**Negotiating Political Positions: Subject-specific Oral Language Use in CLIL Classrooms**

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**Abstract**

While extant research on CLIL suggests positive impacts on lexical proficiency and on spoken language, the crucial question of the effect of CLIL on advanced learners, both in terms of subject-specific language (SSL) proficiency and content knowledge, has received less attention. We argue that the ability to negotiate a factual position appropriately is a key element of SSL, relating to both content and to foreign language ability. As a theoretical framework for understanding these negotiations of generally opposing standpoints, we use argumentation theory.

The study was conducted in upper-secondary CLIL classes on *European economics and politics* in Austria. From the data set of 16 hours of video-recording, comprising teacher-whole class interactions, group work, and role plays, episodes of argumentation were extracted and analysed. Two types of argumentation patterns emerge, with one focused on the joint construction and learning of new SSL and content knowledge, and the other on the enactment of such knowledge in interactions. Students’ engagement in these argumentations gives clear evidence of their SSL proficiency in prepared and unprepared oral production. As the type of classroom event has an effect on the specific argumentation patterns, the need for exposing students to a diversity of educational practice is underlined.

Key-words: CLIL, upper secondary education, oppositional talk, argumentation, subject-specific language, social sciences at school.

**Introduction**

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) enjoys continued popularity in European mainstream education and has led to a vibrant research scene, which has shown some focus on establishing the language outcomes of CLIL, often by comparison with other foreign language learners (e.g., Perez-Vidal and Roquet 2015). Despite some contradictory findings, this research suggests overall positive effects on general language proficiency, and specifically spoken language and vocabulary for CLIL students (Dalton-Puffer 2011; Nikula, Dalton-Puffer, and Llinares 2013). Underlying such studies, however, seems to be a conceptualisation of CLIL as primarily a foreign language learning approach, possibly on a par with communicative language teaching. This, we would argue, misses one crucial part of what CLIL is or can be, namely, a subject-specific educational practice with its own potentials and challenges for learners and teachers.

We would argue that at the heart of integrating the learning of content and of language, and thus CLIL, lies the ability of the students involved to apply their target language in a manner deemed appropriate by experts within the relevant discipline. Thus, the question is for us not so much whether CLIL students learn the foreign language employed as a medium of instruction better overall, but whether they are able to use, for instance, English in a manner acceptable to biologists, historians or economists. Unlike extant research focusing on the word or phrase level of subject-specific language use (e.g., Gablasova 2014a, 2014b), we focus here on a larger discursive unit, namely, that of dialogic argumentation defined as the oppositional exploration of standpoints with the optional use of supporting evidence. In producing argumentations that both content and language experts view as appropriate, participants need to bring together their content knowledge and their foreign language proficiency, and so require subject-specific language (SSL) at its most challenging.

The precise subject under investigation here (i.e. *European economics and politics*) has not been the focus of CLIL-based research so far, due to its infrequent occurrence in general curricula at the school level, but links to one of the most internationalised fields of tertiary education, that is, business and economics. Our analytical lens is placed on a group of learners somewhat under-represented in CLIL research: upper-secondary, vocational students, who can communicate efficiently about personal and familiar topics in line with the expectations of the ‘Independent (B) Level’ of the CEFR.

Within the general exploration of argumentation as a feature of subject-specific language in secondary CLIL, our study is more specifically focused on these two questions:

* 1. What is the discursive structure and quality of argumentation episodes produced within *European economics and politics* lessons?
	2. What is the effect of specific educational practices as shown in different classroom events on argumentation patterns?

These questions are explored within a discourse-pragmatic framework.

**Theoretical Framework**

***CLIL – A Brief and Topic-focussed Sketch***

As reflected in this special issue (and previous ones, e.g*., International Journal of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education* 16/3, 2013, *The Language Learning Journal*, 42/2, 2014 & 43/3, 2015), CLIL has attracted research interests from various linguistic and educational angles. In view of the multitude of research endeavours and findings, our aim here is not to give an overview (but see Dalton-Puffer 2011; Nikula et al. 2013; Pérez-Canado 2012), but rather to focus on CLIL classroom discourse at the upper-secondary level. Firstly, this concerns the specific group of adolescents who are experienced learners in formal schooling and who are at an (upper) intermediate proficiency level in the target language. Overall, this is a student group that has attracted relatively little CLIL research attention (but see Hüttner et al. 2013; Falk 2015; Sylvén and Ohlander 2014). Secondly, with our interest in classroom discourse, we focus on the micro-level of CLIL practices, foregrounding the intertwined nature of language and content and the mutual dependency between interactional processes and textual products. In relation to these three continua – macro-micro, language-content, process-product – this study can thus be placed into the lower central half of the ‘three-dimensional CLIL research space’ (Dalton-Puffer et al. 2010a, 10).

