



This is a self-archived – parallel-published version of an original article. This version may differ from the original in pagination and typographic details. When using please cite the original.

AUTHOR Roiha Anssi, Mäntylä Katja

TITLE CLIL as a Vehicle for a Positive English Self-concept: An Analysis of One Former Student's Life Course

YEAR 2021

DOI

VERSION Author's accepted manuscript

In book: The Psychological Experience of Integrating Content and Language, Kyle Read Talbot, Marie-Theres Gruber, Rieko Nishida (Eds.). 2021. Pages 55-72
<https://www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/?k=9781788924306>

Copyright © 2021 Kyle Read Talbot, Marie-Theres Gruber, Rieko Nishida and the authors of individual chapters.

4 CLIL as a Vehicle for a Positive English Self-concept: An Analysis of One Former Student's Life Course

Anssi Roiha and Katja Mäntylä

Introduction

The interplay between multiple factors such as learners' ages, aptitudes, attitudes, self-perceptions, personality, motivation or learning strategies has an effect on how successful one is in learning a second or foreign language. Of particular interest to our study are both affective factors and self-beliefs as we examine the effect of early CLIL on English language self-concept. Self-concept is an important but not often mentioned psychological construct in language learning. Particularly in CLIL research, the investigation of this construct has remained rare. In this chapter, CLIL is defined as an educational approach in which content is partly taught through a foreign language (Coyle *et al.*, 2010). In Finland (i.e. the context of the study) CLIL started in 1991 and has, throughout the years, established its place in the Finnish education system. It was particularly popular in the beginning as in 1996 approximately 10 per cent of schools reported implementing CLIL at basic education level (Nikula & Marsh, 1996). In the early 2000s, the number of schools providing CLIL had dropped to approximately 5 per cent (Lehti *et al.*, 2006). However, a recent municipal-level survey reveals that the implementation of CLIL has again increased in many municipalities. The survey also indicates that most CLIL programmes in Finland are relatively small scale (i.e. less than 25 % of all teaching) (Peltoniemi *et al.*, 2018). The predominant CLIL language in Finland has been English throughout the existence of this teaching approach (Nikula & Marsh, 1996; Peltoniemi *et al.*, 2018). The Finnish national core curriculum for basic education allows all schools to employ CLIL so long as the content objectives are met in all the subjects (Finnish National Board of Education, 2014).

This chapter draws on empirical data from a case study that investigated 24 former students' experiences of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and its effects on their English language self-concept (Roiha & Mäntylä, 2019). More specifically, in this chapter, we focus on one participant, Kimmo, and how his English self-concept manifests throughout the

course of his life. We rely on the theoretical underpinnings of self-concept as a dynamic and multidimensional psychological construct that reflects people's self-perceptions (e.g. Mercer, 2011). Initially, we will review how self-concept has been defined and how it has been previously investigated within CLIL contexts. We will then move on to a detailed analysis of Kimmo's interview. The results of the study indicate that early CLIL can be an effective approach in forming the foundation of strong target language self-concept. Furthermore, the findings support the views of foreign language self-concept being a situational construct that can oscillate throughout the years. The findings also suggest that foreign language self-concept is constantly constructed in social situations and interactions with interlocutors (see also Chapter 2). The data are in line with earlier studies that suggest it is more reasonable to consider separate self-concepts for different foreign languages. Moreover, the data suggest dividing foreign language self-concept into even more domain-specific self-concepts within a language, such as English writing, speaking or reading self-concept (see also Laine & Pihko, 1991; Mercer, 2011; Walker, 2015). Finally, the practical implications for foreign language and CLIL education based on this study will be discussed.

Self-concept

Conceptualising self-concept

Self-concept, which has been extensively studied in psychology, is generally seen as a multidimensional and hierarchical construct that represents a person's self-perceptions in various domains (e.g. Marsh *et al.*, 1988; Marsh & Shavelson, 1985; Shavelson *et al.*, 1976). Although most scholars have focused on the cognitive dimension of self-concept, it is also considered to include an affective evaluative component (e.g. Pihko, 2007), which some empirical studies have supported (e.g. Arens *et al.*, 2011; Tracey *et al.*, 2014). According to Shavelson *et al.* (1976: 411), self-concept is 'organized, multifaceted, hierarchical, stable, developmental, evaluative, differentiable'. These many dimensions of self-concept show in different models depicting it. For instance, Shavelson *et al.* (1976) have divided the global self-concept into academic and non-academic self-concepts. Marsh *et al.* (1988) have further separated the academic self-concept into math self-concept and verbal self-concept, which incorporates a holistic foreign language self-concept.

Self-concept has been further conceptualised as having a relatively stable core that is formed early on and several less stable domain-specific self-concepts. School itself constitutes an important venue regarding the formation of one's academic self-concept as students'

educational outcomes have been shown to influence it (e.g. Marsh & Craven, 2006; Valentine *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, parents' and teachers' beliefs about students' abilities can have an impact on their self-concept (e.g. Frome & Eccles, 1998; Pesu, 2017). Marsh *et al.* (2018) have created an integrated academic self-concept model for the formation and development of academic self-concept. Their model comprises the internal/external (I/E) frame of reference model, reciprocal effects model (REM) and the big-fish-little-pond effect (BFLPE) model. According to the I/E model, students juxtapose their math and verbal self-concepts, and the assumed difference will further increase the domain-specific self-concept that they perceive to be stronger. The external frame of reference refers to people comparing their own perceived self-concept to other people's self-concepts which correspondingly affects the nature of their own self-concept (Marsh, 1986). The REM model, in turn, refers to academic self-concept and students' achievement being both the causes and effects of each other (Marsh, 1990). The BFLPE model assumes that students' academic self-concepts are influenced by their peers. Therefore, a student who is in a class with more able students is likely to have a lower academic self-concept than an equally able student with less able peers (Marsh & Seaton, 2015). The above models are also applicable to foreign language learning which we will discuss in more detail as follows.

