

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## OF THE

# FINAL REPORT ON DEVELOPING FL LITERACY IN POLAND, SLOVENIA AND SPAIN<sup>1</sup>

Katarzyna Brzosko-Barratt  
Aleksandra Jasińska-Maciążek  
Ana María Halbach  
Raquel Fernández Fernández  
Arteaga Martínez Blanca Paz  
Mateja Dagarin Fojkar  
Mira Metljak  
Tina Rozmanič

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The United Nations has set literacy development as one of the four Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG4) targets concerning Education. Literacy skills are considered a fundamental right that makes it more likely for a person to lead a fulfilled personal and professional life. In this task, educational institutions in general, and teachers in particular, play a pivotal role in guaranteeing students' access to literacy practices, and offering them the best quality literacy learning experiences possible. The challenge is even more remarkable when teachers are working in plurilingual settings, where different languages and cultures are intertwined in everyday practice.

The present transnational research aims to explore and describe the literacy practices of English teachers working in EFL/CLIL contexts in years 3 to 5 in Primary Education in Poland, Slovenia and Spain. Information obtained helps to identify how literacy skills are developed in these multilingual settings, and whether these practices are matching current societal demands. The data gathering tool used was an online questionnaire consisting of 47 questions available on [www.1ka.si](http://www.1ka.si) from December 2018 to March 2019. Participants were a total of 330 teachers (Poland n=116; Slovenia n=109; Spain n=105), who were generally women and between 35 and 40 years of age. Their average working experience as a teacher was 12,7 years (min. 1 year-max.37 years).

Findings show that Poland and Slovenia are developing EFL instruction while Spanish teachers were generally involved in CLIL programmes. Despite showing these different educational modalities, findings for the three countries were strikingly similar. Participants from all three countries generally show a poor conceptualisation of literacy, often describing it as the basic skills needed for reading and writing. Very few participants define literacy as lifelong skills or social practice beyond the classroom walls and that involve different formats and codes. Following this, teachers demonstrate practices labelled as 'traditional': reading aloud, vocabulary work, comprehension activities, gap-filling, spelling activities, etc. Classroom practices are generally based on work at word or sentence level, often showing a disconnection between the different communication skills and with little emphasis on the text, work on text structure and exposure to different text genres. Concerning groupings, the three countries favour whole-class and individual work forms of organisation. Teachers' pedagogical strategies do not usually include literacy-based projects. It is interesting to see that most teachers named mispronunciation and reading comprehension as the main problems of their students in FL reading and grammar, lack of vocabulary and spelling in FL writing. These results show quite a traditional approach to teaching literacy skills in all three countries.

Another important finding is that 80% of the participants would like to improve their teaching knowledge and abilities regarding FL literacy provision. More specifically, they require guidance in the areas of differentiation in developing reading and writing tasks, implementing literacy project work with their students and promoting a stronger cooperation between L1 and FL teachers. Furthermore, most schools in the countries surveyed do not have any programmes that would develop literacy across the curriculum, and there is also little coordination between teachers of the first and foreign language to teach literacy skills jointly.

Following the study outcomes, literacy practices need to be updated in the three countries participating in the research. Guidelines for action indicate the need to work on three main areas:

1. foster integrated practices in the EFL/CLIL classrooms that reflect a more contemporary notion of literacy and match students' needs. In this sense, project-based practices focused on different text types which pay attention to text structure and genre are recommended.
2. include explicit literacy teaching modules in teacher education programmes, in-service and pre-service, and teacher education curricula. It is suggested that these programmes grant access to successful literacy programmes, adequate resources and strategies.
3. promote the creation of a community of practice around successful literacy practices in the FL Primary classroom. In this regard, virtual platforms can support the work of both practitioners and researchers while also spreading the word about examples of good practice that can then be used by other teachers in different contexts.

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