In line with this focus, ‘integration’ is conceptualised as ‘more than a simple combination of the two elements [language and content]’ (Dalton-Puffer et al. 2010b, 288), which ‘asks for an understanding of the characteristics and interplay of both, and of the potential aims, processes and outcomes of the fused context’ (de Graaff 2016, xiii), ultimately leading to ‘a pedagogical approach […] where content and language are interconnected as two sides of one coin’ (Llinares 2015, 69). Such a complex reading of integration (cf. also Nikula et al. 2016) questions the continuing trend in CLIL research to treat the ‘language’ and ‘content’ parts separately rather than jointly when investigating and evaluating the quality of CLIL teaching and learning. So, instead of using learners’ general proficiency skills in the target language as a CLIL quality measuring tool (like Dallinger et al. 2016), we contend that content-and-language-integrated practices must remain the ‘fused’ focus of research and evaluation (Hüttner and Smit 2014; Llinares 2015). This reflects CLIL practice as complementary to foreign language teaching, where content specialists teach through English, often with a decided aim of achieving subject-specific learning rather than general language learning targets. What is therefore focused on in these educational practices (whether overtly or not) is to familiarise students with the (foreign) language practices specific and appropriate to an academic discipline or, as in our case, a school subject.

Capturing these practices has been the focus of research into subject-specific language (SSL). Even if a precise definition of what is encompassed within this heading, is ‘not an easy task’ (Nikula 2012, 137), it is important to note its distinction from disciplinary language. Thus, types of SSL can roughly be identified by their hybrid and contextualised nature influenced by one or more academic disciplines and the respective pedagogic setting. In the present case, the donor disciplines are macro-economics and European politics, merged and adapted to the needs of these upper secondary Austrian learners. Despite the contextualised linguistic characteristics, however, the educational relevance of SSL is undoubted, not least because of the simple but fundamental fact that language plays a crucial role in subject teaching, regardless of whether it is the learners’ first language (L1) or a foreign language (e.g., Lemke 1990). With increasingly heterogeneous student populations, the necessity for language-aware subject teaching has generally become more urgent (Leisen 2010; Vollmer and Thürmann 2013), also placing more emphasis on investigating the specifics of SSL.

The SSL area that has received most research attention is the learning and use of terminology (e.g., Gablasova 2014a, 2014b; Woodward-Kron 2008). In order to capture the elements of SSL beyond the individual word or phrase, studies have investigated CLIL from a discursive angle (e.g., Järvinen 2010; Llinares and Morton 2010; Nikula 2012) and within a Systemic Functional Linguistics framework (Llinares et al. 2012; Nikula 2012), partly drawing on extant research into L1 use in school subjects (e.g., Christie 2002; Schleppegrell 2004). More recently, SSL studies have drawn on Cognitive Discourse Functions (Dalton-Puffer 2013, 2016), such as defining, evaluating or exploring. Conceptualised as illocutionary speech acts, these units of analysis focus on speaker intentions rather than interactional sequences.

What we feel to be missing within this growing body of research into SSL in CLIL is a focus on the oral production of SSL at the discourse level. Importantly, the interactional element has been under-researched, and through a focus on dialogic argumentation we aim to add one more piece to the puzzle. This lens seems appropriate for higher level learners, given its link to decision-making, negotiating, and problem solving (Angouri and Bargiela-Chiappini 2011).

***Argumentation***

Over its long history as a focus of intellectual thought, argumentation has been researched from various angles, of which two will be drawn on more specifically here: the pragma-dialectal theory developed by Frans van Eemeren and associates (van Eemeren et al. 1996; van Eemeren and Houtlosser 2009) and, with a science educational focus, the works of Jiménez-Aleixandre and Erduran (2008), and Macagno and colleagues (2015, 2016).

At the most general level, ‘argumentation refers to a [...] process in which claims are made, supported, and evaluated by reasons and evidence’ (Nussbaum and Edwards 2011). This evaluation typically takes the form of refutation, either of the claim itself or of the supporting evidence provided. The role played by argumentation in helping students develop the abilities to critically evaluate claims and evidence resonates well with the educational aim of fostering critical thinking in our information-rich societies (Macagno 2016).

When placed into a specific disciplinary culture such as the sciences, the claims in an argumentation generally become theoretical ideas and the evidence highlights empirical findings such as laboratory, statistical or single case evidence, in addition to more general support through referencing sources like other scientists, and to survey data reflecting common opinion (Macagno 2016, 185). The process of argumentation itself is used in science education to ‘justify knowledge claims by marshalling converging lines of reasoning’ (Jiménez-Aleixandre and Erduran 2008, 1). Additionally, the aim of convincing or persuading others becomes discursively relevant.

We suggest two elements as the minimal structure of argumentation to express its oppositional nature of argumentation. These elements are either (a) claim and counterclaim, or (b) claim and rebuttal. In (a), the counterclaim presents a logical opposition to the claim. Either or both claim and counterclaim can be strengthened by explicit support, typically in the form of empirical evidence, creating a more complex structure. For pattern (b) a claim with support is countered by a rebuttal that serves to challenge the support offered.

This definition is based on Erduran’s (2008, 49-51) framework of analysis, but has reduced her typology (based on Toulmin 1958), which includes warrants (i.e., explicit links connecting claim and data) and backings (i.e., supporting these specific links), to only support for either claim or counterclaim. This takes into account the nature of oral language data in the social sciences (as opposed to natural sciences, the field of Erduran’s research) where the links between specific types of evidence and claims is frequently less explicit.

