Through interactive activities such as group discussions, role-plays, and peer collaboration, students are encouraged to use the target language in authentic, everyday contexts, enhancing their BICS. For immigrant students, this social communication emphasis is crucial for building confidence and integrating into the classroom community. Teachers often create opportunities for informal interactions during and outside lessons, helping students practice conversational skills in non-threatening settings. Visual aids, hands-on tasks, and real-life scenarios further support comprehension and the practical application of language.

By combining language instruction with cognitive skill-building, CLIL courses in the Netherlands foster a holistic approach to language learning that aligns with students' immediate and long-term communication needs.

- **BICS and CALP in the classroom setting.**

In Dutch classrooms using CLIL, activities aimed at developing Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) often involve interactive and social tasks that encourage students to use the target language in natural, conversational contexts. For example, students may engage in role-plays where they simulate real-life scenarios, such as ordering at a restaurant or planning a group outing. These activities allow students to practice functional language in a relaxed environment, emphasizing fluency and spontaneity. Pair or small group discussions about familiar topics, like hobbies or weekend plans, further promote social language use, helping students build confidence and navigate informal communication with peers.



The Netherlands - CLIL practice

To develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), tasks are typically more structured and content-driven, requiring the use of advanced vocabulary and critical thinking. For instance, students might analyze a historical event and write a structured essay or present their findings using academic language. Science lessons might involve conducting experiments and describing the methodology and results using precise terminology. Teachers support these tasks by providing frameworks, such as writing templates or sentence starters, to guide students in expressing complex ideas clearly. Additionally, reading and discussing academic texts helps students navigate subject-specific language, enhancing their ability to comprehend and articulate abstract concepts. These activities ensure that students build the linguistic proficiency needed for academic success.

Assessment of progress in Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) within Dutch CLIL classrooms often involves informal and formative methods that capture students' ability to communicate effectively in social contexts. Teachers frequently use observational techniques, noting how students interact with peers during group work, discussions, or role-playing exercises. These observations focus on students' fluency, ability to initiate and sustain conversations, and use of appropriate expressions for the context. Peer feedback is another common tool, where students evaluate each other's communication in structured tasks, such as debates or collaborative projects, providing a more interactive and reflective assessment experience.

For Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), assessments are more formal and rigorous, often aligned with curriculum goals in specific subjects. These assessments typically include written tasks, such as essays, lab reports, or summaries of academic texts, which evaluate students' ability to use subject-specific vocabulary and express complex ideas. Oral presentations or subject-based discussions are also common, where students are assessed on their ability to explain concepts, support arguments, and use precise terminology. Standardized tests or teacher-designed exams may further measure comprehension of academic texts, grammatical accuracy, and the ability to apply learned concepts in new contexts.

The Netherlands - Pitfalls

Implementing CLIL for immigrant minority students in the Netherlands poses several challenges, primarily stemming from linguistic and cultural barriers.

Many immigrant students arrive with **limited proficiency in both Dutch and English**, the two languages often used in CLIL programs. This dual linguistic hurdle can hinder their ability to grasp subject content effectively, as they may struggle with basic language comprehension and the academic terminology required for deeper learning. Cultural differences can also impact the success of CLIL implementation. Immigrant students may find it challenging to connect with teaching materials or classroom practices that do not reflect their cultural backgrounds. The lack of culturally inclusive curricula may reduce engagement and hinder the development of a sense of belonging. Furthermore, systemic barriers such as insufficient teacher training in culturally responsive pedagogy and limited access to additional language support exacerbate these issues.

The Netherlands - Good practices

The Dutch context offers several **successful strategies and innovative approaches** to implementing CLIL that address the unique needs of immigrant minority students. One effective strategy is the integration of scaffolded language support into subject teaching.

For example, educators use visual aids, glossaries, and sentence starters to help students navigate complex subject-specific terminology. These scaffolds allow learners to focus on content comprehension without being overwhelmed by language demands. Schools such as Wolfert van Borselen in Rotterdam have effectively implemented these strategies, combining hands-on activities with linguistic scaffolding to make science and history lessons accessible to students with varying language proficiencies.

Another innovative approach is the **emphasis on collaborative learning**. Pairing immigrant students with native or more proficient peers fosters a supportive learning environment where students can practice both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). This strategy is evident in schools like the International School Utrecht, where project-based learning encourages collaboration..

Additionally, **cultural inclusivity is increasingly prioritized in Dutch CLIL programs**. Teachers incorporate multicultural perspectives into their lessons, ensuring immigrant students see their backgrounds reflected in the curriculum. For example, history lessons may include narratives from the students' countries of origin, fostering a sense of connection and relevance.





