

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
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BRIDGING HISTORY AND LANGUAGE: DEVELOPING CLIL
LESSON PLANS TO TEACH WORLD WAR II TO YEAR 9
LEARNERS

MA thesis

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ABSTRACT

This MA thesis explores the implementation of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to teach Estonian history, specifically the period of 1939-1941, to Year 9 students in a basic school in central Estonia. The study was conducted as a qualitative case study and aimed to investigate (1) students' perceptions of learning history in English, (2) how to compile an effective CLIL lesson plan, and (3) teachers' perspectives on implementing CLIL.

The lessons were designed by the author and delivered by an English teacher. Data were collected through classroom observations, student questionnaires, and teacher reflections. The results suggest that CLIL can enhance student motivation and support both language and content learning, particularly through interactive tasks such as quizzes and role-play. However, the study also revealed challenges, including students' varied language proficiency levels, time constraints, and increased teacher planning demands.

The thesis includes a literature review, a description of the lesson planning and implementation process, data analysis, and a conclusion. Lesson materials are teacher notes included in the appendices.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BICS	Basic Interpersonal Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment
CLIL	Content and language integrated learning
EFL	English as a foreign language
EMI	English-Medium Instruction
L1	Mother tongue
L2	Second language
LAK-õpe	Lõimitud Aine- ja Keeleõpe (Estonian term for CLIL)

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language proficiency has become vital in 21st-century education, shaped by globalisation and multicultural communication. Although everyday life is inherently complex, with various elements intricately interconnected, this complexity is sometimes overlooked in education due to time constraints, prescribed learning outcomes, and teacher-centred, subject-isolated methods prioritising factual recall over interdisciplinary connections and applied understanding (Beane 1997; Drake & Reid 2010).

In Estonia, the national curriculum emphasises integrating across subject areas. It encourages teachers to link knowledge into a coherent whole and promote cross-curricular competencies (Riigi Teataja 2023). According to the curriculum appendix for foreign languages, intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary integrations are essential for meaningful language learning (Riigi Teataja, Lisa 8 2023). In other words, students should not learn language in isolation but through connections within the language subject area (intradisciplinary) and linking it to different subjects like history or science (interdisciplinary).

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) bridges the long-existing chasm between subject teaching and the teaching of languages by combining them into a unified method. By doing this, the learning of the subject matter and the education of the language co-occur, creating a richer and more substantial learning process (Dalton-Puffer 2007; Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010).

Although the concept did not originate with the European Commission, it was pivotal in promoting Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) during the 1990s. CLIL was introduced as a strategic initiative to enhance language proficiency and subject-specific knowledge across the EU member states (Marsh, 2002). The development of CLIL was

influenced by earlier bilingual education models, particularly Canadian immersion programmes, which aimed to foster multilingualism and prepare students for increasingly globalised societies. The importance of CLIL is also evident in its alignment with widely accepted educational standards such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe 2020). Designed to enhance both content and language learning, CLIL fosters plurilingual and intercultural competencies. According to the CEFR Companion Volume, such approaches equip students with practical language skills and promote social cohesion, democracy, and cultural diversity through inclusive education (Council of Europe 2020). CLIL offers an effective means of developing cognitive and critical thinking skills, as Dallinger et al. (2016) concluded.

For CLIL to be effective, clear definitions and structured frameworks are required. The CEFR primarily serves as a framework for language learning by providing explicit descriptors of communicative competence. Its structured levels also support planning coherent teaching and learning activities, offering a standard reference for assessing language proficiency across different educational contexts (Council of Europe 2020). For CLIL to achieve similar clarity and impact, it requires well-defined models and a consistent taxonomy to ensure educators and learners understand its objectives and methodologies. The lack of a unified conceptualisation of CLIL can lead to implementation inconsistencies, as Cenoz, Genesee and Durk (2013) noted. Without clear guidelines, the dual goals of language and content learning risk being unevenly prioritised.

Blending history learning with language skills makes learning more enriched and valuable. By reading historical sources in English, debating cause and effect relations, and analysing historical happenings, the students' language skills can be enhanced, and they develop

the abilities of higher-order thinkers that make them academically successful. Teaching history revolves around narratives, argumentation, and assessing different perspectives; it requires language-rich interactions: discussion, debate, and source analysis. Teaching history through CLIL aligns with modern pedagogical trends prioritising active learning, communication, and interdisciplinary approaches (Riigi Teataja 2024). Given Estonia's history and intersections with broader global events, CLIL offers possibilities to gain a deeper understanding of the past. By implementing CLIL in a history classroom, this thesis explores how the approach can enhance student engagement, content acquisition, and language development.

This thesis explores developing and implementing CLIL-based history lessons for Year 9 students. While the project's initial focus was on teacher collaboration, the final implementation leaned more heavily towards enriching English instruction through historical content delivered by an English teacher using materials developed by the author. The history teacher was consulted and involved during the planning phase, but did not co-teach the lessons. Therefore, the study uses a classroom-based intervention to support historical comprehension and English language development. As a qualitative case study, this thesis focuses on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CLIL-based history lessons.

The lessons are based on Unit 23, titled *Estonia in World War II (1939-1941)*, from the history textbook *Ajaloo õpik 9. klassile. Lähiajalugu, I osa* (Värä, Pajur & Tannberg 2015). The initial draft of this chapter was translated into English using Chatgpt and subsequently reviewed and revised by the author. This unit was chosen for several reasons. Firstly, World War II is a historically significant and emotionally engaging topic that encourages critical thinking, discussion, and analysis of primary sources. Secondly, Year 9 pupils between 15 and 16 have the cognitive development and linguistic aptitude necessary to consider more advanced aspects of

history. The selection also corresponds with the author's concern with how pupils absorb and respond to subject area terminology in a foreign language. The theme offers semantic and conceptual difficulties, providing a good case study for considering how the historical terms and the associated content might become accessible in a teaching context using CLIL. This selection thus fulfilled not just pedagogical purposes but offered a professional challenge as well.

The research process consisted of planning, implementation, and reflection. The author designed the lesson plans, while an experienced English teacher delivered the lessons. The implementation was followed by observations, student questionnaires, and teacher feedback to evaluate how the students engaged with the lessons and how content and language outcomes were met.

Based on the literature and personal experience, the following research questions were posed:

1. How do students perceive CLIL while studying Estonian history in English?
2. How can an effective CLIL lesson plan be compiled that enhances content and language learning equally?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions of implementing CLIL?

The study uses a qualitative case study approach to design and evaluate lesson plans for Year 9 learners. The following chapters review the literature on CLIL's methodology, describe the research design, and analyse the data from classroom observations and the learners' views. The lesson plans and the teacher's journal are included in the appendices.

1 EXPLORING CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL): FOUNDATIONS, BENEFITS, AND CHALLENGES

This literature review discusses the theoretical basis and instructional practice of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). It presents general models of CLIL and discusses the approach's advantages and drawbacks concerning learners' second language growth, motivation, and subject matter learning. The review also addresses teachers' views and the situations in which CLIL should be practised to be more successful.

1.1 Definition and Principles of CLIL

In language education, particularly in multilingual and culturally diverse settings, it is essential to distinguish between the various approaches to content-based instruction. This distinction becomes especially relevant in secondary education, where the chosen method can significantly affect both students' subject learning and their language development. Recognising the differences among these models enables educators and policymakers to make more informed decisions regarding curriculum design, teacher preparation, and assessment practices. Distinct pedagogical aims, language acquisition assumptions, and classroom implementation implications underpin each approach.

To situate this study, it is necessary to distinguish between three related but distinct concepts: CLIL, English-medium instruction (EMI), and *LAK-õpe*, the Estonian term typically used to refer to CLIL. While EMI involves teaching content subjects through English without an explicit focus on language learning (as was often the case during Soviet-era bilingual education), CLIL is dual-focused, with clearly defined content and language objectives (Cenoz et al. 2013; Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010). In Estonia, "*LAK-õpe*" is understood inconsistently, sometimes

referring to full CLIL, partial or language-enriched instruction, or EMI-style practices. This thesis defines CLIL as a dual-focused approach where historical content and English language learning are intentionally planned, scaffolded, and assessed. To better situate CLIL on this spectrum, it is helpful to distinguish it from immersion approaches, which differ both in structure and pedagogical aim.

Immersion refers to an instructional method in which the target language serves as the medium of instruction across multiple or all subjects, often introduced at an early age (Genesee 1987). Its primary objective is to enhance learners' language proficiency through sustained exposure, with subject matter acting as a vehicle for language input. CLIL is more flexible than immersion, often implemented in later stages of education, and tailored to learners' varying proficiency levels and specific subject areas (Dalton-Puffer 2011). Unlike immersion programs, which assume long-term, sustained exposure to the target language, CLIL is typically introduced later and integrates language objectives into subject teaching. (Mehisto et al. 2008).

Traditional language instruction is often characterised by teacher-centred delivery and a strong focus on grammar, vocabulary, and the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. These lessons frequently rely on textbooks, drills, translation tasks, treating a language as a system to be mastered rather than a tool for communication (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols 2008; Gibson 2002). Although such methods have been widely criticised in the literature, they still dominate many classrooms. This persistent gap between theory and practice underscores the need for approaches like CLIL, which link language development with meaningful content engagement (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010; Dalton-Puffer 2007).

Learning can be scaffolded through peer support and the integration of L1. CLIL offers pedagogical flexibility, allowing adaptations to different contexts, learner needs, and levels of

language proficiency. Learning can be scaffolded through peer support, the integration of L1 in instructions based on learners' language proficiency, differentiated materials, and additional visual support aids (Roiha 2014).

Given that learners enter CLIL programmes with varying language proficiency and content familiarity levels, choosing an appropriate implementation model is vital. Effective participation in CLIL lessons, especially in cognitively demanding subjects such as history, requires students to have at least intermediate (B1) proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe 2020). By this stage, most students can follow and participate in subject lessons delivered in a second language, even in cognitively demanding areas such as history. As Ioannou-Georgiou and Pavlou (2011) note, with appropriate support, learners at this level can manage the dual challenge of processing complex content and using the target language effectively. It's important to consider how prepared students are when deciding how best to implement CLIL in the classroom.

To accommodate different levels of proficiency and subject focus, CLIL can be implemented through various models situated along a continuum from language-led to content-led instruction. Bentley (2010), writing from a practitioner-oriented perspective, distinguishes between soft CLIL, where language teachers integrate subject-related content into language lessons, and hard CLIL, where subject teachers deliver curricular content in a foreign language. Building on this distinction, Zhaukina et al. (2024) similarly define soft CLIL as focusing on language development with implicit content integration, while hard CLIL involves explicit subject teaching and greater cognitive and linguistic demands. In addition, Colye, Hood and Marsh (2010) offer a broader pedagogical foundation through the 4Cs Framework, Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture, which supports flexible implementation and highlights

the interdependence of language and subject learning.

In designing the lesson plans, the author drew on Cummins' Quadrant Model as a theoretical framework to ensure that both language proficiency and cognitive demand were appropriately balanced. This model, developed by Jim Cummins, categorises learning tasks into four quadrants based on their contextual support and cognitive complexity. It offers valuable insights for scaffolding language learning in content-based instruction (Cummins 1983). The goal in using this model was to design tasks that would guide learners from more supported, straightforward activities towards more abstract and cognitively challenging ones, all delivered in the target language. This progression was intended to help students develop language skills within a CLIL framework.