An addition we make to extant models of argumentation in education is to include the final part of the argumentative process within the structure. Thus, the result of argumentation can be either a refined claim, where the original claimant takes into account elements of the counterclaim and/or rebuttal to provide a more consensual or sophisticated claim. Finally, an argumentation might lead to the opposing parties converging on a resolution. Given the dialogic nature, participants might ask directly for specific parts of the argumentation, a discursive activity we have classified under soliciting, namely, soliciting claim or soliciting support. Taken together, argumentations are thus made up of the following components: claim, support, soliciting claim, soliciting support, counterclaim, rebuttal, refined claim, resolution. These components are termed ‘argumentation elements’, and can be produced by one or several speakers. Overall, we use the term ‘episode’ for the entire discourse from the utterance of either a solicitation for a claim or the original claim to either the final refined claim/resolution or the participants’ moving on to a new topic.

As actual episodes are diverse in complexity and length, we embed these components into a sequential framework that allows for a detailed analysis of argumentation episodes. As visualised in Figure 1, a claim (with or without support) is followed by a counterclaim (with or without support) or a rebuttal. Such sequences might be repeated various times (‘≥1’) and, if at all, lead to a refined claim or a resolution.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

The diverse patterns within such argumentation episodes in education can be grouped and ranked in order to assess the quality of episodes, in terms of argumentational robustness. Inspired by Erduran’s (2008, 51) five-level incremental scheme, we consider the presence of supports and rebuttals as indicators of argumentational strength, allowing us to identify three levels of quality of argumentation, with level 3 being the strongest (see Figure 2). Additionally, we conceptualise our addition of the final refined claim/resolution element by introducing an ‘R’ sublevel for each level, reflecting that resolutions or refined claims reveal an episode-internal argumentation development.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

In addition, it is also important to note the situational constraints at play in a particular discourse setting (cp. the ‘initial situation’ in van Eemeren and Houtlosser’s [2009, 10] four-stage model). In educational settings, such constraints have been widely described in terms of their discursive affordances, contingent on the participant roles and teaching events that are shaped by the aims of particular educational practices and interactional format such as teacher-whole class interaction or group work (e.g., Cazden 2001; Walsh 2011). This points to their relevance for the learning process, especially when viewed from a socio-constructivist perspective which understands meaning-making as a joint construction rather than a process taking place solely within an individual (Lantolf and Poehner 2008). Argumentations, as fundamentally dialogic in the Bakhtinian sense of ‘coming to an understanding [... through] the exploration of ideas between two people’ (Mortimer and Scott 2003, 12) contribute to the learning potential for SSL on various planes. For one, their use supports learners in collaboratively constructing more sophisticated subject-specific negotiations than achieved by the individual (Pekarek-Doehler and Pochon-Berger 2011). Secondly, they encourage the modelling of cognitive processes, including critical thinking and reasoning, and subject-specific literacy and, more generally, the ‘enculturation into the scientific culture’ (Jimenez and Erduran 2008, 4).

**The Study**

At the upper secondary level (school years 9 to 13) the Austrian educational system offers a range of school types, all of which end with a set of partially standardised school-leaving exams, entitling graduates to apply at higher educational institutions. Next to the traditional ‘grammar-school’ type, other schools combine academic and professional education. These cater for a wide range of technical and business-related specialisations, such as IT, engineering, business administration or tourism. These schools are highly popular and attract a majority of all Austrian pupils at upper-secondary level[[1]](#footnote-1).

One such school is the site of the study reported on here. It is a state-run school of average size, located in a socio-economically mixed area of Vienna, which focuses on business and tourism. As is typical of this specialisation, communication and foreign languages play an important role, with students learning either two or three foreign languages (English and Romance languages) up to (upper)-intermediate levels and internships abroad being encouraged. In addition, the school implements CLIL in a systematic way over all five years of schooling, even if the selection of CLIL subjects to some degree depends on teachers’ availability. Although there is a selective intake into the CLIL strand and into the school in general, the school follows a low threshold policy of interview and self-selection, aiming for a student population that reflects the socio-economical mix of the residents in the neighbourhood.

This investigation is a qualitative case study and focuses on two groups together comprising 36 grade 12 learners (aged 17 to 18) in one subject, *European economics and politics*. Permission to undertake the study and ethical clearance were obtained from the University Ethics and Research Governance Office at the University of Southampton, the Austrian Ministry of Education, and the head teacher of the participating school. Informed written consent was obtained from all participants in the study. Personal information on the participants was collected in student questionnaires and teacher interviews. The students were all multilingual, with nine reporting home languages other than German, but all indicated that German was their strongest educational language. The subject was jointly prepared, but individually taught by the two teachers in question, both of whom are L1 speakers of German. Before her teaching career, teacher A had worked extensively in private businesses in Austria. Next to her degree in business studies, this teacher holds a teaching degree in French and Italian. Teacher B holds a teaching qualification for English and French and has spent his entire professional life at this school, where he has some managerial responsibilities. Both teachers are highly experienced, with 8 and 16 years of teaching experience, respectively, and – more importantly – extremely enthusiastic about their teaching, as reflected in their collaborative preparations and regular exchanges on the practices and progress in the respective groups.