Self-concept in foreign languages

Relying on Marsh *et al.*'s (1988) structure of self-concept, Mercer (2011) has defined the foreign language self-concept as 'an individual's self-descriptions of competence and evaluative feelings about themselves as a Foreign Language (FL) learner' (Mercer, 2011: 14). For the sake of operationalising, Pihko (2007) has further separated the foreign language self-concept into three smaller components: 1) real/actual self which refers to learners' subjective perceptions of themselves in a language, 2) ideal self which stands for learners' wishes and desires of language learning (i.e. the level of competence in a given language one aspires to achieve) and 3) self-esteem/self-worth in language learning which she considers as the most important component. Pihko's (2007) conceptualisation bears similarities to Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) which highlights the Ideal L2 Self (i.e. the L2 user one aspires to become) as the paramount component of motivation. Thus, for Pihko (2007) self-esteem weighs more in self-concept whereas in Dörnyei's (2005) model one's aspirations are emphasised more.

Many studies have approached foreign language self-concept as a holistic construct that encompasses all foreign languages. However, for instance, Mercer (2011) has raised the need

to acknowledge distinct self-concepts in different languages and domains within languages. Similarly, Laine and Pihko (1991) regard foreign language self-concept as a hierarchical structure that includes global, specific and task levels. The global level refers to learners' perceptions of themselves as a foreign language learner whereas the specific level designates learners' self-perceptions in a specific language. The task level, in turn, relates to learners' perceptions of their abilities in specific language skills such as speaking or writing, thus somewhat resembling self-efficacy (e.g. Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). In support of this, Yeung and Wong (2004) found that teachers (n = 437) had distinct self-concepts in different languages. Moreover, Lau *et al.*'s (1999) findings imply the need to separate a foreign language self-concept into even more microscopic self-concepts within the language such as listening, speaking, reading or writing self-concept (see also Walker, 2015).

Akin to global self-concept, foreign language self-concept is also believed to be affected by internal and external factors. For instance, Mercer (2011) adheres to Marsh's (1986) I/E model. When applying the I/E theory to language learning, Mercer (2011) has suggested that learners make comparisons more broadly across several subjects or various foreign languages. Other internal factors according to Mercer (2011) are beliefs about foreign language learning and specific languages as well as affect. External factors comprise social comparisons, feedback from significant others, perceived experiences of success and failure and past experiences with the language (Mercer, 2011). Pihko (2007), in turn, proposes that learners' language self-concept is formed gradually through their learning experiences. Positive language situations help create a strong language self-concept while negative experiences are likely to have an adverse effect. In addition, Pihko (2007) emphasises the role of feedback from peers and teachers.

In this study, we approach the data through a specific English (as a foreign language) self-concept which we regard as a subcomponent of the global foreign languages self-concept (e.g. Marsh *et al.*, 1988). We adhere to the conceptualisations by Mercer (2011) who defines it broadly as people's beliefs and evaluative feelings of themselves as English language learners and users. Similarly, we believe that English self-concept has both cognitive and affective components (e.g. Pihko, 2007).

Prior studies on self-concept in CLIL

To the best of our knowledge, few studies have examined self-concept in CLIL contexts. Some have used Dörnyei's (2005) Second Language Motivational Self System (L2MSS) to compare CLIL students' motivation to that of non-CLIL students and found that CLIL students tend to

have a stronger Ideal L2 Self, although often already at the outset of CLIL (e.g. Mearns *et al.*, 2017; Sylvé & Thompson, 2015). In Finland, Seikkula-Leino (2002) compared the foreign language self-concept of 101 non-CLIL and 116 CLIL students in years 5 and 6. The data were collected using a Likert-scale, in which the self-concept indicator was an adjusted version of Laine and Pihko (1991). She found that the CLIL students' foreign language self-concept was significantly weaker than the non-CLIL students'. The CLIL students perceived themselves as weaker learners of English in general, and specifically in reading, writing, speaking and comprehension. This is an interesting result considering that the CLIL students were factually better at English based on their higher school grades. Similar results have also been found by, for instance, Mercer (2011). According to Seikkula-Leino (2002), this can be the result of CLIL, as in CLIL lessons, the students are being exposed to foreign language which may be harder to bear on an affective level than learning through one's L1.

Pihko (2007) investigated the foreign language self-concept of 209 CLIL and 181 non-CLIL Finnish secondary students. Contrary to Seikkula-Leino's (2002) results, she found that the CLIL students' foreign language self-concept was more positive than their non-CLIL peers'. The survey examined the students' real/actual self in general, and specifically in reading, speaking, pronunciation, writing, listening, vocabulary and grammar. The results showed that the CLIL students' real/actual self was significantly higher in all the domains. Interestingly, both groups assessed reading, listening and pronunciation as their strongest domains respectively. Furthermore, the CLIL students' self-esteem/self-worth was also significantly higher than the non-CLIL students'. Ideal self, in turn, was high in both groups, although still slightly higher among the CLIL students. Pihko (2007) deduces that CLIL classes are a potential environment for developing one's positive target language self-concept as CLIL students are constantly using the language in meaningful ways. As a limitation, Pihko's (2007) study did not take *a priori* differences into account.