1.2 CLIL in Foreign Language Education: Benefits and Challenges

CLIL has been shown to support vocabulary development, encourage greater cultural awareness, and bring more variety into the classroom, factors that often contribute to higher levels of student motivation (Palopson 2015; Oattes et al. 2018; Vraciu & Marsol 2023). These benefits are more likely to emerge when CLIL is supported by a blended approach that includes well-designed, student-centred materials and purposeful and engaging activities (Rafi & Morgan 2023).

Technology-enhanced learning, such as computer-based activities, has further endorsed motivation in CLIL lessons, especially when combined with learners' self-regulation skills (Štefková & Danihelova 2023). Lo (2024) suggests that EFL learners' motivation in CLIL lessons is enhanced by using authentic materials, and strong self-regulation skills further strengthen it.

CLIL increases exposure to the target language (Štefková & Danihelova 2023), which is particularly beneficial in contexts where English is spoken as a foreign language. Its flexibility allows content and language teachers to integrate subject-specific elements into their lessons. Well-chosen materials can enhance speaking skills (Ravelo 2013), which are among the primary areas of focus in language teaching according to CEFR (Council of Europe 2020), as well as productive skills (Vraciu et al. 2023). Moreover, CLIL has increased learners' willingness to communicate in the target language (Lockley 2015).

Studies by Dallinger et al. (2016) and Lo (2024) emphasise that while CLIL promotes listening and cognitive engagement, improving overall language proficiency or content mastery depends heavily on input quality and learners' language level. CLIL also increases exposure to the target language (Štefková & Danihelova 2023), which is particularly beneficial in contexts where English is spoken as a foreign language. Its flexibility allows content and language teachers to integrate subject-specific elements into their lessons. Well-chosen materials can enhance speaking skills (Ravelo 2013), which are among the primary areas of focus in language teaching according to CEFR (Council of Europe 2020), as well as productive skills (Vraciu et al. 2023). Moreover, CLIL has increased the participants' willingness to communicate in the target language (Lockley 2015). Dallinger et al. (2016) challenge previous findings, arguing that while CLIL fosters cognitive and receptive skills, particularly listening, this effect does not extend to overall English proficiency or content knowledge. Similarly, a shift appears to favour content over explicit language instruction, especially at higher language levels (Oattes et al. 2018).

The methodology and the balance between language and content instruction have raised concerns about its potential impact on students' native language development, particularly regarding mastery of subject-specific terminology in their mother tongue (Dalton-Puffer 2011;

Palopson 2015). Moreover, Morton and Llinares (2018) observed that students with higher foreign language proficiency achieved better outcomes in content learning. Similar issues have been observed when supplementary materials lack curricular alignment or academic relevance (Rafi & Morgan 2023). Furthermore, some teachers question whether students can attain the same depth of subject knowledge as they would in their native language. Broader CLIL research highlighted the need for targeted support to ensure an appropriate balance between content and language learning (Dalton-Puffer 2011).

Students have expressed concerns regarding the benefits of CLIL compared to traditional teaching methods (Rafi & Morgan 2023). EFL learners have perceived their language skills, especially receptive skills, to be insufficient (Lo 2024). While CLIL is widely recognised for its potential to support language development, it may not always lead to equally strong gains in subject knowledge. Recent research indicates that many EFL learners remain uncertain about their language skills, particularly in receptive areas such as listening and reading, which can limit their confidence when engaging with academic content (Lo 2024). This concern is especially relevant in CLIL classrooms, where students' ability to grasp subject matter is closely tied to how accessible and well-supported the materials are. As Dallinger et al. (2016) argue, if materials are not carefully selected and adapted, CLIL may support language development at the expense of deeper subject understanding, limiting its potential to deliver truly integrated learning outcomes.

Recognising and responding to individual learning differences is especially important in CLIL settings, where students must simultaneously navigate subject content and language learning. Roiha's (2014) study in Finland highlights how challenging it can be for teachers to adapt CLIL instruction for students with special educational needs. While there is a growing

body of international research on CLIL, much less attention has been given to how it works in Estonian classrooms. In particular, we still know very little about its longer-term impact on students in terms of academic development and their future educational or career paths.

Existing publications have primarily examined language immersion and bilingual education, with fewer empirical studies addressing CLIL practices in mainstream basic education. Some research has discussed the challenges of balancing content and language objectives in Estonian schools (Palopson 2015; Reino 2019), yet there is still a lack of data on practical implementation, learner outcomes, and teacher experiences.

As Estonia moves toward increasingly multilingual classrooms, there is a growing need for locally grounded research that addresses CLIL's application across different school types and learner profiles. Despite the increasing importance of educational technology, its role in advancing CLIL practices in Estonia remains underexplored. Addressing these gaps through context-sensitive research and inclusive pedagogical design is essential for advancing equitable multilingual education. The literature suggests that CLIL represents a promising yet complex approach to multilingual education. The following section explores how CLIL has been approached in Estonia to date.

1.3 CLIL in Estonia

CLIL, referred to as *LAK-õpe* in Estonian, has a distinct and evolving history within Estonia, shaped by both international influences and local educational priorities. The beginnings of CLIL in Estonia can be traced as far back as the 1960s, when Tartu State University launched a programme to prepare history and geography teachers to work in English. Housed within the Department of Foreign Languages, the initiative aimed to develop the subject-specific language skills needed for bilingual instruction, well before CLIL was formally recognised as a

pedagogical model. The initiative, which began at Tallinn Secondary School No.7, gradually expanded to other schools in Tallinn, as well as Rapla and Rakvere (Allpere & Leiten 1968). Although these early programmes laid the foundation for subject teaching through English, they more closely resembled what is now classified as English-medium instruction (EMI), with little emphasis on language objectives (Cenoz, Genesee & Durk 2013). This stands in contrast to modern CLIL approaches, which are dual-focused.

The restoration of independence in 1991 marked a pivotal shift. In the following years, Estonia began experimenting with various models of bilingual education, influenced by international approaches. CLIL was gradually adopted as one such strategy, supporting both educational innovation and efforts to strengthen the status of Estonian as the national language, particularly in Russian-speaking regions (Rannut 2003). In the years following independence, Estonia began experimenting with different models of bilingual education. Many of the early programmes took inspiration from Canadian and Finnish immersion approaches, which were already well established. Over time, international cooperation helped shape a more structured approach to CLIL, enabling the adaptation of global ideas to local needs. As Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols (2010) point out, this process laid the groundwork for integrating CLIL more systematically into the national curriculum. Today, CLIL is a familiar part of the Estonian education system, and many teachers see it as an effective way to support both language learning and subject knowledge (Teppe 2023).

Today, CLIL is implemented in diverse ways across Estonia's education system, shaped by global models and local classroom realities. It is implemented across various levels, from early childhood education to secondary schools, often to enhance Estonian language skills among minority groups and foreign language learning (Riigi Teataja 2024).

In Estonia, various approaches have been used to implement CLIL, drawing inspiration from international practices while adapting to local needs. Many schools support learners by using visual materials, structured scaffolding, and a combination of learning methods to suit students with different levels of language proficiency (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols 2008). While the language immersion programme represents a more intensive model, often involving near-complete instruction in the target language, CLIL is generally more flexible. It allows for a balanced integration of language and content learning and can be adapted to support native and non-native speakers (*Keelekümbluse Käsiraamat* 2005). This adaptability has made CLIL a practical and inclusive option within Estonia's multilingual education landscape.

Following broader national practices, this study also uses a well-established theoretical framework to inform lesson planning. Cummins' Quadrant Model, which is frequently cited in Estonian CLIL research, offers a practical way to match classroom tasks with students' language proficiency and the cognitive demands of subject content. When developing the lesson materials, I used the model to guide the selection and sequencing of activities, aiming for a progression from supported, accessible tasks to more complex ones. Its focus on balancing contextual support with academic challenge made it particularly useful for designing lessons in a CLIL history setting.

Within a CLIL setting, where students are required to process subject content through a second language, the framework offers practical guidance for designing tasks that are both challenging and accessible (Cummins 1983). By applying this model, I aimed to create activities that gradually move from context-embedded, cognitively undemanding tasks toward more abstract, cognitively demanding tasks delivered through the target language, supporting deeper academic language development within a CLIL approach.

1.4 Teachers' Perspectives on CLIL

Teachers' beliefs are significantly influenced by prior exposure to CLIL. Those with practical experience using the method tend to view its effectiveness more favourably than those without such experience (Palopson 2015; Oattes et al. 2018; Rafi & Morgan 2023). A similar pattern is observed in countries implementing foreign language teaching policies (Mettewie & Mensel 2020). This aligns with earlier studies that emphasise the importance of teacher training and exposure to CLIL in shaping positive attitudes toward its implementation (Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols 2008). Language teachers with insufficient language proficiency reported feeling more confident using language applications to support their instruction (Štefková & Danihelova 2023); however, subject teachers, such as Dutch history teachers, expressed mixed perceptions of CLIL, citing the high language demands involved in content delivery (Oattes et al. 2018). Moreover, CLIL lesson planning is often considerably more complex than preparing standard language or content lessons (Roiha 2014; Oattes et al. 2018) and might require additional differentiation (Roiha 2014).

While attitudes are shaped by experience and training, teachers also point out more practical challenges in CLIL instruction. Effective CLIL teaching requires proficiency in the target language and the subject matter, often necessitating additional training (Štefková & Danihelova 2023). Teachers have reported a lack of suitable teaching materials, time-consuming lesson preparation (Pavesi et al 2001; Roiha 2014; Teppe 2023), and insufficient collaboration between subject and language teachers (Reino 2019). Technical subjects present particular challenges due to complex terminology and abstract concepts (Reino 2019). Additionally, research suggests that institutional support, including improved collaboration frameworks and leadership initiatives is crucial in reducing teacher workload, enhancing CLIL's effectiveness

(Reino 2019).

Research into Estonian teachers' perceptions of CLIL suggests a generally positive outlook, especially regarding its potential to make lessons more engaging and to boost student motivation. According to Palopson (2015), many teachers see CLIL as a way to support vocabulary development and raise cultural awareness through meaningful language use. At the same time, more recent findings by Teppe (2023) draw attention to persistent challenges, such as mixed-ability groups, limited instructional time, and a lack of adequate training, that complicate classroom implementation.

Teachers working within CLIL contexts often highlight the need for more targeted professional development, particularly in connecting theoretical frameworks to everyday classroom practice. In the Estonian context, collaborative models—where subject and language teachers plan and teach together—have shown promise. As Reino (2019) notes, this kind of cooperation has been especially effective in supporting the practical implementation of CLIL across different schools

1.5 Teaching History in English as a Foreign Language

Teaching history in English as a foreign language presents challenges that differ markedly from traditional instruction, much like teaching any content subject through a second language. It requires careful selection of materials appropriate to learners' language proficiency, tends to be more time-consuming, and often necessitates additional support resources (Oattes et al. 2018). As students' language proficiency improves, teachers frequently focus more heavily on content, sometimes at the expense of continued language scaffolding. Dutch history teachers

noted that Year 7 students often struggled more with content learning due to lower language proficiency, especially compared to students in Years 8 and 9 (Oattes et al. 2018).

A one-year study involving 1,806 learners in Germany demonstrated cognitive skill development, increased study motivation, and improved instructional quality. Interestingly, despite these gains, the study found no significant difference in content knowledge between the CLIL and control groups, even though the CLIL group received more instructional hours overall (Dallinger et al. 2016). Other studies have observed similar results (Whittaker, Llinares & McCabe 2011; Oattes et al. 2018).