The classroom data set consists of 16 lessons that were audio- and video-recorded in month 3 and month 8 of one academic year. During the lessons four types of classroom events occurred, three of which will be discussed in this paper.[[2]](#footnote-2) These were

* *teacher whole class* (TWC): lesson sequences with the teacher leading the input
* *group work* (GW): teachers monitoring groups of 4-5 students working on a topic related to European monetary policy
* *role play* (RP): prepared and assessed student discussion of three ‘journalists’ from different EU countries interviewing one ‘EU politician’ on their key standpoints

Transcriptions follow discourse analytical conventions (VOICE; Smit 2010), and coding was undertaken by both authors. Additionally, two sets of interviews were conducted with the teachers (after the first round of lesson recording and during data analysis), as well as with focus groups of students after the second round of data recording. The aim of these interviews was to collect the participants’ views on and evaluations of the observed CLIL lessons.

In order to analyse the data, we used the operationalised definition of argumentation above and, with the help of the qualitative coding software NVivo 10, identified the relevant episodes iteratively. Each author independently identified argumentation episodes in the entire data set; then, in several sessions, the identifications were compared and any differences in identification were resolved through discussion and reference to the construct operationalization. Following the same procedure, the episodes were then scrutinised regarding their internal argumentation structure, formulations, language choice, and participant roles.

**Findings**

As outlined above, the analyses in this paper draw on three diverse classroom events: TWC, GW, and RP. In addition to the a priori established differences of corpus size and the fact that students could prepare for their RPs, descriptive statistics also show distinctions in terms of the talk time taken by teachers vs. students.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

***Argumentation Episodes***

As outlined above, argumentation was chosen as a focal point for studying the use of SSL in negotiating political and economic positions. This allows us to capture a nexus of content and language knowledge, as in order to ‘do argumentation’ both content knowledge and language resources are needed to engage in fluent interactions.

The findings highlight that argumentation takes place in all classroom events, albeit at different frequencies and with different levels of teacher participation, as shown in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

When turning to the 44 argumentation episodes themselves, each was analysed structurally identifying its constituting elements and how these are sequenced within the episode (Table 3, Appendix). The general model of argumentation (as visualised in Fig. 1) allows a fit of all episodes identified within it and caters for the variations encountered in the detailed sequential structures across classroom events. Thus, argumentation episodes range from those showing the simplest sequence of claim and counterclaim (e.g., RP-gr3-1) to those showing, at the other extreme, a sequence of 12 elements, with the core claim being restated and countered with counter-claims and rebuttals until a final explicit resolution is arrived at (GWA-gr2-5).

Sequential complexity, however, cannot be equated with quality of argumentation within a specific discipline. In order to capture such qualitative differences, we decided on two approaches, a structure-based evaluation of all episodes, followed by a discourse-based analysis of the individual episodes per classroom events. Within the structural approach, we classified all episodes according to the adapted analytical framework for assessing the quality of argumentation (see Figure 2 for levels 1, 1R, 2, 2R, 3 and 3R). The findings reported in Table 4 (Appendix) show that students produce argumentations at all levels of quality, including the argumentationally most advanced type at Level 3R, which are those including a claim plus support, followed by a rebuttal or counterclaim, and resolution. The more detailed discourse-pragmatic analyses of these episodes are reported by classroom event below.

*Teacher-Whole Class*

Overall, the TWC event shows the lowest proportion of argumentation episodes (see Table 2) in line with its overarching aim to present and clarify content knowledge. This focus leads to the teacher prominently taking on the role as ‘knowledge transmitter’, which is evidenced in several structural and participatory patterns. Thus, of the 21 argumentation elements, such as claim, counterclaim, support, 12 are solely produced by the teacher and 6 by the teacher and student(s) in collaboration. Importantly, all 3 resolutions, the only rebuttal and 4 of 6 counter-claims are provided by the teacher alone, and there is one argumentation episode (TWC\_A\_2), where the teacher models all parts of a dialogic argumentation: claim, counterclaim, and refined claim.

In the jointly produced elements of teacher and students, the teacher provides extensive scaffolding, often through questions and content-related corrections. This can be seen in Example 1, where the teacher provides a more accurate formulation as well as requesting further details on the elements affecting interest rate decisions:

Example 1 (TWC\_A\_3)

S: the f- the full employment for example can be affected maybe=

T: =the objective of full employment why

It is also worth noting the teacher also uses German in long stretches of talk to provide repetition in terms of content and also to introduce and repeat German subject-specific lexical items, such as *‘Leitzinssatz’* *(key interest rate)* or ‘*Zinstender’* *(variable rate tender).* This seems to reflect the teacher’s view that ‘there is a SSL in German, too, which [..the students] should know’ (Teacher A, Interview).

All three levels of argumentational quality in the sense of structural complexity (see Fig. 2) are represented in TWC (see Table 4, Appendix). This classroom event contains a majority of episodes with a resolution/refined claim (i.e. 4 of 5 episodes). By using these argumentational elements, the teacher identifies accepted knowledge of the discipline.