Rumlich (2016), in turn, investigated the English as a foreign language self-concept (EFL SC) in a German CLIL context. His study examined the change in 321 CLIL students', 221 non-CLIL students' (i.e. students from CLIL schools who did not receive CLIL) and 134 regular students' (i.e. students from non-CLIL schools) EFL SC during a two-year period (years 6-8). Rumlich (2016) took *a priori* differences into account and found that the CLIL students had an initially higher EFL SC. This notwithstanding, the CLIL students' EFL SC slightly increased during the two-year period whereas for regular students it remained the same and for non-CLIL peers slightly decreased. Rumlich (2016) emphasises that the results

regarding the effect of CLIL on students' self-concept should be interpreted with caution as the CLIL students' initially higher EFL SC seems to explain most of the increase.

Dallinger *et al.* (2016) studied the effect of CLIL on students' English and History learning. Their sample included 1281 students from 54 classrooms, out of which 483 were CLIL students, 354 non-CLIL students from CLIL schools and 444 non-CLIL students from schools without a CLIL programme. In addition to academic achievement, the study touched upon self-concept and showed that the CLIL students' English self-concept was substantially higher compared to the non-CLIL students.

Most previous studies on self-concept in CLIL have been quantitative and focused on students currently enrolled in CLIL. With this study, we aimed to fill an important research gap by qualitatively examining the effect of CLIL on students' target language self-concept in the long-term. Contrary to the above studies, we did not endeavour to measure the participants' self-concept but rather describe how it was expressed in their narratives. For instance, according to Zimmerman (2000), it can be problematic to measure *de facto* self-concept. This may also partly explain the discrepancies between the aforementioned studies.

Overview of the Study

Although the focus of this chapter is on one participant, Kimmo, we will first briefly outline the larger study from which this case study is drawn (for more details see Roiha & Mäntylä, 2019). The participants ($n = 24$) commenced their schooling in 1992. The CLIL programme in the target school had started a year before during the onset of CLIL programmes in Finland. The applicants were not pre-tested, but priority was given to students who already had some experience of English. The participation in the programme was voluntary. CLIL was implemented in most subjects and at the primary level, 25 per cent of all teaching was in English. In the 1st and 2nd years, CLIL was mostly carried out through class routines, songs, rhymes and games rather than teaching content. From the 3rd year onwards, the amount of CLIL teaching increased and the participants also started to receive formal English teaching alongside CLIL. CLIL continued in lower secondary school but was less extensive than in primary school. Author 1 had been a student himself in the target class the entire 9-year comprehensive school. This position and the earlier relationship with the participants also added a distinctive character to the data collection and analysis (Garton & Copland, 2010). Knowing the participants and sharing school experiences with them naturally had both advantages and disadvantages. First of all, due to the shared experience, the researcher had a

thorough understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Moreover, the common history may have made the participants more open in the interviews. However, some of the participants may have also been inclined to overemphasise their English language self-concept as they were interviewed by their former classmate.

The study aimed to investigate how the participants' English language self-concept is expressed and what role the participants assign to CLIL in the forming of their English self-concept. The data were collected through individual life course interviews which were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed inductively using theory-oriented thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Eskola, 2018). That is, the data coding was guided by theory and prior studies of self-concept, but the final coding was based on what emerged from the data. For instance, the definition of English self-concept as a multidimensional, dynamic and situational construct guided the analysis. All the data excerpts that concerned the participants' perceptions of themselves as language learners and users were coded. The labels used to code the data (e.g. language anxiety, self-confidence, social comparisons, limitations in English skills etc.) were combined and sorted into several subthemes (i.e. robust self-concept, dynamic self-concept, multidimensional self-concept, the significance of early CLIL and social comparisons). The analysis led to two overarching themes (i.e. expression of English language self-concept and perception of factors influencing English language self-concept).

The data used specifically for this chapter (i.e. Kimmo's interview) are approximately 9000 words of transcribed text. In addition to the thematic analysis that was carried out with the overall data on self-concept, we relied on narrative analysis to analyse Kimmo's life history (Polkinghorne, 1995). For that, we created the following framework, which was inspired by Kuronen (2010):

- (1) Introduction: deals with Kimmo's comprehensive school times. In it, Kimmo reflects on his past CLIL education and its nature.
- (2) Episodes: focuses on Kimmo's entire post-CLIL life course and his life events related to English language (either positive or negative).
- (3) Evaluation: covers Kimmo's micro-level assessments of his life events in relation to his English self-concept formed by CLIL.

(4) Conclusion: summarises the significance of CLIL education in Kimmo's life. He makes a macro-level assessment of his CLIL experience and its role in constructing his life course thus far.

Combining both methods of analysis (i.e. thematic analysis and narrative analysis) enabled us to look at the data from several perspectives.

Kimmo's life course and English self-concept¹

In this section, we will focus on Kimmo's life course. We have divided the section into three parts corresponding to the relevant time periods: 1) CLIL years, 2) upper secondary school and 3) university and the present time. At first, we will provide a brief synopsis of Kimmo's life to help contextualise and relate the results to his life trajectory.