Other studies have examined long-term vocabulary outcomes in CLIL history instruction. One longitudinal small-scale study, for example, found a sharp increase in content vocabulary during the first three years, followed by a notable decline in the fourth year, with levels dropping below their initial baseline. This may reflect historical terminology's increasing abstraction and complexity in later secondary years (Morton & Llinares 2018). The study also found that content vocabulary growth was more pronounced among learners with higher language proficiency at the outset.

Alongside these cognitive and linguistic factors, affective engagement also plays a role in successful history instruction in a CLIL context. In the study on teaching sensitive historical themes, Ravelo (2013) demonstrates how using visual aids, combined with a clear narrative structure, supported students' understanding of complex events, opened space for multiple interpretations, and encouraged thoughtful, open-ended discussion.

Teaching history through English as a foreign language has also been linked to increased willingness to communicate in the target language (Lockley 2015). Additionally, participants reported feeling more connected to the world through learning history. History education places

particular demands on learners, such as interpreting complex source materials, engaging in critical discourse, and understanding causality - all of which require both linguistic and cognitive scaffolding in CLIL settings (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010).

Taken together, the literature suggests that teaching history through CLIL presents both pedagogical potential and practical challenges. History was chosen for this thesis precisely because it invites the kind of critical thinking, discussion, and vocabulary that align well with CLIL's dual aims. The selected focus, Estonia's experience during 1939 - 1941, addresses an emotionally and politically significant period, making it highly relevant to the curriculum and students' broader understanding of history. This study explored whether carefully designed CLIL materials and strategies could turn these complexities into deeper engagement and learning opportunities.

2 A CASE STUDY OF TEACHING HISTORY THROUGH ENGLISH

This chapter presents the empirical part of the study, focusing on how CLIL was implemented to teach Estonian history through English in a Year 9 classroom. Adopting a case study methodology, the research explores student and teacher perspectives on CLIL-based instruction in a real school setting. The chapter begins with describing the research context and participants, followed by an account of how the lesson plans and materials were developed. It then outlines the methods used for collecting and analysing data. The findings draw on classroom observations, student questionnaires, and teacher interviews to offer insight into how CLIL was experienced and perceived in practice.

2.1 Case Study

The study began with a structured planning phase to ensure pedagogical coherence and contextual relevance. I first familiarised myself with the historical content, specifically the period from 1939 to 1941, and proposed a general timeline for implementing the lessons. The English teacher, responsible for delivering the instruction, was consulted early in the process and took the lead in obtaining consent from students and school leadership following ethical procedures.

Once ethical approval was confirmed, I designed a sequence of CLIL-based lesson plans and accompanying teaching materials supporting historical content and English language development. These materials were reviewed in collaboration with the English and history teachers. Their feedback helped ensure that the tasks were accurate in terms of content, linguistically appropriate, and aligned with effective CLIL methodology.

The three lessons were carried out over one week. After the first session, the English teacher and I reflected on student performance and adjusted the second lesson to improve pacing and align with learning goals. The third lesson required fewer modifications and included a summative test, developed to assess both historical knowledge and language use. The teachers reviewed this test, and the results were interpreted alongside the students' previous term grades in history and English.

Throughout the process, the author remained observational rather than delivering the instruction. This approach maintained professional distance and reduced the risk of researcher bias. It also allowed me to focus closely on how students engaged with the materials, responded to different task types, and demonstrated understanding throughout the lessons. Because the process was collaborative and reflective, it was possible to make meaningful adjustments along the way, based on classroom observations and teaching team feedback.

From a professional perspective, my experience as a teacher resonated strongly with many of the challenges identified in CLIL literature. Designing and implementing lessons that balance subject learning with meaningful language development, especially within the time constraints of a standard lesson, requires deliberate planning and careful scaffolding. These demands are amplified in classes with mixed language proficiency levels. Several authors have noted that such challenges highlight the need for continuous professional development, collaborative planning structures, and access to appropriate teaching tools to support effective CLIL delivery (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols 2008).

2.1.1 Research design

A case study approach was selected for its capacity to explore educational practices within a real-life classroom context, where multiple elements—such as learner language levels, classroom interaction, and curriculum content—intersect and influence one another. As Ritchie and Lewis (2003) point out, case studies are particularly valuable for examining complex, context-dependent educational phenomena. This design also made it possible to draw on multiple data sources, including classroom observations, teacher interviews, and student feedback questionnaires, to understand better how CLIL functions in a basic school setting.

2.1.2 Participants and Setting

The study was conducted during the last week of January 2025 (27th January – 3rd February) in a medium-sized general education basic school in central Estonia. The school has a long-standing tradition of subject-based instruction and offers a variety of academic and extracurricular opportunities. As of the 2023/2024 academic year, it serves approximately 400 students across Years 1 to 9 and is supported by an experienced teaching staff. Two Year 9 groups participated in the study, with around 20 students.

This particular school was selected due to its previous engagement with CLIL and the recent participation of several teachers in a professional development programme focused on CLIL material design. Working in a setting where the approach was already familiar allowed the research to focus on lesson planning and implementation, rather than introductory training or conceptual orientation.

In addition, the choice of school was supported by the author's established professional relationship with the participating English teacher. The teacher holds a master's degree and has

eighteen years of experience. Although not involved in classroom instruction, the school's history teacher reviewed the lesson plans to ensure historical accuracy and curricular alignment. Their collaborative input contributed to the academic and methodological integrity of the CLIL materials used in the study and helped maintain smooth coordination throughout the research process.

Based on consultation with the English teacher, students' receptive language skills ranged from B1 to B2, while productive skills were estimated between B1 and B1.2. Over the week, six lessons were delivered: three to each group.

2.1.3 Compiling CLIL lesson plans and Study Materials

Creating the lesson plans required carefully integrating historically accurate content and clearly defined language objectives. The Grade 9 textbook *Ajaloo õpik 9. klassile partly informed the historical topics. Lähiajalugu, I osa* (Värä, Pajur & Tannberg 2015), ensuring alignment with the national curriculum and maintaining thematic consistency, an essential consideration in interdisciplinary CLIL design (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010). The lesson plans were developed through a collaborative process. The author started drafting the lesson materials, but the history and English teachers closely supported the planning process. The history teacher offered feedback to ensure the content was historically accurate and aligned with the curriculum. In contrast, the English teacher focused on how the language elements connected with students' current language studies. Their suggestions helped refine the overall flow of the lessons and supported the integration of subject content with language development. The grammar focus was intentionally matched to upcoming topics in the students' English classes to strengthen cross-curricular coherence. Topics such as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, the Soviet annexation,

and the German occupation were paired with linguistic elements including conditional forms and comparative structures.

2.1.3 Implementing the CLIL Lesson Plans

To support the implementation phase, I prepared various materials, including worksheets, visual aids, quizzes, and presentation slides, and shared them in advance with the English teacher, who led the lessons. I took on the role of observer, sitting at the back of the classroom to monitor how students engaged with the tasks and responded to the materials. After each session, the author and I engaged in reflective discussions to identify which aspects of the lesson had been effective and where adjustments might be needed. These conversations informed the planning and delivery of the subsequent lessons. The following section offers a more detailed account of how the lessons were adapted and conducted in practice.

Lesson Plan 1: Introduction to Estonia in WWII (1939-1941)

Lesson 1 (see Appendix 1) is designed to introduce students to the historical context of Estonia from 1939 to 1941, with a dual focus on historical content and English language development. The lesson design combines vocabulary development and third conditional structures, creating opportunities for students to engage with historical content while expanding their linguistic repertoire. Activities were selected to encourage comprehension and expression, including tasks such as analysing images, matching key terms, reading from the textbook, and discussing key events in small groups.

The goal is to promote student engagement through multimodal tasks, encouraging comprehension and language use. These choices are aligned with the core principles of CLIL,

which emphasise integrating cognitive challenge, academic content, and language development in a balanced and well-scaffolded manner (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010).

The lesson begins with a visual warm-up task to activate students' prior knowledge and stimulate curiosity. This approach supports cognitive readiness, creating a foundation for deeper content learning in a foreign language (Meyer et al. 2015). Vocabulary support is built into the sequence through targeted pre-teaching and matching tasks, which help students grasp abstract historical terms - an essential step when dealing with complex academic concepts in English (Bentley 2010; Gibson 2002). Reading a historical timeline and the follow-up discussion are intended to guide learners in articulating their understanding using English, promoting cognitive academic language proficiency (Cummins 2000). Supporting visuals, including the historical image of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact and related vocabulary, are included to reinforce comprehension (see Appendix 2).

When implemented in the class, several challenges emerged. Although the lesson was initially planned to take place over three 45-minute periods, it became apparent that students needed significantly more time for most activities, especially vocabulary processing and reading tasks. This outcome is consistent with known challenges in CLIL settings, where learners must simultaneously process new content and language, often slowing task completion and requiring more instructional support (Dalton-Puffer 2007; Llinares, Morton & Whittaker 2012).

A critical aspect of the process was how the lesson evolved between the two groups. After teaching it to the first Year 9 class, it became clear that the pacing was too ambitious—there simply wasn't enough time for students to fully engage with the vocabulary and reading tasks. Based on these observations, the lesson plan was adjusted on the spot: a few activities were cut, and more time was set aside for language work. The revised version of the

lesson was subsequently implemented with the second Year 9 group. Although the core materials remained unchanged primarily to preserve consistency across groups, adjustments to the lesson structure had a clear impact. The second group experienced a more focused and manageable progression through the tasks, particularly in balancing historical content acquisition with opportunities for language practice.

One of the clearest findings from this lesson is the need to pace CLIL activities realistically. As Banegas (2012) notes, CLIL lessons are typically more time-consuming due to their dual focus, and students benefit from additional time and teacher guidance when dealing with unfamiliar vocabulary or complex concepts. In both groups, reflective discussions and higher-order thinking tasks were limited by time constraints, which confirms that integrated lessons must include flexible task timing (Coyle et al. 2010; Grey & Morton 2018).

Maintaining a balance between content and language also posed a challenge. While the aim was to integrate both equally, the need for extra language support sometimes reduced the time available for historical discussion. Ball et al. (2015) highlight that such imbalances can occur unless lessons are carefully sequenced and adjusted to students' language proficiency and content familiarity.

Ultimately, the teacher played a pivotal role in shaping the lesson unfolding, responding to students' needs in real time. Shifting between facilitation and observation, she monitored levels of engagement, tracked how tasks were progressing, and identified moments where clarification or pacing adjustments were required. This responsive approach was essential for maintaining the lesson's accessibility, particularly in a CLIL setting where learners must navigate content and language simultaneously.

This kind of real-time responsiveness reflects what Smit et al. (2012) and Moore et al. (2015) describe as core to effective CLIL teaching: the ability to reflect in action and adapt accordingly. In this case, that reflective process played a vital role in improving the lesson between the two groups, helping ensure that both had a meaningful learning experience—even when the initial pacing posed a challenge.

Lesson Plan 2: Hypotheticals in History - “What if?”

The primary historical aim of Lesson 2 (see Appendix 3) was for students to grasp the timeline and consequences of key events in Estonia between 1939 and 1941, with a particular focus on cause-and-effect relationships surrounding political agreements and occupation. Regarding language learning, students practised forming hypothetical historical scenarios using third conditional structures and expanded their vocabulary on topics such as war, diplomacy, and national sovereignty.