Example 2 (TWC\_B\_1)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | T | so if you have a weaker currency of course uhm it is easier to |
| 2 |  | <3> export x exports become cheaper</3> |
| 3 | S | <3>yeah for example great britain</3> will buy something from Austria  |
| 5 |  | because we have a weaker currency but we won't buy something from great |
| 6 |  | britain= |
| 7 | T | =uh i-if you say we won't buy <4>anything from great britain at <@>all</@> |
| 8 |  | it's not true</4> |
| 9 | S | <4>yeah we we will buy but not not a lot</4> |
| 10 | T | uh not so uh we would probably be able to afford more if the currency was |
| 11 |  | weaker you have to maybe put it that way right |

The complete argumentation in example 2 shows how the teacher takes on both the claim (ll. 2-4) and the rebuttal (ll. 7-8). The student provides support for the teacher’s claim in lines 3-6 and initiates the refined claim in line 9. The teacher then sanctions the refined claim in lines 10-11 and very noticeably includes a meta-linguistic comment on the formulation of the currency effect on trade: ‘you maybe have to put it that way right’. Thus, she provides some modelling of oppositional talk (and interestingly, rebuts her own claim), and while the student resolution is to some degree accepted as correct, the teacher recasts it using disciplinarily more appropriate language and comments on the need for rephrasing. While student and teacher are very actively involved in creating this argumentation, the teacher is ‘doing teaching’ very explicitly at both content and language levels.

*Group Work*

In this event, small groups of students worked on establishing the benefits and disadvantages of Eurozone membership. Each student had been asked earlier on in the school year to become the ‘expert’ on the political and economic situation in one specific EU country, drawing on this knowledge in class. During these sessions, the teachers monitored students’ work and joined in briefly; while working on their own, students mostly remained on task and continued using English (only 9 of 106 elements contain any German).

Of the 106 argumentation elements, 45 are jointly produced (42%), and these include 33 produced by several students (31%), and 12 produced by the teacher and one or more students (11%) The patterns of such joint constructions vary and both T-S and S-S collaborations include simple agreement tokens or affirmative repetitions, as well as more loosely linked statements in the same argumentation element.

In the 25% of argumentation episodes with active teacher participation, a resemblance to TWC can be observed in the teachers accepting and recasting student contributions, as well as their acting as informants on both content and language issues. For example, in GWB\_1\_5 a student asks the teacher in German for an item of subject-specific vocabulary *(‘fristlos’ – without notice*) before continuing her argumentation. In general, the majority of such joint constructions highlight the nature of these argumentations as a means of developing content and related language knowledge.

While there is not sufficient space to address the entire range of structural diversity in the individual elements of argumentations, all levels of argumentation quality were encountered (see Tables 3-4, Appendix). Overall, 7 of 20 argumentation episodes contained an explicit resolution/refined claim, which was sometimes framed explicitly in terms of the pedagogic task that students had to achieve. Thus, episode GWA\_2\_5 features a student statement of ‘okay I think we should come to a conclusion @@’.

Example 3 serves to illustrate some of the GW features:

Example 3 (GWA\_1\_1)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | S1 | well conc- concerning Hungary uhm the country is just not ready for the |
| 2 |  | Euro because if it would adopt the euro it might uhm uhm it might uh |
| 3 |  | affect the other it might hurt the other countries <5>that that</5> |
| 5 | S2 | <5>right like</5> for example Greece x |
| 6 | S1 | Yeah |
| 7 | S2 | yeah okay |
| 8 | S1 | mhm for example so I we don't want any further any more problems so |
| 9 |  | we just have to wait at the moment and hope that our economy: |
| 10 |  | will get better and (.) for now I think there is a very big difference  |
| 11 |  | between the forint and the euro and for all of us so fo- from for the  |
| 12 |  | inhabitants from Hungary it would be a very big change because there is |
| 13 |  | a very big difference between one euro and one forint I think one Euro |
| 14 |  | equates to three hundred Fo- Forint it's very big difference |
| 15 | S2 | okay well I think it's very good that you want to wait because you are  |
| 16 |  | not economically ready (.) but for example in Ireland we weren't really |
| 17 |  | ready for it but as we introduced the Euro it kind of saved us |
| 18 | S1 | yeah <6> it but</6> |
| 19 | S2 | <6>so</6> |
| 20 | S1 | it's not for every country: <7>the best</7> |
| 21 | S2  | <7>yeah yeah sure</7> sure yeah |
| 22 | S1  | decision to immediately join |

In lines 1-2, S1 makes a claim that Hungary is not yet ready for the Euro, which is followed by a support element in lines 2-14, consisting of brief additional information given by S1 and strengthened with a further example by S2 and agreement tokens, before S1 can present her own support in greater detail. In lines15-16, S2 takes up the original claim by S1 and repeats it in an affirmative manner before going on with ‘but ..’ to present his counterclaim, resembling a ‘yes-but’ disagreement (see also Hüttner 2014). This is followed by a jointly developed refined claim (ll. 18-22). Such jointly constructed elements are encountered frequently in the argumentation episodes in GW and underline the generally collaborative nature of this classroom event, where students enact their roles as supportive fellow students and engage in dialogic learning.

*Role-play*

As an assessed classroom event, RP reveals specific characteristics that also play out in argumentation. To begin with, the 19 episodes are exclusively run by students. The one time when a teacher features (RP\_gr3\_7), he does so in the role of journalist raising a counterclaim and thereby questioning the ‘student-politician’ (‘but clearly I mean the European Union is a project that's been ensuring not only economic wealth but as has also been (assuming) different agendas [support following]’). The student stays in role and responds with a refined claim by acknowledging the proposition but, as ‘politician’, insists on his position against centralisation in the EU (‘I [..] completely get your part now but [..] don't you think that we can all do this […] without creating one single Europe’).