Kimmo attended the CLIL programme for the entire nine years. He had no prior experience of English. Following the CLIL comprehensive school, he completed upper secondary school with the highest grade in the English language matriculation examination. Kimmo entered university in Finland and completed a master's degree in mathematics in Finnish, apart from a few courses and course materials in English. After graduation, Kimmo continued with a doctoral programme for a while before moving to Estonia to obtain a Doctor of Medicine degree. The first two years of his studies were in English and the remaining four in Estonian. After receiving his diploma, Kimmo returned to Finland and at the time of the interview, was working as a doctor in a hospital while simultaneously writing his Doctor of Medical Science dissertation in English.

CLIL years

In general, Kimmo reflected on his past CLIL times in a highly positive way, appreciating both the teaching and the class as a community. He considered that as a result of CLIL, he had learnt English imperceptibly and had been completely comfortable with the use of English. He stated that at the time, he had not perceived CLIL as anything special or extraordinary or something that would be more beneficial for him than mainstream education, which is often the case with CLIL students (e.g. Pladevall-Ballester, 2015).

It was totally normal and natural ... somehow I thought that others also studied like this.

Kimmo's interview implies that the fact that CLIL started already in year 1 made it a natural and taken-for-granted teaching approach for him. It can also be interpreted that due to the gradual start with CLIL and the relatively moderate amount of it, instruction in English did not feel overwhelming. Kimmo articulated that, at the time, he had been satisfied with only 25 per cent of the overall teaching being CLIL. However, when reflecting on the issue in retrospect, he contemplated that there could have been even more lessons and subjects taught in English to gain a more extensive vocabulary.

A fairly prevalent theme in Kimmo's interview was the reciprocal relation between his strong English self-concept and his language using experiences. Kimmo mentioned how his English skills had enabled him to participate in international forums on the internet, which was quite exceptional for a young student back then:

It was very motivating to study it [= English] because I was using it in computer things and when browsing the internet ... I have these memories that I have been in some chat rooms and I have written in English and then when I have told them that I come from Finland and ... that I am like quite young ... then I have gotten praises that wow you are totally fluent in this ... it was somehow surprising because they were making quite bad spelling mistakes.

It appears that the early English proficiency had encouraged Kimmo to use the language for real communication. The positive recognition from the environment had reciprocally reinforced his high English self-concept while also influencing his motivation to study English. It seems that age was an important factor for Kimmo as he presumably was under the impression that his interlocutors were older than he was. The fact that they were nonetheless making errors in their writing appeared to be somewhat remarkable for Kimmo. This coincides with the views of Mercer (2011) and Pihko (2007) who have proposed that self-concept is constructed in language using situations and social interactions.

Self-concept is considered to be a situational, dynamic and fluid construct (e.g. Mercer, 2011). We identified traces of this also in Kimmo's interview. Although generally speaking Kimmo's English self-concept seemed to have been very strong during his CLIL years, the time period also included moments when his self-concept had oscillated slightly. One illustration of this is the language anxiety he had experienced in English. This was mostly

during primary school when he was speaking with native English speakers while visiting his sister who lived in the United Kingdom. Kimmo elaborated on the issue as follows:

Everyone is probably more or less at the same level [in the CLIL class] ... whereas the natives ... they speak fast ... fluently ... and they might laugh and I have been very sensitive to that.

Kimmo stressed that he never experienced language anxiety in CLIL lessons, which can be seen as a testimony of a safe learning environment and feeling of achievement in class. Kimmo's quotation further exemplifies how self-concept is formed in relation to social comparisons (Marsh, 1986; Mercer, 2011). The native speakers appeared to be a significant frame of reference for him. Kimmo had previously communicated orally mostly with other non-native speakers and fully engaging with native speakers for the first time provided him with a new frame of reference. The external comparisons he made therefore plausibly resulted in a momentarily decline in his self-concept. There is evidence showing that in general it seems to be easier and more comfortable for Finns to speak a foreign language with other non-natives than with natives (Leppänen *et al.*, 2011). Kimmo felt language anxiety only outside the CLIL class. However, Pihko (2007) found that, despite their high self-concept, CLIL students also experienced some language anxiety in class, although to a much lesser extent than their non-CLIL peers.

Upper secondary school

Entering upper secondary school (age 16–19) was a period when Kimmo became more conscious of his language skills and started to notice some differences to others. There the CLIL students were merged with non-CLIL students in formal English lessons which offered Kimmo a natural venue to compare his language skills to those of other students. Consequently, this seemed to positively affect his English self-concept which is in line with the big-fish-little-pond effect model (Marsh & Seaton, 2015). In general, as Kimmo got older, he began to view his language skills more analytically:

I started to be aware of it [= English skills] more because I was able to complete the courses just by taking the exams. ... For me Finnish essays were always like this that I had to sit down and it was always a bit hard to inflect the sentences.. but in English already the starting point was that this is relaxed.. that I just sit in front of the computer

and start typing.. and that some nice text just comes. ... Writing in English was considerably easier for me.. it could be because I was relatively better at English and I got better grades.. in that way it was more rewarding.