The lesson began with a short discussion to activate students’ knowledge about the 1939 base agreement. This task helped draw students into the topic and gave them a clearer sense of the lesson's focus. Starting with something familiar appeared to boost their confidence and made it easier for them to follow the historical content that came next. In CLIL settings, this kind of cognitive preparation is beneficial, as it helps students connect new information to what they already know while also getting used to working in the target language. As Meyer et al. (2015) noted, such preparatory strategies are essential for enabling students to connect new information with existing frameworks, thereby deepening content understanding and language processing.

Using a Kahoot quiz immediately after this helped consolidate key facts in a format that students found motivating. Studies support using digital tools like Kahoot in CLIL classrooms to boost recall and learner involvement (Štefková & Danihelová 2023).

Next, students completed a textbook-based reading task (*Ajaloo õpik 9. klassile*), supported with scaffolding to aid comprehension. The text was translated using Chatgpt and modified by the author. This reflected Dalton-Puffer's (2007) emphasis on mitigating the dual cognitive demands of CLIL through language support. Students were grouped to analyse historical causes and consequences, which encouraged collaborative reasoning and oral production, which is central to building disciplinary understanding in CLIL settings (Llinares, Morton & Whittaker 2012).

A grammar worksheet focusing on Type 3 conditionals (see Appendix 4) allowed learners to link grammatical form with historical thinking by speculating about alternative outcomes. The lesson closed with a reflective discussion, where students applied the target structure to hypothetical decisions about Estonia's path in 1939. This final task fulfilled Banegas's (2012) call for output-focused learning that links content understanding to critical language use.

The pacing of Lesson 2 was notably more effective compared to Lesson 1. Each task, from the warm-up to the closing discussion, fits into the 45-minute session, allowing students to engage meaningfully with the content. This adjustment reflected what Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) describe as a necessary feature of effective CLIL practice: lessons must follow a precise, intentional sequence so that language and content can be processed meaningfully. It also echoed Banegas's (2012) argument that overly ambitious lesson plans often come at the cost of depth. In this case, scaling back the number of tasks allowed students to engage more fully with the core material rather than rushing through it.

However, even with improved structure, some transitions felt rushed. While the lesson followed a logical flow, students occasionally needed more time to process the material and express their ideas, especially when combining grammar accuracy with historical content. This

reflects recurring findings in CLIL research, where learners often require longer to complete integrated tasks (Dalton-Puffer 2007; Llinares, Morton & Whittaker 2012).

The lesson's success was closely connected to the English teacher's ability to balance the dual aims of CLIL, developing language skills while teaching subject content. Her explanations of complex grammatical forms were clear and well-paced, and she paid close attention to how students were responding. When necessary, she adapted her instruction to help learners keep up. This kind of flexibility helped ensure that the language demands did not prevent students from engaging meaningfully with the historical content.

This kind of responsiveness lies at the core of effective CLIL practice. Gibbons (2002) points out that timely scaffolding can make a decisive difference in how well students grasp academic language. Meyer et al. (2015) add that when content and language support are carefully balanced, learners tend to feel more confident and stay engaged.

In this context, the teacher's role extended well beyond delivering content. As Moore and Lorenzo (2015) argue, CLIL educators must constantly navigate between subject teaching and language support. The teacher's ability to anticipate where students might struggle and adapt on the spot helped prevent overload and enabled students to express their understanding more fully in English.

As an observer, the second delivery felt more coherent and better paced in both Year 9 groups. The adjustments made after the first lesson improved the overall flow, especially in managing time between tasks. Even so, specific activities, particularly those involving grammar instruction and reading, remained demanding for students with lower language proficiency. These learners would have benefited from a slower pace or additional scaffolding to support their understanding. Student focus remained high throughout, and the classroom atmosphere was calm

and attentive.

Taking on the observer role rather than instructor created space for detailed reflection on the lesson's strengths and limitations. It became clear during the observation that 45 minutes often does not allow enough time for a CLIL lesson that relies heavily on content exploration and classroom discussion. Tasks that require students to process complex ideas and express them in a second language take longer than traditional language or subject lessons might. In this context, a longer or double-period format would likely support deeper engagement, giving students the space to work through the historical material and the language it demands.

Though this lesson showed improvement, it also generated a long list of future adjustments, both at the planning and structural levels. Further progress would involve refining materials to allow greater flexibility during delivery, embedding more structured scaffolding, and continuing to differentiate tasks to meet the needs of learners at varying language proficiency levels.

Lesson Plan 3: Estonia's Loss of Independence (1941-1945)

Lesson 3 (see Appendix 5) was designed to deepen students' historical understanding of Estonia's experience under Soviet and German occupations between 1941 and 1945. At the same time, the lesson aimed to reinforce the use of Type 3 conditional structures in English. The activities integrated historical inquiry with language development through varied and interactive tasks, including contextual grammar practice, creative role-play (see Appendix 6), and a summative written test (see Appendix 7). Using a multi-modal instructional approach enhanced cognitive engagement and opportunities for meaningful language use, aligning with CLIL's underlying objective of integrating subject learning with language development (Marsh 2011).

Pair work tasks required students to explore alternative historical outcomes using

conditional structures to express hypothetical scenarios. This form of guided collaboration promoted both active engagement and deeper historical reasoning. Such content-driven interaction supports findings by Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010) and Dalton-Puffer (2007), who argue that anchoring language in cognitively meaningful tasks enhances communicative competence and contributes to long-term retention.

The grammar task, where students wrote speculative conclusions to World War II events, was particularly effective in linking form to meaning. This activity encouraged students to reflect critically on historical developments while applying language structures. Gibbons (2002) and Mehisto et al. highlight how embedding grammar into content tasks can deepen learners' language awareness and promote functional language use.

Although the lesson was carefully scaffolded, students occasionally reverted to their L1 during discussions. Initially, this appeared to be a limitation. However, as recent CLIL literature suggests, such multilingual use is acceptable and pedagogically valuable. Current approaches encourage translanguaging to ensure comprehension, especially when dealing with complex subject matter. As the thesis introduction acknowledges, the development of plurilingual competence implies that students draw on all their linguistic resources to support learning (Council of Europe 2001). Rather than viewing this as a breakdown in English usage, it became clear that students were using language purposefully—to clarify, negotiate, and build meaning together.

The role-play segment supported this by boosting learner confidence and vocabulary use while engaging practical learning dimensions. Motivation and emotional investment are closely tied to language acquisition (Lasagabaster et al. 2009), lesson-balanced structure, and student autonomy. Nevertheless, the final written test revealed varying outcomes across the group.

Student performance varied noticeably: while some demonstrated effective integration of historical content and English language use, others found it challenging to keep up, particularly under time constraints. This disparity highlights the need for differentiated materials and assessment formats for learners' varying linguistic and cognitive readiness—an approach supported in recent CLIL research (Kelly et al. 2015; Teppe 2023).

The lesson also highlighted the challenges of implementing CLIL in mixed-ability classrooms. The teacher was required to make numerous in-the-moment adjustments, including adaptations to the planned assessment, to respond to learners' varying levels of linguistic readiness. While such responsiveness indicates strong pedagogical judgement, it also underscores the considerable cognitive and emotional demands CLIL places on the teacher, who must simultaneously manage both disciplinary content and language support.

As discussed earlier, the effectiveness of CLIL instruction depends not only on careful planning but also on the teacher's capacity to adapt responsively to classroom dynamics while maintaining the balance between content objectives and language development.

From the observer's point of view, this lesson was rich with learning moments. Having refined the previous two lessons, Lesson 3 was delivered smoothly. The students were focused, the materials functioned as intended, and the classroom atmosphere was calm. At the same time, the experience confirmed that no lesson is ever final. Each group is different, and each day brings new rhythms and needs.

Although the planning, adapting, and analysing process was demanding, Lesson 3 left the author wanting to continue. The experience reinforced how important long-term CLIL development is, in terms of materials and creating school environments where teachers are supported, reflection is ongoing, and student needs are central. A single teacher managing

content and language as an English teacher in real time is demanding. The teacher handled this lesson exceptionally well, but as a fellow educator, the author could see the cognitive and emotional energy it required.

In conclusion, Lesson 3 highlighted the key principles of CLIL: integrated learning, active engagement, and authentic language use. It also exposed the structural demands of this approach—differentiation, adaptability, and sustained collaboration. If CLIL is to be implemented meaningfully and sustainably, schools must recognise the need for support systems that enable teachers to deliver, reflect, revise, and thrive.

2.1.4 Data Collection

Data collection methods included lesson observations, student questionnaires, and informal interviews with the collaborating teacher. Observations were carried out across all six lessons (three per group), offering insight into classroom interaction, learner engagement, and the practical implementation of instructional strategies. These qualitative data provided a basis for evaluating how students responded to the content and language demands of the CLIL approach. The teacher's feedback was gathered through informal post-lesson discussions, offered qualitative data on the lesson design's strengths and challenges, and helped inform iterative improvements. The English teacher's journal has been added to Appendix 8.

A questionnaire was administered at the end of the final lesson to examine students' perceptions of the CLIL-based history instruction. The questionnaire was adapted from Francesca Zaroni's (2021) instrument, which was initially developed to evaluate learner experiences with CLIL. Ten statements addressed the key aspects of the learning process, such as clarity of instruction, perceived difficulty, emotional responses (e.g. anxiety or enjoyment), and

students' preferences regarding learning history in English versus in their native language (see Appendix 9).

The students responded to 14 statements using a dichotomous (yes/no) scale and 14 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The five open-ended questions were included to capture more nuanced qualitative feedback on students' engagement and perceptions of the tasks.

To gather student feedback efficiently, the author used Google Forms, which allowed for easy access, straightforward navigation, and automatic organisation of the responses. Anonymity was built into the questionnaire design to create a sense of safety and encourage students to respond honestly. All observational notes and participant data were stored in password-protected digital files. Throughout the study, data were handled carefully and used solely for research purposes, per the university's ethical guidelines and with a clear commitment to protecting participant confidentiality.

2.2 Results and discussion of findings

This section presents data analysis collected through classroom observations, student feedback questionnaires, and teacher reflections. The aim was to evaluate the CLIL-based history lessons' effectiveness in student engagement, language development, and content comprehension. A mixed-method approach was employed to triangulate findings and better understand how students responded to the integrated teaching approach. Using multiple data sources made it possible to cross-check findings and notice recurring patterns in how students

participated, where they struggled with language, and how well they engaged with the historical content.

2.2.1 Student Feedback Analysis

The data collected from student questionnaires provided valuable insights into learners' experiences with the CLIL-based lessons. Especially, in the areas of instructional clarity, language confidence, engagement with historical content, and the perceived effectiveness of the activities. The findings reflect the strengths of the CLIL approach and areas requiring further support, which align with previous studies on learner response to integrated instruction (Banegas 2012; Lasagabaster et al. 2009).

A total of 40 Year 9 students participated in the CLIL project, of whom 29 completed the feedback questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of approximately 72.5%. The intent was to provide both groups with the same lesson plans. Therefore, necessary modifications were made after each lesson. Both groups received the same tasks. The data were analysed in conjunction with the students from both groups, who have similar language proficiency and move at the same pace in history.

One of the key dimensions examined was the clarity of teacher instructions. Most students indicated that instructions were clear and understandable, with an average rating of 4.2 out of 5 (Question 1). This suggests that using scaffolding strategies and structured explanations effectively supported learners in navigating content and language tasks—an essential feature of successful CLIL instruction, as Gibbons (2002) and Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) emphasised.