 Secondly, the teachers set the role-play task well in advance of the actual performance so that the students could prepare their roles and contributions, which they did in two steps (Student group, interview). In their groups, students first selected the topics and ideas they wanted to raise, while linguistic formulations were, if at all, prepared individually. Performances show that the students did not recite their contributions, but engaged in these spoken interactions spontaneously. Still, their preparations become apparent in two aspects: (a) structure of argumentation episodes and role enactment; and (b) the quality of contributions in terms of linguistic formulations as well as propositional clarity and argumentational coherence.

 Detailed structural analysis shows that in contrast to GW most elements are performed by one participant, rather than in collaboration with others (72 vs. 22 elements). Students enacted their respective roles of politician or journalist also on the level of argumentation element; thus, claims, supports, and refined claims were largely provided by the ‘politicians’ alone, while the ‘journalists’ offered counterclaims and supports for counterclaims, sometimes in collaboration. Interestingly, in 5 out of 6 cases, resolutions were jointly constructed by ‘politician’ and ‘journalists’. The interview character of the RP was reflected in the ‘journalists’ questions soliciting claims or supports from the ‘politician’, as well as in the more frequent sequence of claims leading to counterclaims first before supports were offered for one or both argumentative sides (RP\_gr3\_2 below is an exception in this regard).

 As a detailed analysis of the argumentations regarding their propositional clarity and syntactic complexity would go beyond the scope of this paper, we will exemplify their discursive and textual qualities by way of one episode (RP\_gr3\_2) that, despite being short and, as a ‘level 2’ type, structurally simple, illustrates the argumentational coherence and cohesion typically found in the data set.

Example 4 (RP\_gr3\_2)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 12345678 | SJ: | (.) just a question why have you formed EAF so you-you are <quiet&fast> you didn't mention it </quiet&fast> but you are right wing parties a:nd you normally they try to stay out of the European Union's way the only i- possibility I can see here is that you try to sabotage the EU from the core (.) so as an example uhm two weeks ago we had uhm Marine le Pen which is president of the uh <fr> Front National </fr> and she said to a German uh newsletter that she'll try to get uhm France out of the Eurozone and out of the European Union and at least she is the vice president of EAF so that can't be just her point of view |
| 91011 | SP: | (what so) (.) (I first wanna say) we don't want to sabotage the European Union but what we try to do is uh (.) to form a trade union which consists out of different coun- different countries |

Triggered by a question for information on the reasons for founding the European Alliance for Freedom (EAF), the ‘journalist’ (SJ) proposes the claim (ll. 2-4) that the EAF was aiming to ‘sabotage the EU from the core’, which he supports immediately by drawing on a political statement made by Marine le Pen to that effect (ll. 4-8). As the selected next speaker, the ‘politician’ (SP) issues the counterclaim that his party aims for ‘a trade union’ on the European level (ll. 9-11), thus refuting SJ’s reproach of intending ‘sabotage’ directly without addressing the factual and highly valid support of the ‘journalist’s’ claim. Although this avoidance to rebut the support could be interpreted as argumentationally of lower quality, we see it as discursively highly successful. After all, the counterclaim allowed the ‘politician’ to present his political position in a positive light – forming something new instead of clandestinely ruining what is established – without having to deal with a fact that could have undermined his trustworthiness.

 Such discursive appropriateness finds further support in the matching register (e.g., ‘the only possibility I see’, line 3; ‘she is the vice president of EAF so that cannot just be her point of view’, ll. 7-8) and discourse structuring phrases used by both students (e.g., ‘just a question’, line 1; ‘what I first wanna say’, line 9). In view of the nature of this classroom event we further argue that the discourse- and task-related success of this episode is not diminished by the features of spoken language (e.g., change in speed in ll. 1-2, the false start in line 9), or by the lexico-grammatical inaccuracies (‘which’ for ‘who’ in line 5; ‘newsletter’ for ‘newspaper’ in line 6, ‘consists out of’ instead of ‘consists of’ in line 10). As established in recent literature, lexico-grammatical variability and flexibility are part and parcel of multilinguals drawing on English as a lingua franca in institutionalised settings, such as business or (tertiary) education (Smit 2010; Seidlhofer 2011). CLIL scenarios at upper secondary levels are very well placed to model such interactional realities.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Although understanding SSL use is key to developing our knowledge of content and language integration in learning (Gajo 2007), we concur with Nikula (2012, 148) that this is ‘an essential yet relatively unexplored aspect of CLIL education’. The findings of this study will, we hope, add a jigsaw piece to developing this area of knowledge.

To the best of our knowledge we are the first to use argumentation as a focus of analysis in CLIL and link this unit of oppositional talk to capturing key moments in developing and using SSL within a discourse-pragmatically natural event. Returning briefly to the research questions posed at the beginning of this study, the data analysis and the teachers’ own evaluations reveal that these CLIL students are able to discursively enact argumentations in *European economics and politics* in a manner acceptable within the subject. There are, of course, differences in the complexity of arguments produced.

With regard to research question 1, the discursive structure of argumentation episodes identified in the literature is supported. Adaptations from Erduran (2008) were, however, necessary to account for both the different subject area, located in the social rather than natural sciences, and for the status of students as foreign language users. Overall, the minimal elements of an argumentation episode were identified as either claim and counterclaim, or claim plus support and rebuttal. One important addition to these previously established elements is the inclusion of an explicit resolution or refined claim, showing a consensual final standpoint among students. This final element is often used by the teacher to classify or acknowledge a contribution as disciplinarily and linguistically appropriate.