A few interesting issues can be analysed from the above quotation. Firstly, the high grades Kimmo received in English seemed to work as a frame of reference that reinforced his English self-concept. In general, school attainment has been shown to be one influencing factor to academic self-concept (e.g. Marsh & Craven, 2006; Valentine *et al.*, 2004). Secondly, the quotation illustrates how Kimmo juxtaposes his Finnish and English self-concepts. Somewhat remarkable, is that at that period of Kimmo's life, his English self-concept seemed to have been described even more positively than his Finnish self-concept. It can be interpreted that the internal comparisons between his Finnish and English self-concepts had further reinforced the latter one. This could partly be a reflection of different teaching methods as the Finnish lessons often focus more on form and are more analytical, for instance, in terms of syntax and grammar. The CLIL lessons, in turn, tend to be more meaning-focused and the emphasis is often more on content. Thirdly, despite his more positive English self-concept, factually Kimmo's proficiency in Finnish had been higher than in English. This demonstrates how self-concept represents one's self-beliefs rather than the actual level of ability (e.g. Mercer, 2011). Finally, the quotation suggests, following the conceptualisation by Laine and Pihko (1991), that Kimmo's task self-concept (i.e. writing) had affected his specific (i.e. Finnish) self-concept. Since he had received low grades in writing tasks in Finnish, he had started to perceive his overall ability in Finnish more negatively.

Upper secondary school was also a time for Kimmo when his language anxiety seemed to vanish, which further highlights the dynamic nature of self-concept. Kimmo associated this with ample exposure to oral communication situations when visiting his sister. This is in accordance, for instance, with Pavlenko (2013) and Pihko (2007) who propose that authentic language use helps to create a positive self-concept.

There were just so many of those situations [where I have used English] so it became somehow normal.. and [sister's name omitted] friends are very kind and nice that they don't think badly.. so that way it has been a safe environment to use the language.

Kimmo's quotation demonstrates how the environment has a central role in developing and influencing one's self-concept. It is interesting to contemplate whether negative feedback from

his interlocutors would have had an adverse effect on his self-concept and consequently to his subsequent English using situations.

In general, self-concept is considered to have a relatively stable core and domain-specific parts which are more subject to change. It is suggested that the domain-specific self-concepts which one regards as important can positively affect one's global self-concept (e.g. Hardy & Moriarty, 2006). This appeared to be the case for Kimmo for whom being proficient in English was highly important. Thus, his overtly positive English self-concept seemed to have had a direct bearing on his more global self-perceptions. The following quotation also illustrates the affective dimension of self-concept:

It was a very important thing to me [= being good at English].. and it probably relates to the fact that I had a better vocabulary or something.. but for my self-esteem it was a very big thing.

Overall, Kimmo's linguistic repertoire consisted of Finnish, English, German, Swedish and Estonian. For instance, Mercer (2011), based on her data, has contemplated whether it would be feasible to break the foreign language self-concept into language-specific self-concepts, such as English or Italian as a foreign language self-concept. In accordance with this, Kimmo's self-concept was portrayed differently in different languages, although to a lesser extent than with some of the other participants (see Roiha & Mäntylä, 2019). For instance, Kimmo compared studying the different foreign languages as follows:

For me, Swedish felt always like English.. it felt like many things go like in English and it felt easier.. then German, in turn, was 'from another planet' [says it in English].. that it felt strange and.. like I didn't.. I ran out of motivation with it.

In general, out of all the foreign languages Kimmo had studied, English self-concept arose by far as the most positive one for him. The issue appeared to be somewhat dependent on the specific language as Kimmo seemed to analyse various languages based on their perceived similarity or difference to English. He had clearly enjoyed the ease of learning a language where he could detect similarities to English. Again, this issue could also be partly connected to the varied teaching approaches. That is, many of the participants reported how English was implicitly acquired in CLIL lessons, whereas the teaching of German, for instance, was more form-focused.

There seemed to be some discrepancy between Kimmo's task level self-concepts (e.g. Laine & Pihko, 1991) within his English self-concept. One *example of this is his occasionally low speaking self-concept which was manifested in his language anxiety. Comparably, his writing self-concept was portrayed as high and stable as he emphasised that writing in English had always been very effortless for him, even more so than in Finnish. Similarly, in Pihko's (2007) study, the CLIL students assessed their speaking skills as only their fifth strongest domain after reading, listening, pronunciation and writing. However, in contrast to Kimmo, the majority of the participants in the present study perceived that CLIL had enhanced particularly their speaking skills (see Roiha, 2019).*

University times and present

Kimmo had experience of university level studies both in Finland and Estonia. Both time periods seemed to be significant for his English self-concept as he again had noticed that he stood out from the cohort and fared better than his peers in English:

There [= at university in Finland] it was quite clearly noticeable that I was better at English than most. Giving presentations [in English] in some seminars was not a problem.. or reading articles. ... I wasn't anxious because of the language. Mostly about the content because in maths it's quite strict and it's possible you make mistakes in the thinking process so I was more nervous about that than about the language.

In that context, Kimmo was completely comfortable with using English and appeared to have a strong self-concept. The comparisons to his peers arguably increased his strong English self-concept even further. The quotation also reinforces that, at least in this context and time frame, he had shed his language anxiety. He had used English both with native and non-native speakers, and presumably noticed that he manages well with it. These encounters had also provided him with opportunities to compare his English skills to those of others perhaps not as proficient in English as he.

