

# Erfolgreiches Deutschlernen durch CLIL?

*Zu Lexikon und Kommunikationsstrategien in mündlicher L3  
schwedischer Schüler mit bilinguaem Profil*

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## Abstract

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**Title:** Erfolgreiches Deutschlernen durch CLIL? Zu Lexikon und Kommunikationsstrategien in mündlicher L3 schwedischer Schüler mit bilinguaem Profil

**English title:** Successful German learning through CLIL? A study of lexicon and communication strategies in Swedish students' oral L3

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This thesis investigates the spoken L3 German of Swedish CLIL learners in lower secondary school (grades 8-9) in comparison to Swedish non-CLIL controls and German native speakers; its main objective is to investigate whether the CLIL approach has a positive impact on L3 production. The study deals with vocabulary size and frequency in the spoken lexicon as well as communicative strategies and is based on data consisting of narratives elicited through the retelling of Mayer's well-known picture story *Frog, where are you?* Material was also elicited in the learners' L1 Swedish and in their L2 English. In addition to being contrastive, the study is also longitudinal, in the sense that recordings of the learners' foreign language spoken productions were made twice, as opposed to those of their L1 Swedish or the L1 German of the native speaker control group.

Albeit both learner groups dispose of a rather limited lexical production compared with the German native speakers, the analysis of vocabulary size shows that the L3 narratives of the CLIL learners are not only longer, but also more varied and thus have a greater lexical richness than those of the non-CLIL controls. There seems to be no clear correlation between the L1 and the L3 productions, neither for the CLIL group nor for the non-CLIL group, which is to say that the progress in the L3 cannot be directly linked to L1 proficiency. Similar positive results for the CLIL group were observed in the L2 English narratives, which may indicate an impact of CLIL on enhanced skills in other foreign languages. In the investigation vocabulary frequency, the analysis points to a higher level of L3 German proficiency for the CLIL group, in that they show a higher number of synsemantic words (such as e.g. pronouns and cohesive ties) and a lower number of basic, so-called nuclear verbs and adjectives. Again, the same positive tendencies could be seen in their L2 English. The analysis of the employment of communication strategies (CS) among the Swedish learners indicates that both learner groups experience communication problems in their L3 German and thus resort to CS. However, the use of L3-based, so-called positive CS is much more frequent among the CLIL learners, whereas their non-CLIL peers display a clearly predominant use of L1-based, so-called negative CS.

In contrast to earlier Swedish CLIL evaluations of L2 English, this study points to a positive influence of CLIL on spoken L3 German. Even though no statistically significant results could be obtained due to the fairly small size of the test groups, clear gains are visible in all aspects examined, i.e. vocabulary size, vocabulary frequency and communication strategies. There are several pedagogical implications of this study concerning successful classroom L3 learning. Most importantly, the number of L3 CLIL projects should be enhanced in order to boost progress in L3 skills. Thus, a CLIL module (encompassing e.g. connection between input/output, lexical acquisition and communication strategy use) should be introduced in the teacher education programme for traditional FL education to benefit from. Furthermore, there were no drop-outs during the period of investigation in comparison to a drop-out rate of approx. 35 per cent among the controls, which may suggest that CLIL also fosters motivation for FL learning.

**Keywords:** foreign language learning, CLIL, L1, L2, L3, spoken L3 German, productive vocabulary, tokens/lexical size, types/lexical variation, Guiraud Index/lexical richness, communication strategies