A key finding with regard to research question 1 is the existence of two types of argumentation in class, with one focusing on the joint construction of disciplinary knowledge using SSL (‘learning-focused argumentation’), and the other one using disciplinary knowledge and SSL (confidently) to engage in an ‘expertise-focused argumentation’, thus displaying a certain level of subject-specific knowledge. Both types are encountered in each of the three classroom events, but there is a tendency for students to engage in more expertise-focused argumentation in the prepared RP.

With regard to research question 2 (i.e., the effect of the specific classroom events on argumentation patterns), we could find that – as one would expect – one of the clearest influences lies in the involvement of the teacher which ranges from paramount in TWC to negligible in RP. Correspondingly, the sequential discourse analysis suggests that the different classroom events lead to distinct trajectories of argumentation, including diverse student participation. Thus, in TWC the teacher assumes the role of disciplinary and SSL expert overtly, which is evidenced in her using both English and German SSL, her dominance in producing resolution/refined claim elements, as well as in her meta-comments evaluating specific pieces of information and/or SSL as appropriate. This classroom event features both types of argumentation outlined above, and so we find learning-focused argumentation episodes, with features of teacher scaffolding (e.g., TWC\_A\_3), as well as one expertise-focused example (TWC\_A\_2), which can be seen as the teacher modelling argumentation for the students. The most noticeable feature of GW is the high proportion (42%) of jointly constructed argumentation elements, highlighting the main function of this classroom event as facilitating and fostering learning, both of content and language. Thus, learning-focused argumentation episodes are more typical of this event than expertise-focused episodes, although both types are present. The non-assessed nature of this task as well as the collaborative nature of the classroom arguably help support the creation of a space for dialogic learning. Finally, the assessed RP format leads to a noticeably lower proportion of jointly constructed argumentation elements (22%) and a preponderance of expertise-focused argumentation episodes. As the task itself ought to prohibit much overt collaboration (‘journalist’ and ‘politicians’ are constructed at opposing sides) the simultaneously existing role of fellow student ensures that joint construction or ‘learning-focused’ argumentation is not totally absent.

It has to be noted, however, that in many aspects these data are exceptional. The two teachers involved in this study are extremely enthusiastic about CLIL and show high levels of knowledge and awareness for the ‘other’ specialisation (i.e., language for the content teacher, and content for the language teacher). In addition, both the school management and the overall curricula support foreign languages and CLIL. Such an environment is, unfortunately, rare, but it is important to note that this is still a regular state school and thus these data show what is possible in upper-secondary CLIL.

Nevertheless, this study illustrates that CLIL students need to be involved in diverse classroom events to access their full range of disciplinary knowledge and ability in SSL (see also Llinares and Dalton-Puffer 2015). Our findings thus lend support to Llinares and Morton’s (2010, 62) assertion that ‘CLIL students may be able to do more than we think, if we provide them with the interactional space to articulate their understandings’.

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There are 4 Tables and 2 Figures in total:

2 Tables and 2 Figures in the main text

3 Tables in the Appendix (Tables 3+4)

**Appendix**

INSERT TABLES 3+4 HERE

**FIGURES**

Figure 1:

see separate file Figure 2 is included here as no special formatting

Figure 2: Framework for quality of argumentation (developed from Erduran 2008, 51)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| LEVEL 1: | claim vs counterclaim; no support/rebuttal |
| LEVEL 1R: | LEVEL 1 criteria plus refined claim/resolution |
| LEVEL 2: | claim vs counterclaim; one support, no rebuttal |
| LEVEL 2R: | LEVEL 2 criteria plus refined claim/resolution |
| LEVEL 3: | claim vs counterclaim; two supports OR support + rebuttal |
| LEVEL 3R: | LEVEL 3 criteria plus refined claim/resolution |

**TABLES**

Table 1: Overview of data

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **TWC** | **GW** | **RP** |
| Words Overall | 11,322 | 26,881 | 19,298 |
| Teacher Talk % | 78.1 | 12.6 | 7.6 |
| Student Talk % | 21.9 | 87.4 | 92.4 |

Table 2: Argumentation episodes per classroom event

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Argumentation episodes**  | **per 10,000 words** | **Argumentation episodes without teacher**  | **per 10,000 words** |
| **TWC** | 5 | 4.4 | 0 | 0 |
| **GW** | 20 | 7.4 | 14 | 5.2 |
| **RP** | 19 | 9.8 | 18 | 9.3 |