In general, Kimmo considered that as the literature and other materials were in English, the learning at the university partly resembled CLIL, which he was used to and very comfortable with. The foreign language therefore had not played a role in his learning process as it presumably had for some of his peers. This was particularly apparent at the university in Estonia where his courses were in English:

For instance, when we talked about the ethics of medicine which is already relatively challenging linguistically.. so it was nice when you were able to take a stand on things.. like on those kind of ethical questions where you already need to explain a bit more.. I noticed that the ones for whom the language was not that strong just sat quietly those lessons.

Nowadays, English is still present in Kimmo's life to some extent. For instance, he mentioned using English with his sister's bilingual children. In addition, *he occasionally uses English at work when communicating* with patients who do not speak Finnish:

It's quite nice.. nice variation.. I like to speak English.. I don't find it anyway challenging to explain things in English.. I like it.. sometimes I have to find words and it's slower to explain if a patient asks something a bit more challenging.. but then again it's often related to the fact that the patients themselves are not very strong at English so the language you speak has to be quite basic.

Kimmo also used English in his doctoral project in which he collaborated with foreign scholars and regularly communicated with other medical doctors and researchers in international forums online. He emphasised that he was very comfortable with using English and trusted his language skills also in that context. One additional explanation for this could be that professional jargon is often relatively easy to master as it concerns topics one deals with regularly and is a significant element in one's linguistic identity (see also Chapter 11)

In general, Kimmo's self-concept appeared to have gone through some changes throughout his life course:

I have maybe only started to realise it in recent years that it [= English] is in a way a foreign language and that I don't master it that well. I have had this that this is like my language ... my own language.

The quotation highlights how the affective dimension is strongly present in Kimmo's English self-concept. Overall, his interview revealed that even though as a young student his English self-concept seemed to have been even stronger than his Finnish self-concept, their order had shifted when reaching adulthood. This suggests that the network of self-concepts in different languages can evolve and change throughout the years based on one's experiences with each

language. Furthermore, the variations in Kimmo's English self-concept can also be explained by the proposition that self-concept becomes more complex when learners gain proficiency in a language (e.g. Mercer, 2011). Therefore, it could be that as Kimmo has become older and more advanced in English, he has also become more critical about his skills.

In summary, it seemed that at the time of the interview, Kimmo's self-concept was fairly strong yet realistic as he trusted his language skills while acknowledging his perceived shortcomings as an English user. In general, Kimmo perceived CLIL as a highly prominent factor in forming the foundation of his strong English self-concept:

For real I don't know what ... where I would be if I hadn't been in this kind of.. or if my English skills hadn't been so [good]. ... Well okay you teach English differently from this [= CLIL] but it's like a very big asset to have such strong English because the working life is more and more international.

Kimmo's reflection shows that he sees English as a gateway to knowledge and understanding that he would not have been able to reach only through Finnish. It is also interesting that he does not seem to think that he would have gained equivalent skills in English in a non-CLIL class with only formal English teaching. In the following section, we summarise the findings of the study and discuss their implications.

Conclusion

This chapter investigated one learner's perception of CLIL in creating the foundation of his English language self-concept. Despite some oscillation during Kimmo's life course, his confidence as an English user and strong English self-concept seemed to permeate throughout his reported life trajectory to date. *Overall, CLIL had had a significant role in building and developing Kimmo's self-concept. Its role among other internal and external factors influencing this dynamic, situational and multidimensional construct (e.g. Mercer, 2011) is indisputable. For Kimmo, particularly social comparisons with his non-CLIL peers had reinforced his self-concept, whereas interactions with native English speakers had had a temporary adverse effect.*

One finding worth addressing is Kimmo's somewhat negative outlook towards other foreign languages. Similarly to him, many participants associated their negative attitude and self-concept in other foreign languages with CLIL (see also Roiha & Sommier, 2018), even though

CLIL is claimed to foster a positive attitude towards languages in general (e.g. Marsh, 2000). The juxtaposition of the implicit language learning in CLIL with the focus-on-form approach other foreign languages were taught in was very prominent in the data. The internal comparisons across languages (Marsh, 1986; Mercer, 2011) can be interpreted to have reinforced Kimmo's strong English self-concept and weakened his self-concept in other foreign languages. This result raises the need to pay increasing attention to other languages in CLIL contexts and to reconsider the teaching methods in language education in general. For instance, including learning via language use also in formal language classes can make them more meaningful and motivating.

Finally, a few limitations are worth mentioning. Firstly, in addition to CLIL, formal English lessons seemed to constitute an important context for the development of Kimmo's self-concept (see also Chapter 11). Secondly, besides CLIL, Kimmo's attitudes towards different languages may partly be related to the societal status of languages in Finland (e.g. Leppänen *et al.*, 2011). In general, when interpreting the results, it is important to bear in mind the context and time of the study. In Finland in the 1990s, CLIL was only emerging and generally regarded as more exceptional than today. Therefore, it is highly plausible that the feedback and social comparisons had a more significant impact on Kimmo's self-concept than they would possibly do now. Despite its limitations, the study broadens the scope of research on CLIL by helping to understand how it may contribute to self-concept over a longer period of time. In the future, it would be fruitful to conduct similar research in various CLIL settings across countries. It would also be important to investigate the long-term effects of CLIL with other languages than English that has a unique global role to better uncover the effects of this teaching approach on target language self-concept.