I understood the teacher's explanations well. 1 - Disagree completely ... 5 - Agree completely
29 responses

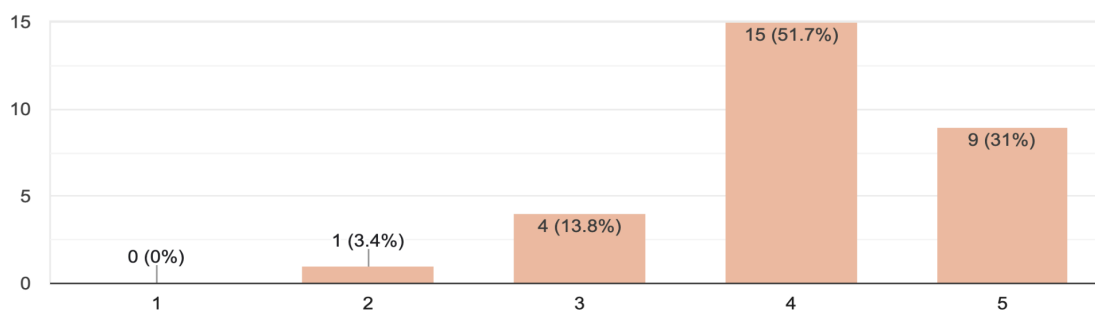


Figure 1. Student ratings for instructional clarity in CLIL lessons (Question 1).

Student responses showed greater variation in terms of language confidence. While their ability to respond in English received an average rating of 3.5/5 (Question 2), the rating for formulating questions was slightly lower at 3.2/5 (Question 3).

It was easy for me to ask questions in English. 1 - Disagree completely... 5 - Agree completely
29 responses

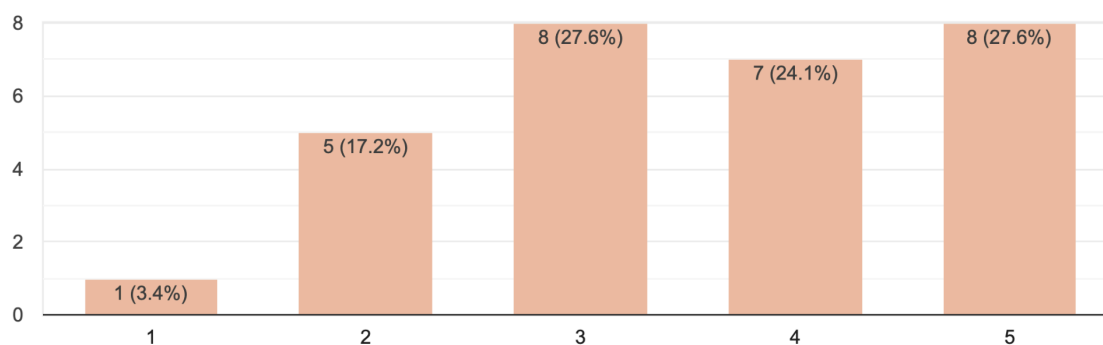


Figure 2. Students' confidence in asking questions in English (Question 3)

It was easy for me to answer in English. 1 - Disagree completely... 5 - Agree completely

29 responses

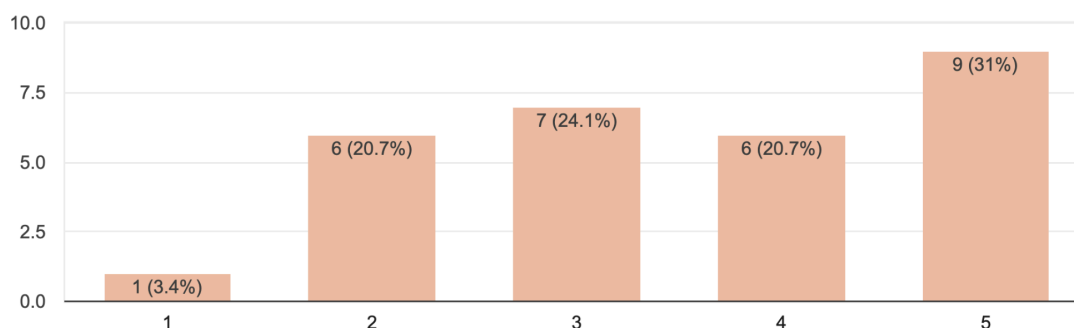


Figure 3. Students' confidence in asking questions in English (Question 3)

This discrepancy indicates a stronger development in receptive skills than productive skills, particularly in spontaneous spoken output. This pattern is consistent with findings by Dalton-Puffer (2007) and Morton (2018), who note that productive academic language remains one of the most demanding areas in CLIL, especially in cognitively complex subjects like history. The data highlight a continued need for targeted speaking support to build learners' confidence in formulating and articulating historical inquiries (Llinares et al. 2012).

Engagement with historical content was also rated positively, with an average of 4.0/5. Notably, 68% of students agreed that the CLIL lessons enhanced their understanding of the events from 1939 to 1941 (Question 8).

I understood the content of Chapter 23 (Estonia in World War II - the Bases Agreement, the loss of independence in 1939-1941) quite well. 1 - Disagree completely... 5 - Agree completely

29 responses

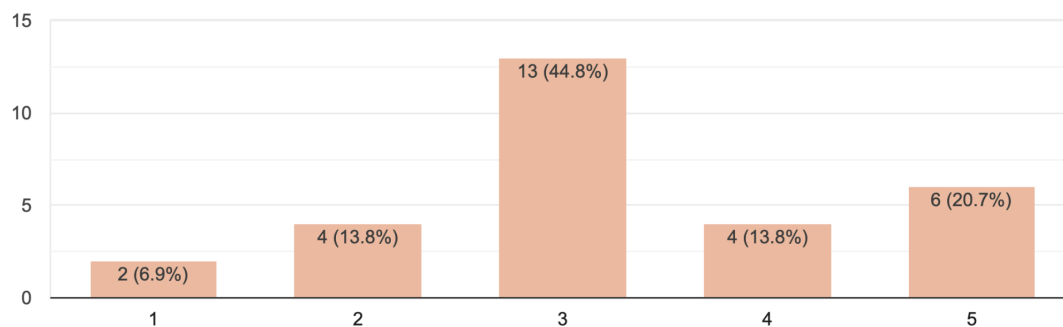


Figure 4. Students' perception of understanding of historical events through CLIL instruction (Question 8).

These responses suggest that the integrated approach promoted deeper content engagement through increased cognitive and emotional involvement, outcomes supported in CLIL research by Coyle et al.(2010) and Meyer et al. (2015). However, 15% of students preferred learning history in their native language (Question 10), indicating that language barriers can still hinder some learners' access to complex subject matter (Bruton 2011).

I prefer to study Estonian history in Estonian. 1 - Disagree completely... 5 - Agree completely

29 responses

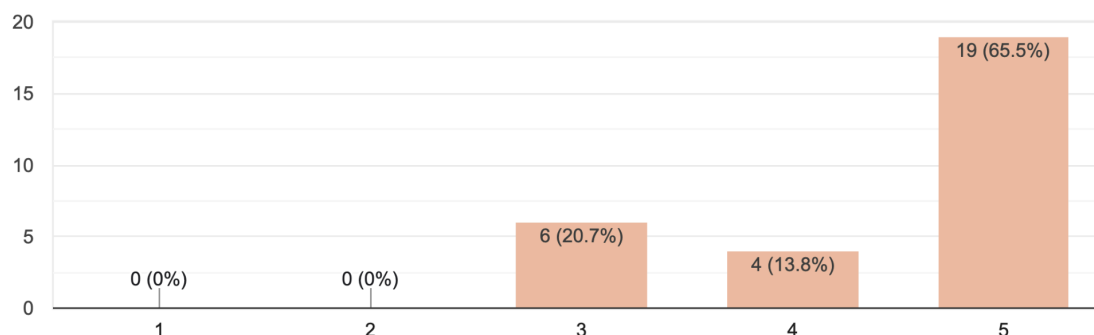


Figure 5. Students' preferences for learning history in English versus Estonian (Question 10).

In evaluating the effectiveness of specific activities, interactive tasks received the highest ratings: the Kahoot quiz and role-play were rated at 4.5/5 and 4.3/5, respectively (Ranking Question: *“Which methods are most effective?”*). Students described these activities as engaging, motivating, and helpful for consolidating historical knowledge - findings that echo the pedagogical value of game-based and experiential learning in CLIL contexts (Wang 2015; Stoller 2002).

In contrast, more traditional tasks, such as vocabulary translation and reading comprehension, received lower ratings (3.2/5), suggesting that these require additional scaffolding or more dynamic delivery to sustain student interest and support comprehension (Bentley 2010).

When reflecting on perceived learning outcomes, 72% of students reported that learning history in English had improved their language skills, particularly in listening, speaking, and subject-specific vocabulary (Question 13).

Nevertheless, 20% reported difficulties in expressing historical ideas fluently (Questions 3, 5 and open-ended responses). This disparity draws attention to a central challenge in CLIL instruction: supporting learners in developing the academic language required to engage with subject-specific content. In such contexts, students are expected to grasp disciplinary concepts and express them through the specialised discourse of the target language, a dual demand widely acknowledged in CLIL research (Cummins 2000; Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010).

In addition to the quantitative data, the students' open-ended responses provided a more nuanced picture of their experiences. Many learners appreciated group work, interactive activities, and vocabulary tasks, with comments like "*I learned more history that way*" and "the activities helped me understand the topic better" (Open-ended question: "*What did you like the most?*"). Students frequently pointed to visual materials and vocabulary-matching tasks as especially useful for making historical content more accessible. Their responses echoed Stoller's (2002) argument that collaborative, scaffolded learning fosters language development and aligns with Meyer et al.'s (2015) emphasis on the importance of multimodal input in CLIL classrooms. The use of varied visual, textual, and interactive formats appeared to ease comprehension and create more entry points into the content, particularly for students with lower proficiency levels. These strategies underscore the value of pre-teaching essential terminology to reduce cognitive load and facilitate access to complex concepts, an approach well supported in CLIL literature (Gibbons 2002; Ravelo 2013).

However, several students, particularly those with lower language proficiency, described the texts as "*too difficult*" or said they "*didn't understand most of it*" (Open-ended question: "*Was there anything you did not like?*"). The feedback also brought attention to a recurring issue in CLIL research: learners with higher language proficiency could more readily engage with the

content, while those with weaker skills faced greater difficulty accessing and expressing subject knowledge (Morton & Llinares 2018; Dallinger et al. 2016). The variation in student performance underscores the importance of tailoring scaffolding strategies to different levels of language proficiency. Consistent with Roiha's (2014) findings, incorporating students' first language selectively and purposefully can provide meaningful support, especially during cognitively demanding tasks or when working with abstract concepts.

Taken together, the feedback indicates that while students were largely positive about the integrated approach, the effectiveness of CLIL depends significantly on activity design, pacing, and scaffolding. These insights will inform future lesson development, emphasising the need to balance content comprehension and language production through interactive, student-centred tasks, one of the core principles of evidence-based CLIL pedagogy (Ball et al. 2015).