The Netherlands - Target groups' feedback

Educators working with CLIL for immigrant students in the Netherlands generally highlight its potential for fostering language acquisition and academic engagement. Many teachers note that integrating content and language instruction helps students develop both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) more effectively, as students are immersed in real-world language contexts that align with academic subjects. However, they also emphasize challenges such as adapting materials to diverse language proficiencies, managing cultural differences, and addressing the varying levels of prior education among immigrant students. Some educators have reported that immigrant students often find the dual focus of CLIL demanding, particularly when their language skills are still in the early stages of development. Teachers also cite limited training and resources for addressing these unique needs. Nonetheless, innovative strategies, such as scaffolding techniques, collaborative group work, and the use of visual aids, have proven effective in supporting students' learning.

Immigrant minority students participating in CLIL courses in the Netherlands have shared diverse insights into their experiences, reflecting both the benefits and challenges of this educational approach. Many students express appreciation for the opportunity to learn Dutch and another foreign language while engaging with academic content, noting that this integrated approach helps them feel more connected to their new environment. They often highlight the positive impact of group activities and interactive lessons, which foster social bonds and build confidence in using the language in real-life contexts. For some, the opportunity to learn through CLIL has made transitioning into the Dutch education system smoother, as it provides a structured and immersive language-learning experience.

However, students also report difficulties, particularly when their initial language skills are limited. The dual challenge of grasping new content and learning a language simultaneously can feel overwhelming, especially when insufficient scaffolding is provided. Many students mention the importance of having supportive teachers who are patient and willing to adjust their teaching methods to accommodate varying levels of proficiency. Additionally, some immigrant students feel a cultural disconnect in the curriculum, which can make it harder to relate to the material or fully engage with it. Despite these challenges, students generally recognize the long-term value of CLIL in preparing them for academic success and future opportunities in a multilingual and multicultural society.

The Netherlands - Target groups' feedback

- Perspectives from key community groups, such as: parents of students attending a CLIL course.

The perspectives of key community groups regarding CLIL courses for students in the Netherlands highlight a mix of optimism, concerns, and strategic considerations. Parents of students often view CLIL as a valuable opportunity for their children to develop language proficiency alongside academic skills, recognizing its potential to enhance future employability and integration into a multicultural society. However, some express concerns about the added cognitive load and whether their children receive adequate support to thrive in a dual-language learning environment.

School authorities generally regard CLIL as an innovative and effective teaching method that aligns with the goals of modern, inclusive education. They emphasize the importance of well-trained educators who can effectively balance content delivery with language instruction and the need for sufficient resources to support this dual focus. Authorities acknowledge the challenges of implementing CLIL in diverse classrooms, such as varying language levels and cultural backgrounds, but highlight its potential to foster inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding.

Governmental institutions view CLIL as an important policy tool for fostering multilingualism and supporting the integration of immigrant students into the Dutch education system. They stress its alignment with national and European priorities for education and language learning, including preparing students for globalized job markets. However, they also identify challenges such as ensuring equitable access to CLIL programs across schools, addressing resource disparities, and supporting teacher training initiatives.





The Netherlands - Conclusions

From a national perspective, CLIL courses for immigrant students in the Netherlands reveal several key findings.

First, the integration of language and content teaching has proven effective in promoting both linguistic proficiency and subject matter understanding, aiding academic integration.

Second, the use of bilingual and visual resources helps bridge language gaps, particularly for students new to the Dutch educational system.

Third, teacher training and professional development play a crucial role in equipping educators with the skills needed to address the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of immigrant students.

Fourth, challenges persist in aligning curriculum content with students' varied language abilities, requiring adaptive teaching strategies and additional support.

Lastly, the active collaboration between schools, parents, and governmental institutions is essential to creating inclusive learning environments and ensuring the success of immigrant students in CLIL programs.

While many schools strive to adapt their CLIL courses for immigrant minority students, challenges remain:

- 1) Limited Resources – some schools lack the funding or staff needed to implement fully inclusive programs;
- 2) Linguistic Gap – for students who are neither proficient in Dutch nor the CLIL language (usually English), the dual challenge of learning content and language can be overwhelming.;
- 3) Standardized Testing – national assessments and exams may not fully account for the linguistic and cultural hurdles faced by immigrant students.

In the Netherlands, adapting CLIL for immigrant minority students involves a blend of linguistic support, culturally inclusive content, peer and community engagement, and teacher training. While significant progress has been made, ongoing efforts are needed to ensure equitable access to CLIL programs and to fully unlock their potential as tools for integration and academic success.

The Netherlands - Conclusions

- Feasible recommendations for improving the implementation of CLIL courses for immigrant minority students in classroom environments.