Implications for policy and practice

Though the results of the study cannot be generalised, a few tentative suggestions may be made for language teaching. Primarily, the study indicates that, at least for Kimmo, CLIL was a highly beneficial teaching approach for a positive view of the target language, self-stemming from the early exposure to CLIL. This coincides with the results from studies on early language learning (Muñoz & Singleton, 2011) that state that starting early seems to create positive attitudes and willingness to communicate and use the foreign language, even though the level of proficiency would not necessarily benefit from an early start. This provides another incentive for the implementation of CLIL already at an early primary stage. For Kimmo, the

psychological and social learning environment had been very positive. Therefore, it can be important to create a safe and supportive setting in which students are encouraged to use the language freely without the fear of making mistakes. One salient theme of the present study was the symbiotic relationship between Kimmo's positive English self-concept and language use. *That is, using the language in a meaningful way at a young age came up recurrently in the interview. English had been a vehicle for authentic interaction and content learning prompting the implication of incorporating plenty of communicative language situations in CLIL teaching. With the help of contemporary technology, creating these situations, for instance, interactions across countries is relatively feasible and easy to arrange not just in CLIL classes but also in mainstream language education.*

Notes

- (1) The chapter manuscript has been reviewed by Kimmo (pseudonym) to ensure his consent to such a detailed synopsis of his life course.

References

- Arens, A.K., Yeung, A.S., Craven, R.G. and Hasselhorn, M. (2011) The twofold multidimensionality of academic self-concept: Domain specificity and separation between competence and affect components. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 103(4), 970–981.
- Bong, M. and Skaalvik, E.M. (2003) Academic self-concept and self-efficacy: How different are they really? *Educational Psychology Review* 15(1), 1–40.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3(2), 77–101.
- Coyle, D., Hood, P. and Marsh, D. (2010) *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Dallinger, S., Jonkmann, K., Hollm, J. and Fiege, C. (2016) The effect of content and language integrated learning on students' English and history competences – Killing two birds with one stone? *Learning and Instruction* 41, 23–31.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005) *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum.
- Eskola, J. (2018) Laadullisen tutkimuksen juhannustaiat: Laadullisen aineiston analyysi vaihe vaiheelta [Midsummer magic of qualitative research: A step by step analysis of qualitative data]. In R. Valli (ed.) *Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin 2. Näkökulmia aloittelevalle tutkijalle tutkimuksen teoreettisiin lähtökohtiin ja analyysimenetelmiin* [Windows to Research Methods 2. Perspectives for a Novice Researcher on the Theoretical Basis and Analysis Methods of Research] (pp. 209–231). Jyväskylä: PS-kustannus.
- Finnish National Board of Education. (2014) National core curriculum for basic education. Helsinki: Finnish National Board of Education. See www.oph.fi/english/curricula_and_qualifications/basic_education (accessed January 2018).
- Frome, P.M. and Eccles, J.S. (1998) Parents' influence on children's achievement-related perceptions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74(2), 435–452.
- Garton, S. and Copland, F. (2010) 'I like this interview; I get cakes and cats!': The effect of prior relationships on interview talk. *Qualitative Research* 10(5), 533–551.
- Hardy, L. and Moriarty, T. (2006) Shaping self-concept: The elusive importance effect. *Journal of Personality* 74(2), 77–402.
- Kuronen, I. (2010) Peruskoulusta elämäkouluun. Ammatillisesta koulutuksesta syrjäytymisvaarassa olevien nuorten aikuisten tarinoita peruskoulusuhteesta ja elämäkulusta peruskoulun jälkeen [From comprehensive school to the school of life. Narratives of young adults' engagement in basic education and of their life course following comprehensive school are at risk of exclusion from vocational education and training]. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Jyväskylä.
- Laine, E. and Pihko, M.-K. (1991) *Kieliminä ja sen mittaaminen [The Foreign Language Self-Concept and How to Measure It]*. Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä.
- Lau, I.C., Yeung, A.S., Jin, P. and Low, R. (1999) Toward a hierarchical, multidimensional English self-concept. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 91(4), 747–755.
- Lehti, L., Järvinen, H.-M. and Suomela-Salmi, E. (2006) Kartoitus vieraskielisen opetuksen tarjonnasta peruskouluissa ja lukioissa [An Inquiry about the Status of CLIL Education in Comprehensive and Upper Secondary Schools]. In P. Pietilä, P. Lintunen & H.-M. Järvinen (eds) *Kielenoppija tänään – Language learners of today* (pp. 293–313). AFinLA yearbook 2006. Jyväskylä: The Finnish Association for Applied Linguistics Publications