2.2.2 Teacher reflection

Although the author designed the CLIL history lessons, they were delivered by an experienced English teacher. This deliberate division between planning and implementation enabled the author to adopt the role of observer, which in turn created space for a more distanced, reflective analysis of the pedagogical process. The real-time observation of the lessons enabled a systematic study of classroom interaction, learner participation, and the unfolding effects of pedagogical decisions. This external perspective offered valuable insight into how planned instruction was negotiated in practice, revealing strengths and areas requiring adjustment. The English teacher's reflections, documented in Appendix 9, further illuminate key aspects of the implementation process, including the sequencing of tasks, levels of student engagement, and practical constraints such as limited instructional time and the diverse language proficiency within the groups.

Such documentation is critical for exploring the extent to which theoretically grounded aims, such as those outlined in Coyle et al.'s (2010) 4Cs framework, can be realised within the constraints of actual classroom practice (Stoller 2002).

The teacher generally found the lessons successful in promoting participation and vocabulary development. Her journal entries describe high levels of engagement during tasks such as role-play and image-based vocabulary matching. In particular, she noted that students responded well to visual stimuli and were more active in group discussions when provided with clear task instructions. However, she also acknowledged that some learners required more support, especially during reading tasks and grammar-based exercises involving the third conditional. These reflections mirror findings in prior research, which suggest that CLIL can increase motivation but may also disadvantage students with weaker language skills (Dallinger et al. 2016; Morton & Llinares 2018).

From the author's perspective as an observer, additional insights emerged, particularly regarding classroom interaction patterns and differentiated learner engagement. A key advantage of not being responsible for teaching was the ability to step back and critically evaluate what might go unnoticed during live instruction. For example, it was striking how some students with lower language proficiency withdrew during more demanding tasks. Although the teacher provided visual aids and vocabulary scaffolding, a few learners did not complete the exercises or participate in discussions. It was also physically visible that some students experienced discomfort or frustration, yet were not pressed to continue. While this compassionate approach avoided unnecessary stress, it also underscored the need for more effective long-term scaffolding strategies.

One recurring dilemma was the tension between the inclusive goals of CLIL and the practical limitations of teaching large, mixed-ability groups. With 20 students in each class, it became apparent that one teacher alone may not meet all learners' needs, especially when questions arise rapidly. Based on this experience, it can be argued that successful CLIL implementation, particularly in cognitively demanding subjects like history, would benefit from the presence of two educators: one to lead instruction and another to support individual learners in real-time. This finding aligns with research by Banegas (2012) and Reino (2019), who both note the time-intensive and collaborative nature of CLIL planning and execution.

Another significant observation concerned the persistence of teacher dependency among learners. Although CLIL pedagogy is underpinned by promoting learner autonomy and shifting away from teacher-led instruction, the lessons indicated that many students relied extensively on the teacher for guidance and validation. This pattern was especially noticeable during more demanding tasks, as students frequently looked to the teacher for reassurance instead of working together to clarify instructions or using available resources independently. Encouraging greater learner autonomy by fostering peer collaboration, guiding students in asking strategic questions, and integrating support materials more intentionally continues to be an essential pedagogical aim. Gibbons (2002) argues that fostering academic autonomy requires more than delivering content; it involves scaffolding learners' capacity to approach tasks independently and with increasing confidence over time.

Watching the lessons unfold also made clear how important it is for CLIL materials to develop over time. Even well-designed tasks can become overwhelming if they do not allow flexibility, especially when students are working across two cognitive domains simultaneously. Materials need to be adaptable—not only to fit different class profiles, but also to allow teachers

to adjust in real time, depending on how learners respond. Building in scaffolding from the start helps with this, but it needs to be usable in different ways. When materials can grow with the teacher and the students, they become more sustainable and more likely to support all learners, not just the most confident ones.

In conclusion, the collaborative teaching experience described in Appendix 9 showed both the promise and the challenges of using CLIL to teach history. The teacher's reflections highlighted clear benefits, especially how interactive tasks helped students stay engaged with the content. At the same time, observing the lessons raised some crucial questions about how to support learners with different language levels, manage the extra demands on the teacher, and help students take more responsibility for their learning. These insights suggest that effective CLIL teaching is about more than just materials or planning. It also requires institutional support, space for reflection, and a willingness to adapt as students' needs change.

2.3 Discussion

This section examines the key findings of the case study concerning the stated research questions and the broader theoretical framework underpinning CLIL. The results suggest that content and language integration can enhance historical understanding and foreign language development, aligning with earlier research highlighting the benefits of merging subject learning with language instruction (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010). Interactive activities, such as Kahoot quizzes and role-plays, were particularly effective in sustaining learner motivation and creating space to use historical content in English actively. These outcomes reinforce the view that cognitively demanding, content-driven tasks are central to achieving CLIL's dual aims of disciplinary knowledge and language acquisition.

Despite the positive outcomes, some challenges became clear, especially concerning students' language proficiency. While many reported feeling more motivated during the lessons, those with weaker productive skills often struggled to express historical ideas clearly in English. This tension between motivation and ability has been noted in earlier studies (Dallinger et al. 2016), and was particularly visible when students were asked to explain abstract or unfamiliar content. These moments pointed to the importance of building in more explicit language support, especially in tasks that require higher-order thinking or specialised vocabulary, as Gibbons (2002) has also argued. The findings contribute to the broader theoretical discussion on CLIL by highlighting the importance of balancing content and language objectives, as Cummins (2000) and Coyle et al. (2010) note, effective CLIL instruction depends on robust scaffolding that promotes both subject comprehension and academic language development. In this study, while students engaged successfully with historical content, their productive skills, especially speaking and writing, require further support to ensure meaningful participation.

Moreover, the effectiveness of CLIL appears closely tied to task design and the extent to which learners' language needs are addressed throughout the lesson. Scaffolding strategies such as vocabulary development, peer interaction, and visual support played a key role in helping students overcome linguistic barriers. These findings support the argument that integrated instruction must balance content input with structured language-focused tasks (Cummins 2000; Coyle, Hood & Marsh; Dallinger et al. 2016). Lesson pacing, sequencing, and built-in support mechanisms require thoughtful planning to maximise CLIL's impact.

These findings confirm that CLIL has genuine potential for motivating students and enriching their understanding of history content. One crucial factor is the significance of task pacing and lesson structure. CLIL's dual focus can lead to cognitive overload if lessons are too

ambitious or densely packed. Teachers must ensure sufficient time for students to process complex ideas and practise the language needed to express them. This echoes Banegas's (2012) recommendation to pace lessons carefully in content-heavy disciplines such as history, where linguistic demands are high.

Furthermore, CLIL teachers should adopt a flexible and responsive approach to planning, allowing tasks to build toward content mastery and language fluency. Frequent feedback, repetition of key vocabulary, and opportunities to apply new grammar structures in meaningful contexts are crucial. As seen in this study, the importance of vocabulary development underscores the need for precise language objectives in both spoken and written formats, a view supported by Gibbons (2002).

Another key implication relates to teacher development. The findings underscore the dual role of the CLIL teacher as both a subject expert and language facilitator. This dual responsibility requires professional training and ongoing support. Smit and Dafouz (2012) argue that successful CLIL implementation depends on teachers' ability to integrate content and language aims. Interdisciplinary collaboration is particularly valuable, with subject and language teachers co-developing lessons to ensure a balanced and coherent approach (Reino 2019; Clegg 2007).

This study offers important insights into the implementation of CLIL in the context of teaching Estonian history. However, it also has limitations. Future studies could include more schools or age groups to assess CLIL's effectiveness in broader contexts. A longitudinal study could also examine how sustained exposure to CLIL affects learners' development in both language and subject domains.

Further research could also investigate which specific scaffolding techniques, such as graphic organisers, peer collaboration, or visual prompts, are most effective in helping students

express complex ideas in a foreign language. Exploring the long-term effects of CLIL on students' academic achievement and language proficiency would offer a fuller picture of its impact (Stoller 2002; Meyer et al. 2015).

To conclude, the case study findings suggest that CLIL can support content understanding and language acquisition, reinforcing previous research highlighting the advantages of integrating subject learning with language development (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010). Interactive tasks such as Kahoot quizzes and role-play were particularly effective in motivating students and enabling them to apply historical knowledge while simultaneously using English. These findings align with Coyle, Hood and Marsh's (2010) argument that cognitively rich, content-driven tasks foster deeper engagement and support dual learning objectives.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the use of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to teach Estonian history to Year 9 students in English. The research was guided by three main questions: how students respond to learning history in a foreign language(1), how lesson materials can be designed to meet both content and language goals(2), and how teachers experience the delivery of CLIL-based history instruction (3). Through lesson planning, classroom observation, and reflective analysis, this study has offered insights into the possibilities and the practical challenges of applying CLIL in a real school context.

The findings confirm that CLIL can offer meaningful educational value when thoughtfully planned and implemented. Many students responded positively to the lessons, particularly when tasks were varied, interactive, and visually supported. Activities like group work, role-play, and quiz-based review encouraged participation and made abstract historical topics more approachable. For these students, the opportunity to use English in meaningful contexts increased motivation and reinforced both language skills and subject knowledge.

At the same time, the lessons also revealed critical limitations. Students with lower language proficiency were less likely to engage fully with the tasks, especially those requiring historical analysis and structured language use. In some cases, learners withdrew from participation altogether despite scaffolding and visual support. This highlights the persistent equity issue within CLIL. While the approach may support language growth, it does not guarantee access for all students unless differentiation is embedded deeply into the materials and delivery. Without this, the risk remains that the most linguistically vulnerable learners may be left behind.

Another key learning point emerged from the teaching arrangement itself. Although the author designed the lesson materials, the lessons were delivered by a collaborating English teacher. This setup allowed for systematic observation of classroom dynamics and a degree of critical distance that would have been impossible had the author led the class. This vantage point revealed important aspects of classroom practice that may otherwise go unnoticed: how students interact with tasks, where timing becomes tight, and how teacher attention is distributed. It also exposed the heavy demands placed on a single teacher in a CLIL classroom, particularly when questions arise quickly, and students need individual support. Based on these observations, a co-teaching model or classroom support staff could significantly enhance the effectiveness of CLIL instruction, especially in content-heavy subjects like history, where the dual focus is cognitively demanding.

The lesson development process itself also revealed broader challenges. While collaboration with the history teacher was constructive, it required substantial time and coordination, especially when aligning historical depth with language scaffolding. This reinforces findings in earlier research that stress the resource-intensive nature of interdisciplinary planning. In schools where time for joint planning is limited, this can easily become a barrier to consistent CLIL implementation.

Despite these limitations, the experience has demonstrated what CLIL can offer when given careful thought. The study showed that history, often considered too demanding for CLIL, can be successfully taught in English, provided that lessons are paced realistically and support structures are in place. History also has unique strengths as a CLIL subject: it offers a narrative structure, emotionally engaging content, and vocabulary that connects students to broader world events. Combined with language learning, it can foster bilingual competence and critical and

reflective thinking.

Looking ahead, it is clear that CLIL cannot be treated as a one-size-fits-all model. Its success depends heavily on classroom conditions, learner profiles, teacher experience, and institutional support. Schools interested in adopting CLIL should invest in teacher training, provide space for cross-departmental collaboration, and encourage the long-term development of adaptable materials. For teachers, the next step is to build on existing resources, refine scaffolding strategies, and continue to reflect on what works for different learners.

In conclusion, this thesis shows that CLIL is not only a method but a mindset that invites flexibility, collaboration, and ongoing adaptation. While it has its share of difficulties, it also opens new doors for learners and educators, offering a more integrated and engaging way to approach language and subject learning in the modern classroom.