To improve the implementation of CLIL courses for immigrant minority students in the Netherlands, it is essential to adopt a multifaceted approach that enhances inclusivity and effectiveness. One key recommendation is to provide targeted professional development programs for educators, focusing on strategies for supporting students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. Training should include methods for scaffolding complex content, integrating cultural diversity into lessons, and fostering a supportive classroom environment. Additionally, schools should develop collaborative practices that involve parents and community members, creating a shared understanding of the educational goals and offering language support to families when needed.

Another critical step is to invest in differentiated teaching materials that cater to varying levels of language proficiency while maintaining subject rigor. Resources such as interactive digital tools, multilingual glossaries, and culturally responsive teaching aids can help bridge language gaps and enhance student engagement.





The Netherlands - References

- Denman, J., Tanner, R., & de Graaff, R. (2013). "CLIL in Dutch bilingual education: How Dutch history teachers focus on second language teaching." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*
- Kampen van, E., Admiraal, W., & Berry, A. (2018). "Content and language integrated learning in the Netherlands: Teachers' self-reported pedagogical practices." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*
- Nuffic (2024). "Standard for Bilingual Education in English - Secondary Education"
- Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2023). "Quality Framework for Bilingual Inspectie van het Onderwijs (2023). "The State of Education in the Netherlands"
- Nuffic (2023). "Annual Report on International Education in the Netherlands"
- Dutch Ministry of Education website section on bilingual education - <https://www.nuffic.nl/sites/default/files/2020-08/bilingual-education-in-dutch-schools-a-success-story.pdf>
- LOWAN resources for newcomer education (<https://www.lowan.nl>)
- Integration of newly arrived students in the Netherlands (Study of the Utrecht University)
- <https://studenttheses.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/20.500.12932/40983/Masterthesis%20Avramidou%2C%20Z-7595747.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>



CONCLU SION





Conclusion

The desk research on the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) across Poland, Croatia, Spain, and the Netherlands reveals both shared challenges and distinct approaches tailored to each country's educational and immigration contexts.

In Spain, CLIL is integrated into bilingual and trilingual regions, particularly in Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, where subjects like science and history are taught in English alongside Spanish and regional languages. The emphasis on scaffolding techniques, culturally inclusive curricula, and peer collaboration has proven effective in supporting immigrant students. However, regional differences in resource allocation and the need for specialized teacher training remain as significant barriers. Spain's recommendations highlight the necessity of a coherent national strategy to ensure access and standardized support for immigrant learners.

The Netherlands demonstrates a well-structured CLIL framework, primarily in secondary education through bilingual programs (TTO), with rigorous quality standards and a focus on English. However, CLIL policies predominantly cater to native Dutch students, leaving immigrant minority students underserved despite specialized language programs like NT2 and ISK. Educators stress the importance of intercultural training and the integration of students' multilingual competences into CLIL methodologies. The Dutch system's flexibility at the municipal level allows localized adaptations, yet there are still national policy gaps when it comes to addressing the unique needs of immigrant populations.

Croatia's CLIL implementation is in its early stages, with pilot projects such as the Prelog Secondary School's bilingual literature courses serving as good examples. While these initiatives support creativity and language-literary skills, systemic challenges like insufficient teacher training, lack of standardized guidelines, and limited materials slow down broader adoption. Croatian educators advocate for a national CLIL center to provide expertise and formalize implementation, alongside enhanced collaboration between language and subject teachers. Croatia's focus on EU-funded integration programs underscores the potential for CLIL to bridge linguistic and academic gaps, provided systemic support is strengthened.

Conclusion

Poland faces unique challenges due to recent demographic shifts, particularly the influx of Ukrainian refugees. CLIL is primarily applied in teaching English to younger students, with limited adaptation for Polish language instruction targeting immigrants. Current practices rely on remedial classes rather than CLIL-based methodologies, worsened by staffing shortages and underfunding. However, upcoming curricular reforms emphasizing project-based learning offer opportunities to align CLIL with broader educational goals. Recommendations include targeted teacher training, culturally responsive materials, and partnerships with bilingual schools abroad to enhance CLIL's relevance for immigrant integration.

Common challenges across all countries include insufficient teacher preparation, resource limitations, and policy gaps in addressing immigrant students' needs. Successful strategies, such as Spain's scaffolding techniques, the Netherlands' structured bilingual frameworks, and Croatia's collaborative teaching models, highlight the importance of context-specific adaptations. Recommendations emphasize the need for enhanced professional development, inclusive material design, and policy frameworks that explicitly integrate CLIL into immigrant education. By addressing these areas, CLIL can evolve as a transformative tool for supporting academic success and social cohesion among immigrant minority students across Europe.





Co-funded by
the European Union



PARTNERS



USTANOVA ZA
OBRAZOVANJE
ODRASLIH

ADULT
EDUCATION
INSTITUTION



© CARE project, 2025



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Project Number: 2024-1-PL01-KA220-SCH-000256498