- Leppänen, S., Pitkänen-Huhta, A., Nikula, T., Kytölä, S., Törmäkangas, T., Nissinen, K., Käätä, L., Räisänen, T., Laitinen, M., Koskela, H., Lähdesmäki, S. and Jousmäki, H. (2011) National survey on the English language in Finland: Uses, meanings and attitudes. Helsinki: Varieng. See <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/series/volumes/05/> (accessed February 2019).
- Marsh, D. (2000) Using languages to learn and learning to use languages. Jyväskylä, FI: University of Jyväskylä. See <http://archive.ecml.at/mtp2/clilmatrix/pdf/1uk.pdf> (accessed February 2019).
- Marsh, H.W. (1986) Verbal and math self-concepts: An internal/external frame of reference model. *American Educational Research Journal* 23(1), 129–149.
- Marsh, H.W. (1990) The causal ordering of academic self-concept and academic achievement: A multiwave, longitudinal panel analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 82(4), 646–656.
- Marsh, H.W. and Craven, R.G. (2006) Reciprocal effects of self-concept and performance from a multidimensional perspective: Beyond seductive pleasure and unidimensional perspectives. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 1(2), 133–163.
- Marsh, H.W. and Seaton, M. (2015) The big-fish-little-pond effect, competence self-perceptions, and relativity: Substantive advances and methodological innovation. In A.J. Elliott (ed.) *Advances in Motivation Science* (pp. 127–184). New York, NY: Elsevier.
- Marsh, H.W. and Shavelson, R.J. (1985) Self-concept: Its multifaceted, hierarchical structure. *Educational Psychologists* 20(3), 107–123.
- Marsh, H.W., Byrne, B.M. and Shavelson, R.J. (1988) A multifaceted academic self-concept: Its hierarchical structure and its relation to academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 80(3), 366–380.
- Marsh, H.W., Pekrun, R., Murayama, K., Arens, K.A., Parker, P.D., Guo, J. and Dicke, T. (2018) An integrated model of academic self-concept development: Academic self-concept, grades, test scores, and tracking over six years. *Developmental Psychology* 54(2), 263–280.
- Mearns, T., de Graaff, R. and Coyle D. (2017) Motivation for or from bilingual education? A comparative study of learner views in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Advance online publication.
- Mercer, S. (2011) *Towards an Understanding of Language Learner Self-Concept*. Dordrecht, NE: Springer.
- Muñoz, C. and Singleton, D. (2011) A critical review of age-related research on L2 ultimate attainment. *Language Teaching* 44(1), 1–35.
- Nikula, T. and Marsh, D. (1996) *Kartoitus vieraskielisen opetuksen tarjonnasta peruskouluissa ja lukioissa [An Inquiry about the Status of CLIL Education in Comprehensive and Upper Secondary Schools]*. Helsinki, FI: Finnish National Agency for Education.
- Pavlenko, A. (2013) The affective turn in SLA: From ‘affective factors’ to ‘language desire’ and ‘commodification of affect’. In D. Gabrys (ed.) *The Affective Dimension in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 3–28). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Peltoniemi, A., Skinnari, K., Mård-Miettinen, K. and Sjöberg, S. (2018) *Monella kielellä Suomen kunnissa 2017. Selvitys muun laajamittaisen ja suppeamman kaksikielisen varhaiskasvatuksen, esiopetuksen ja perusopetuksen tilanteesta [In Many Languages in Finnish Municipalities 2017. A Report on the State of Other Extensive and Small-scale Bilingual Early Childhood Education, Pre-primary Education and Basic Education]*. Jyväskylä, FI: University of Jyväskylä.
- Pesu, L. (2017) The role of parents' and teachers' child-related competence beliefs in the development of students' self-concept of ability. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Jyväskylä.

- Pihko, M.-K. (2007) *Minä, koulu ja englantia. Vertaileva tutkimus englanninkielisen sisällönopetuksen ja perinteisen englannin opetuksen affektiivisista tuloksista [Me, School and English. A Comparative Study of the Affective Outcomes of English Teaching in Content and Language Integrated (CLIL) Classes and in Traditional Foreign Language Classes]*. Jyväskylä, FI: University of Jyväskylä.
- Pladevall-Ballester, E. (2015) Exploring primary school CLIL perceptions in Catalonia: Students', teachers' and parents' opinions and expectations. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 18(1), 45–59.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (1995) Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 8(1), 5–23.
- Roiha, A. (2019) Investigating former pupils' experiences and perceptions of CLIL in Finland: A retrospective analysis. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy* 5(2), 92–103.
- Roiha, A. and Mäntylä, K. (2019) 'It has given me this kind of courage...': The significance of CLIL in forming a positive target language self-concept. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Advance online publication.
- Roiha, A. and Sommier, M. (2018) Viewing CLIL through the eyes of former pupils: Insights into foreign language and intercultural attitudes. *Language and Intercultural Communication* 18(6), 631–647.
- Rumlich, D. (2016) *Evaluating Bilingual Education in Germany: CLIL Students' General English Proficiency, EFL Self-Concept and Interest*. Frankfurt am Main, DE: Peter Lang.
- Seikkula-Leino, J. (2002) Miten oppilaat oppivat vieraskielisessä opetuksessa? Oppilaiden suoriutumistasot, itsetunto ja motivaatio vieraskielisessä opetuksessa [How pupils achieve in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)? Pupils' achievement levels, self-esteem and motivation in CLIL]. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Turku.
- Shavelson, R.J., Hubner, J.J. and Stanton, G.C. (1976) Validation of construct interpretations. *Review of Educational Research* 46(3), 407–441.
- Sylvén, L.K. and Thompson, A. (2015) Language learning motivation and CLIL: Is there a connection? *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education* 3(1), 28–50.
- Tracey, D., Yeung, A.S., Arens, A.K. and Ng, C. (2014) Young second language learners' competence and affective self-concept. *Asian EFL Journal* 16(4), 76–95.
- Valentine, J.C., DuBois, D.L. and Cooper, H. (2004) The relation between self-beliefs and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review. *Educational Psychologist* 39(2), 111–133.
- Walker, C. (2015) A study of self-concept in reading in a second or foreign language in an academic context. *System* 49, 73–85.
- Yeung, A.S. and Wong, E.K.P. (2004) Domain specificity of trilingual teachers' verbal self-concepts. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 26(2), 360–368.
- Zimmerman, B.J. (2000) Self-efficacy: An essential motive to learn. *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25(1), 82–91.