***Tables 3-4: in Appendix***

**Table 3**: All argumentation episodes and their internal sequence of elements (cp. Fig. 1)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **elements****episodes** | **SOLICITING CLAIM** | **CLAIM** | **SUPPORT for CLAIM** | **COUNTER-CLAIM** | **SUPPORT for COUTERCLAIM** | **REBUTTAL** | **REFINED CLAIM**  | **RESOLUTION** | **(SOLICITING) SUPPORT** |
| **TWC\_A\_1** |   | 1 |   | 2 |   |   |   | 3 | 4 |
| **TWC\_A\_2** |   | 2 | 1 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **TWC\_A\_3** |   | 1, 5 |   | 2, 4, 6 | 3 |   |   | 7 |   |
| **TWC\_B\_1** |   | 1 | 2 |   |   | 3 | 4 |   |   |
| **TWC\_B\_2** |   | 1 |   | 2 |   |   |   | 3 |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_1** |   | 1, 3 | 2 | 4 |   |   | 5 |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_2** |   | 1 |   | 2,4  | 3 |   |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_3** |   | 1 |   |   |   | 2 |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_4** |   | 1 |   | 2 | 3 |   |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_1** |   | 1, 4 | 2 | 5 | 6 |   | 3 |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_2** |   | 1 | 2 |   |   | 4, 5, 7 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| **GWA\_gr2\_3** |   | 1 |   |   |   | 2 |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_4** |   | 1 | 2 | 3 |   | 4 |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_5** |   | 1, 4, 7, 10 | 5 | 2, 8 | 3, 9 | 6, 11 |   | 12 |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_6** |   | 1, 3, 6 | 2,5 | 4 |   | 7 |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_1** |   | 1, 3, 5 | 2 |   |   | 4 |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_2** |   | 1 | 2 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_3** |   | 1 | 2 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_4** |   | 1 | 2,4, 6 |   |   | 3,5 |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_5** |   | 1 | 2, 4, 6 |   |   | 3,5,7 |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_6** |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |   |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr2\_1** |   | 1 |   | 2 |   |   | 3 |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr2\_2** |   | 1 | 2 |   |   | 3 | 4 |   | 5 |
| **GWB\_gr5\_1** |   | 1 | 2 | 3, 6, 8 | 4,7 |   | 5 |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr5\_2** |   | 1,3, 6 | 2, 4 |   |   | 5 |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_1** | 1 | 2 | 4 |   |   | 5 |   |   | 3 |
| **RP\_gr1\_2** |   | 1, 4 | 2 | 3, 5 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_3** |   | 1, 3 | 4 | 2 |   | 5 |   | 6 |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_4** | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_5** |   | 1, 3, 5 |   | 2, 4, 6 |   |   | 7 |   |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_6** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |   |   | 6 |   |
| **RP\_gr2\_1** |   | 1 |   | 2 | 3 |   |   | 4 |   |
| **RP\_gr2\_2** |   | 1 | 5 | 2, 3, 4 |   |   |   | 6 |   |
| **RP\_gr2\_3** |   | 1 | 2 | 4, 6 |   | 3 | 5 | 7 |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_1** |   | 1 |   | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_2** |   | 1 | 2 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_3** |   | 1 | 3 | 2, 4 | 5 | 6 |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_4** |   | 1, 3, 6 |   | 2 |   | 5 |   |   | 4 |
| **RP\_gr3\_5** | 1 | 2, 4 | 5 | 3, 6 |   |   |   | 7 |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_6** |   | 2, 4 | 1 | 3 |   |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_7** |   | 1, 4 |   | 2, 5 | 3 |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_8** |   | 1 |   | 2 |   |   | 3 |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_9** |   | 1 | 2 |   | 3 | 4 |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_10** |   |   | 1 |   |   | 2 |   |   |   |

Key:

* TWC: teacher-whole class; GWA: group work, class A; GWB: group work, class B; RP: role play; gr: group
* Numbers indicate sequence of elements per argumentation episode.

**Table 4:** Overview of argumentation structure according to quality levels (cp. Fig. 2)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **LEVEL 1** | **LEVEL 1R** | **LEVEL 2** | **LEVEL 2R** | **LEVEL 3** | **LEVEL 3R** |
| **TWC\_A\_1** |   | ✓ |   |   |   |   |
| **TWC\_A\_2** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **TWC\_A\_3** |   |   |   | ✓ |   |   |
| **TWC\_B\_1** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **TWC\_B\_2** |   | ✓ |   |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_1** |   |   |   | ✓ |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_2** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_3** | ✓ |   |   |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr1\_4** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_1** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **GWA\_gr2\_2** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **GWA\_gr2\_3** | ✓ |   |   |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_4** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **GWA\_gr2\_5** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **GWA\_gr2\_6** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **GWB\_gr1-1** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_2** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_3** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_4** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_5** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **GWB\_gr1\_6** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **GWB\_gr2\_1** |   | ✓ |   |   |   |   |
| **GWB\_gr2\_2** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **GWB\_gr5\_1** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **GWB\_gr5\_2** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_1** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_2** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_3** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **RP\_gr1\_4** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_5** |   | ✓ |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr1\_6** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **RP\_gr2\_1** |   |   |   | ✓ |   |   |
| **RP\_gr2\_2** |   |   |   | ✓ |   |   |
| **RP\_gr2\_3** |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| **RP\_gr3\_1** | ✓ |   |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_2** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_3** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_4** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_5** |   |   |   | ✓ |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_6** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_7** |   |   | ✓ |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_8** |   | ✓ |   |   |   |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_9** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **RP\_gr3\_10** |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| **Total** | **3** | **5** | **11** | **5** | **11** | **9** |

1. 56% or 117,358 learners in 2015/16 (Statistik Austria 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The fourth type was short student presentations. While these also contain argumentation episodes, for reasons of space these monologic events are not considered in this paper. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)