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APPENDICES


APPENDIX 1 LESSON PLAN 1

Lesson 1: Introduction to Estonia in WWII (1939–1941)

Stage	Time	Activity	Instruction	Learning Outcomes
Warm-up	10 min	Show images of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signing, Soviet bases, and deportations. Students identify true vs. false statements in pairs.	“Work in pairs. Look at the images carefully. Decide which statement is true. Discuss your reasoning with your partner.” Google slides .	History: Recall and infer facts about key events. English: Discuss historical facts using relevant vocabulary.
Vocabulary	10 → 15 min	Introduce key terms: <i>non-aggression pact, annexation, sovereignty, deportation, and resistance</i> . Students match terms to definitions.	“Match each term to its definition. Use context clues from the lesson so far. Compare answers with a partner.” Vocabulary revision - Google slides. Worksheet task 1 - English definitions. Matching Worksheet task 2 . → L1 for students	History: Understand key terminology for historical discussion. English: Expand vocabulary related to war and politics.
Reading Task	15 → 10 min	Read a short timeline (from peatükk 23) about the base period and loss of independence. Answer questions such as: <i>Why did Estonia sign the base agreement?</i>	“Read the timeline carefully. Answer the comprehension questions in your notebooks. Work quietly.” Reading tasks and questions . Key	History: Comprehend Estonia's political choices in 1939-1941. English: Practice reading to understand and answer in English.
Discussion	5 min	In groups, students discuss: <i>“What was the most significant event for Estonia during 1939–1941? Why?”</i>	“Each group member should share their opinion and explain their reasoning. Write down one key event your group agrees on.”	History: Analyze and evaluate key historical events. English: Practice articulating opinions in English.
Conclusion	5 min	Recap key events and introduce the next lesson on “What If?” historical scenarios.	“Let’s review what we learned today. Can someone summarise the impact of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on Estonia? Next time, we’ll explore hypothetical scenarios.”	History: Summarize key events. English: Practice summarisation and speaking skills.
<p>Notes: The lesson was overly dense, leaving insufficient time to effectively cover all activities. While the focus on the mutual assistance agreement was essential, the content needs to be streamlined, with a greater emphasis on interactive elements like Kahoot to enhance engagement. Adjustments have been made to simplify and balance the activities. All activities highlighted in yellow were not completed during this lesson.</p>				

APPENDIX 2 THE VISUAL WARM-UP TASK

PICTURE No 1:



[The Molotov-Ribbentrop pact – archive, August 1939 | Second world war | The Guardian](#)

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact included a secret protocol dividing Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence.

True.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a defensive alliance designed to protect smaller countries in Eastern Europe.

False. Instead, it was a non-aggression agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, with secret protocols dividing Eastern Europe for their own control.

Figure 6. True or false activity.

Vocabulary Matching Worksheet

ESTONIAN WORD	ENGLISH WORD	Estonian definition	English definition
MITTEKALLALETUNGI LEPING	NON-AGGRESSION PACT	Riikidevaheline kokkulepe mitte üksteist rünnata.	An agreement between two countries not to attack each other.
SALAPROTOKOLL	SECRET PROTOCOL	<i>Lepinguga kaasnev varjatud kokkulepe, mis sätestab salajased tingimused või plaanid.</i>	A hidden agreement or clause in a treaty outlining confidential terms or plans.
OKUPATSIOON	OCCUPATION	Võõra sõjaväe või valitsuse kontroll üle riigi või piirkonna.	The control of one country or region by a foreign military or government.
ISESEISVUS	INDEPENDENCE	<i>Riigi võime ise valitseda ilma välise sekkumiseta.</i>	The ability of a nation or state to govern itself without external control.
ANNEKTEERIMINE	ANNEXATION	<i>Teise riigi või territooriumi ülevõtmine, sageli jõuga.</i>	The act of taking control of another country or territory, often by force.

Figure 7. Vocabulary task page 1

APPENDIX 3 LESSON PLAN 2

Lesson 2: Hypotheticals in History – “What If?”

Stage	Time	Activity	Instruction	Learning Outcomes
Warm-up	5 min	Recap why Estonia signed the base agreement and discuss its implications.	“What were the risks of refusing to sign the base agreement? Why might Estonia have agreed to it? Share your thoughts.”	History: Understand Estonia’s strategic decisions. English: Use discussion to form complex sentences.
Kahoot Quiz	10 min	Interactive quiz based on prior knowledge about the base agreement.	“Let’s play Kahoot! Answer the questions quickly and accurately to test what you remember about Estonia’s decisions in 1939.” Kahoot: The Base Agreement Quiz: Estonia’s Turning Point	History: Reinforce knowledge of historical events. English: Practice reading and quick comprehension.
Reading task	10 → 5 min	Read a short timeline (Chapter 23) about the loss of independence. (Translated to English)	“Read the timeline carefully. Pay attention to key events and think about their implications. Highlight one event that stood out to you.”	History: Identify significant moments in Estonia’s WWII history. English: Enhance reading comprehension.
Group Discussion	7 → 10 min	Students discuss key events from 1939–1941 using information from Chapter 23. They analyse causes, consequences, and alternative historical outcomes. Each group shares their main takeaway with the class.	“Read Chapter 23 carefully, focusing on Estonia’s loss of independence. In groups, discuss the provided questions, write key points, and choose one argument to present.”	History: Critically assess historical events. English: Improve speaking and reasoning skills.
Grammar Practice	8 → 10 min	Complete a worksheet matching sentence halves to form Type 3 conditionals about WWII events.	“Match the sentence halves to make logical conditional sentences. Example: ‘If Estonia had resisted, the Soviets might have...’ Work individually.” L2 Worksheet: Matching Type 3 Conditional Sentences + Key	History: Relate grammar structures to historical content. English: Master Type 3 conditionals.
Conclusion	3 → 5 min	Review scenarios and discuss decision-making during crises.	“What would you have done in Estonia’s position in 1939? Why? Use conditionals to explain your reasoning.”	History: Assess alternative historical outcomes. English: Express complex ideas using conditional structures.
Notes: The pace of integrated lessons is highly dependent on the group and their language proficiency/classroom dynamics. Groups with a more positive and engaged atmosphere are more willing to participate in discussions.				

APPENDIX 4 MATCHING TYPE 3 CONDITIONAL SENTENCES

Worksheet: Matching Type 3 Conditional Sentences

Match the sentence halves on the left (A) with their correct completions on the right (B) to form logical Type 3 conditional sentences about WWII events. Be careful - some options in the right column are distractions and do not match any if-clause

A. Sentence Halves (If-Clauses)	B. Sentence Halves (Main Clauses):
1 If Estonia had resisted the Soviet Union in 1939...	A. ...Estonia might not have been annexed by the Soviet Union.
2 If Finland had accepted the mutual assistance agreement...	B. ...the Cold War might have ended earlier.
3 If the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had not included secret protocols...	C. ...the Soviet Union would have focused on Germany instead of the Baltic states.
4 If the Baltic states had united against the Soviet Union...	D. ...the United Nations might have intervened sooner.
5 If the Soviet Union had not invaded Poland in 1939...	E. ...relations between the USSR and Germany might have remained stable.
6 If the June Coup in Estonia had not happened...	F. ...the Red Army might have invaded immediately.
7 If Germany had not attacked the Soviet Union in 1941...	G. ...the USSR and Nazi Germany might not have divided Eastern Europe
8 If the Estonian government had refused to replace its leaders in 1940...	H. ...the Soviet Union might not have established military bases in Estonia.
9 If Soviet troops had not been stationed in Estonia during the Winter War...	I. ...Estonia might have maintained its neutrality.
10 If Estonia had received international support in 1939...	J. ...Estonia might have preserved its independence longer.
	L. ...the Baltic states might have resisted Soviet demands more effectively.
	M. ...the Winter War would not have started.

APPENDIX 5 LESSON PLAN 3

Lesson 3: Estonia's Loss of Independence (1941–1945)

Stage	Time	Activity	Instruction	Learning Outcomes
Warm-up	10 min	Recap June Coup and Soviet annexation. Briefly discuss the transition to German occupation.	<p>“What happened during the June Coup? How did Soviet annexation lead to the events of 1941? Share one key fact with the class.”</p> <p>Kahoot: Estonia 1940: The Fall of Independence</p>	<p>History: Understand the sequence of historical events.</p> <p>English: Summarize events <u>concisely</u>.</p>
Grammar Practice	10 min	Students work in pairs to create alternative historical scenarios by forming Type 3 conditional sentences based on Unit 23 events. This task encourages creativity, critical thinking, and grammar application.	<p>“Now we’ll imagine how history could have been different by using Type 3 conditional sentences. You’ll work in pairs to create sentences about key events from 1939–1941.”</p>	<p>History: Explore alternate outcomes in Estonia’s history.</p> <p>English: Apply advanced grammar skills.</p>
Role-Play	15 min	Fun role-play: Students take on roles as key figures or events from Unit 23.	<p>“Each of you will receive a role card (e.g., ‘June Coup,’ ‘Soviet Union,’ ‘Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact’). Read your role aloud and let the class guess!”</p> <p>Role Play Worksheet.</p>	<p>History: Engage in active learning.</p> <p>English: Improve speaking confidence.</p>
Test	10 min	Written test based on Unit 23 content and grammar practice.	<p>“Complete the test by answering questions about Estonia’s loss of independence and forming Type 3 conditional sentences based on historical events.”</p> <p>Test.</p>	<p>History: Demonstrate understanding of WWII events.</p> <p>English: Use Type 3 conditionals correctly.</p>
<p>Notes: Students possess the necessary knowledge; however, they tend to respond in Estonian. Due to varying language proficiency levels, students with lower proficiency find it more challenging to answer questions. The necessary modifications were implemented too late, resulting in errors remaining in the test materials. Consequently, the teacher faced increased difficulties in conducting the lessons effectively.</p>				

APPENDIX 6 ROLE-PLAY

<p>Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was signed in 1939 between two powerful nations. • I divided Eastern Europe into “spheres of influence.” • Because of me, Estonia lost its independence. 	<p>June Coup of 1940</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I happened when Soviet troops entered Estonia. • A new pro-Soviet government was formed. • I led to Estonia becoming part of the USSR. 	<p>June Deportations of 1941</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thousands of Estonians were taken from their homes. • Many were sent to Siberia by the Soviet authorities. • This happened just before the German invasion. 	<p>Soviet Bases Agreement (1939)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was signed under pressure from the Soviet Union. • I allowed Soviet troops to be stationed in Estonia. • Shortly after, Estonia was fully occupied.
<p>Forest Brothers (Metsavennad)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We hid in the forests to avoid Soviet rule. • We fought both Soviet and Nazi forces. • We were Estonian resistance fighters. 	<p>Annexation of Estonia into the USSR (1940)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was officially announced in August 1940. • Estonia was declared a Soviet republic. • I was not a free democratic decision. 	<p>Secret Protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was not meant to be seen by the public. • I decided the fate of the Baltic States. • I was an agreement between Hitler and Stalin. 	<p>German Invasion of Estonia (1941)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I began when Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union. • The Soviet Red Army retreated from Estonia. • Some Estonians saw me as “liberation,” but it was temporary.
<p>Joseph Stalin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was the leader of the Soviet Union during WWII. • I ordered mass deportations from Estonia. • I played a key role in Estonia’s annexation in 1940. 	<p>Konstantin Päts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was Estonia’s president before the Soviet occupation. • I was deported to Russia and died in captivity. • Many say I made the wrong decision in 1939. 	<p>Johannes Vares-Barbarus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I became Estonia’s leader after the June Coup. • I followed orders from Moscow. • I was seen as a Soviet puppet. 	<p>Adolf Hitler</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was the leader of Nazi Germany. • I invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. • Estonia became part of my Eastern war plan.

APPENDIX 7 ASSESSMENT TASK

Assessment: Checking Learning Outcomes

1. Yes/No Questions. Mark 'Yes' or 'No' for each statement.

- ___ Estonia remained independent throughout World War II.
- ___ The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a secret agreement between Germany and the Soviet Union.
- ___ The June Coup of 1940 led to Estonia becoming part of the Soviet Union.
- ___ The Forest Brothers were a pro-Soviet resistance group.
- ___ The Soviet Union deported thousands of Estonians in 1941.

2. Multiple Choice - Choose the correct answer.

- What was the purpose of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact?
 - a) To create a military alliance between Estonia and Germany
 - b) To divide Eastern Europe between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union
 - c) To establish democratic governments in the Baltic States
- What happened to Estonia in 1940?
 - a) It joined the Allied forces
 - b) It was occupied by the Soviet Union
 - c) It became a neutral country in WWII
- Who carried out the June Deportations in 1941?
 - a) The German army
 - b) The Estonian government
 - c) The Soviet NKVD
- What was the main reason Estonia was occupied during WWII?
 - a) Its strategic location between Germany and the Soviet Union
 - b) Its large army

- c) Its strong economy
- What was the response of many Estonians to Soviet occupation?
 - a) They welcomed Soviet rule
 - b) Many joined the Forest Brothers to resist
 - c) Estonia declared war on Germany

3. Put the following events in the correct order (1-4).

- ___ Soviet Union invades Estonia
- ___ Germany invades the Soviet Union & Estonia
- ___ Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is signed
- ___ June Deportations take place

4. Write 2–3 sentences for each question, using the third conditional.

If Estonia had not been part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, how might history have been different?

.....

.....

.....

Imagine you are an Estonian citizen in 1940. How would you feel about the Soviet occupation? Why?

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX 8 THE JOURNAL OF THE CLIL TEACHER

The pilot lesson. Group 1. The 27th of January 2025.

Being well-prepared for a lesson ensures a smoother experience for both the teacher and the learners. Therefore, before the lesson, I opened the presentation and arranged the slips of paper containing definitions and terms on the teacher's desk. 17 students out of 20 were present.

The topic of the first lesson was *Estonia in World War II (1939–1941)*. The lesson began with a brief introduction to the concept of CLIL. Given the classroom setup, the learners were seated in groups of three or four, and these groups remained the same throughout the lesson, which supported collaboration and increased confidence.

To activate prior knowledge and introduce the topic, the learners examined a set of photographs and discussed whether the accompanying statements were true or false. This task was engaging and encouraged short discussions. It was evident that some students recognised specific images. Additionally, I asked the learners to identify the historical figures in the photographs. To incorporate movement into the lesson, I instructed students to stand or remain seated based on their answers.

Following this, I asked students to translate historical terms into Estonian. In their groups, they then matched the Estonian definitions with their English equivalents. This activity was generally engaging and led to further discussion. However, reviewing the answers as a class proved to be quite time-consuming due to the number of terms included. As a result, I decided to adjust the layout of this activity for the second group.

For the reading task, each student received an individual copy of the text for silent reading. Each group was assigned one question to answer orally. Some learners struggled to articulate their responses, with a few referring back to the text for support. In cases where a group encountered difficulty, other groups were encouraged to assist.

Due to time constraints, I could only briefly summarise the key points and outline the plan for the next lesson.

The 29th of January 2025. Group 2

The first lesson with Group 2 followed a similar structure. However, specific adjustments were implemented based on insights from the pilot lesson and discussions with the thesis author. Additionally, we had been too optimistic concerning the number of tasks one lesson should contain. It was obvious that CLIL meant a slower pace to ensure the acquisition of the learning outcomes.

As we had to use a different classroom, students were seated in rows instead of groups. This seating arrangement proved slightly less effective, though desks could have been rearranged to facilitate group work.

As in the pilot lesson, the photo-based activity designed to activate prior knowledge provided opportunities for recognition. Once again, I asked students to identify the historical figures in the images, and they were able to provide answers.

An adjustment was made to the vocabulary task to improve efficiency: students received a set of terms with pre-printed translations, reducing the time required for matching. However, due to the group's generally passive engagement, the task took just as long as with Group 1. While the activity encouraged discussion, some students needed reminders to use the target language.

The reading task was followed by summarising questions, which proved slightly more challenging for this group compared to Group 1.

The 30th of January, group 1

As a warm-up activity for the second lesson with Group 1, we reviewed the key facts from the previous lesson. Overall, students largely recalled the key terms and some important dates. To reinforce their learning, the author had prepared a 10-question Kahoot quiz. Interactive tasks tend to make learning more engaging; most students enjoy them. Moreover, the activity provided an opportunity to revisit the key points.

This was followed by the second part of the reading text, which students read silently. Initially, we had intended to cover the theoretical content within a single lesson, but this proved overly ambitious given the actual pace of work.

Once again, we reviewed the summarising questions, each group answering one. Occasionally, other groups contributed to the discussion, and some students had to refer back to the text to recall what they had read.

The reading task was followed by a grammar component introducing the third conditional, which both groups would be studying next in their English lessons. We watched a short video explaining the function of the third conditional, after which students were given worksheets containing sentence fragments. Their task was to match the beginnings of sentences with possible endings, all involving hypothetical outcomes. Since some sentences had multiple possible endings, the task encouraged discussion and critical thinking.

The lesson concluded with a review of the key facts.

The 30th of January, group 2

Since the second lesson with Group 2 occurred on the same day as with Group 1, there was limited time to make adjustments. However, we had anticipated the need for time efficiency in the tasks and planned accordingly.

A notable difference between the two groups was their level of discipline. For half of the group, two students questioned why I was conducting the lesson instead of their usual teacher. Addressing this interruption took additional time that had not been accounted for.

Despite this, the group seemed to enjoy the Kahoot activity. As with Group 1, we paused after each question to review the answers, particularly when many students had answered incorrectly.

The conditional sentence-matching task was effective; however, students were not particularly engaged in discussing the possible sentence combinations.

The 31st of January, group 2

The third and final series lesson with Group 2 concluded the week.

Like the second lesson, we began by recalling key facts. I asked questions, and the learners responded. Once again, they played Kahoot, which provided an engaging way to review the material.

Next, each student received a paper describing a historical figure or concept they were meant to portray. They were instructed not to reveal their descriptions to their classmates. However, the seating arrangement (in rows) was not ideal for this activity. Each card also included an answer. To introduce the task, I read the first example aloud, and we reviewed the terms before students took turns reading their hints while their classmates attempted to guess the correct answer. Although both the history teacher and I found the activity pedagogically valuable, the learners were not particularly eager to participate in the guessing process.

To conclude the CLIL lessons, the learners answered a series of multiple-choice and open-ended questions to consolidate the material covered throughout the week. The results were shared with the history teacher, who approved the relevance and usefulness of the selected questions.

The 3rd of February, group 1

The time between the final lessons with groups 2 and 1 allowed for a beneficial adjustment to the role-play task. After discussions with the author, we divided the role-play cards into smaller groups of 4-6 students instead of using the whole class. This change proved to be more effective in engaging the students.

APPENDIX 9 THE FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Kairi Kruusaauk. I am a Master's student at the University of Tartu, and I am writing my master's thesis on the topic "BRIDGING HISTORY AND LANGUAGE: DEVELOPING CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING LESSON PLANS FOR ESTONIA'S WORLD WAR II HISTORY."

You participated in 1-3 CLIL lessons between January 27 and February 3, 2025. I kindly ask for your feedback on these lessons. The questionnaire is anonymous, and its content will be used solely for scientific research purposes.

Please mark the most suitable answer or circle the number if required.

Gender

Woman

Man

Group

9A

9B

I participated in (how many) lessons

1

2

3

In the CLIL History and English lessons ... (please mark the most suitable answer where 1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
I find it easy to understand my teacher's explanation in English.					
I find it easy to reply in English.					

I find it easy to ask questions and/or speak in English.					
I find it easy to understand written texts in English.					
I find it easy to write in English.					
I find it easy to do the activities the teacher asks us to do in English.					

I liked to study history in English.					
I understood the historical content (the Base agreement, the loss of independence in 1939-1941) quite well in English.					
I think learning history in English is a good idea.					
I prefer to study history in Estonian.					
The tasks and activities chosen for the lessons helped me to understand the content (the Base agreement, the loss of independence in 1939-1941) well.					
I felt insecure/anxious in history lessons taught in English.					
Studying history in English helps me to improve my English language skills.					

What do you think is the difference between a CLIL lesson and a traditional language and/or content lesson?

What did you like the most about integrated (CLIL) lessons (learning environment, phrases, used teaching methods, student involvement, etc.)?

How did you benefit from integrated classes (the acquired language, speciality knowledge, etc.)?

Was there anything you did not like about integrated (CLIL) classes (learning environment, phases, teaching methods, little involvement in classes, etc.)?

Which methods are the most effective in integrated (CLIL) classes? (Please rank at least 3 of the following methods in order of importance.)

- Photos
- Matching the terms with their definitions
- Reading
- Answering questions about the text read
- Discussions
- Interactive revision (Kahoot)
- Type 3 conditional sentences
- Role play

Please comment on how the 1-3 activities you selected in the previous question were practical.

What was your final grade in English in the 8th grade?

What was your final grade in History in the 8th grade?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire!

Your opinion is highly appreciated

At the end of the lesson, we reviewed the key points and summarised the main ideas.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Kairi Kruusaauk

Title: Bridging History and Language: Developing CLIL Lesson Plans to Teach World War II to Year 9 Learners

Pealkiri: Ajaloo ja keele ühendamine: CLIL-tundide koostamine Teise maailmasõja õpetamiseks 9. klassi õpilastele

Magistritöö

Aasta: 2025

Lehekülgede arv: 75

Annotatsioon:

Käesolev magistritöö uurib lõimitud aine- ja keeleõppe (LAK-õppe) rakendamist Eesti ajaloo perioodi 1939-1941 õpetamisel ühe kesk-Eesti põhikooli 9. klassi õpilastele. Töö on kvalitatiivne juhtumiuuring, mille eesmärk oli uurida: (1) kuidas õpilased suhtuvad ajaloo õppimisse inglise keeles, (2) kuidas koostada tõhus LAK-õppe tunnikava, ning (3) millised on õpetajate arvamused LAK-õppe rakendamise kohta.

Tunnikavad on koostatud magistritöö autori poolt ning läbi viidud kesk-Eesti kooli inglise keele õpetaja poolt. Andmeid koguti klassivaatluse, õpilasküsitluse ja õpetaja refleksiooni kaudu. Uuringu tulemused viitavad, et LAK-õpe võib tõsta õpilaste motivatsiooni ning toetada nii keelelist kui sisulist õppimist, eriti interaktiivsete tegevuste kaudu nagu mälu- ja rollimängud. Samas selgusid mitmed väljakutsed, nagu õpilaste varieeruv keeleoskus, ajapiirangud ning õpetajatele lisanduv planeerimiskoormus.

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13.05.2025