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EÖTVÖS LORÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

Bölcsészettudományi Kar

ALAPSZAKOS SZAKDOLGOZAT

Az első idegen nyelv hatása az anyanyelvhasználatra kéttannyelvű gimnáziumokban

The Effects of L2 on L1 in Bilingual Highschools

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ABSTRACT

Claiming that cross-linguistic issues are just as relevant in Hungary as in any other countries, this paper deals with the question of reverse language transfer in the special environment of English-Hungarian bilingual highschools. As this form of education is found to provide its students with improved cognitional benefits, reverse language transfer is specified to the level of skills. Bilingual high schools in Hungary were also found to offer increased opportunities for skills development in English classes; consequently, the investigation of reverse transfer of skills was focused on a set of specific skills developed by a particular activity typical of bilingual EFL education, debating. A case study was conducted to gain evidence of the hypothesis that skills developed by debating in English are applicable in Hungarian. The case study consisted of an interview with a teacher using debate in her EFL classes and a questionnaire on students' perception on debate-developed skills transfer, filled in by the teacher's group. The results confirmed the proposal and reflected that thinking and speaking related skills were seen as the most applicable in Hungarian. As the case study concerned only a small group and the questionnaire gained self-reported data, the results are regarded as implicative only in the context and should not form the basis for comprehensive generalization.

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I. Introduction

"Despite the efforts of nation builders then, the monolingual state remains a myth. All nations have substantial linguistic groups within their borders, making cross-linguistic communication an *intranational* as well as an *international* affair" – claims Guy Cook (2003, p. 24), and there is most certainly broad agreement in most European countries only with a few exceptions, among which Hungary, maybe not surprisingly, is a peculiarly veteran one. Although Hungarians are notorious as resistant foreign language learners and ingrained monolinguals, small but pertinent signs of change seem to be appearing. The increased exposure to languages and cultures through the media and the official measures taken in favour of enhanced foreign language teaching appear to have a result: more and more young people today speak languages on a high level in Hungary, bringing cross-linguistic matters into the focus of not only FL but also of general education. Therefore, the question legitimately arises: how does the knowledge of another language influence the person, the skills, the sense of national identity and not least, the use of mother tongue?

This paper does not attempt to answer the above question, as it would require a much more complex and detailed investigation than this study allows for; rather, it focuses on one particular aspect, and that is the linguistic-educational feature: the effects of the second language on the first one. To narrow the scope even further, the field is specified to one particular system of education where foreign language exposure is noticeably high and hence ensures a higher probability of L2$\rightarrow$L1 influence: to bilingual highschools. Yet, the domain of L2$\rightarrow$L1 influence is needed to be clearly defined and limited too, as again, the investigation of all aspects of reverse transfer would constitute a task too demanding for the potentials of this paper. Therefore, only the cognitive elements: specific skills were decided to be examined regarding transferability from L2 to L1 in bilingual educational settings. Summarizing the above explained goals and limitations of the paper, the following research questions may be

phrased: 1. Is L2→L1 language transfer an existing and verifiable phenomenon in a bilingual highschool setting? 2. Are the special skills learnt in L2 transferrable and used in L1, thus influencing it positively?

In order to find answers to the research questions, a two-way investigation was conducted. First, the relevant academic background was researched to seek insight into the nature of language transfer and bilingual highschools, and thus find evidence of reverse transfer (L2→L1) taking place in this environment; also, in this part it was attempted to discover those special "extra" skills that bilingual education provides its students with and which were hypothesised as being applicable to Hungarian too. Second, a case study was designed and conducted to gain support (or disproof) that the special skills identified and attributed to the extra potentials of a particular bilingual highschool are transferrable from L2 to L1 in that specific environment. As the empirical part of the research is narrowed to a context-dependent case study, the results are not appropriate for generalization or the drawing of far-reaching consequences; nevertheless, it was felt to bring satisfying evidence for answering the second research question and for the formulation of a starting point for more detailed and objective research later.

II. Academic background

1. **Cross-linguistic influence: language transfer, bidirectional transfer and occurrence and effects of L2→L1 transfer in bilingual schools**

Accepting G. Cook's (2003) quote as a premise applying within the borders of Hungary too, it evidently follows that the mentioned field, cross-linguistic communication and influences must be reviewed for a thorough and proper discussion of the topic. Therefore, in the following sections the academic background of cross-linguistic influence is briefly described, with emphasis on the nature and domain of language transfer, on the occurrence of bidirectional transfer and on the possibility and expected results of L2→L1 influence in bilingual education.

1.1. Language contact / language interference / cross-linguistic influence: clarification

The concepts of language contact, language interference and cross-linguistic influence are often used interchangeably, which might lead to ambiguity concerning their content and domain. Many respectable academics of the field define them differently – which explains the sometimes unclear usage of the terms -, therefore, it is seen as a necessity to provide though incomplete but consistent definitions that later on clearly frame the boarders of investigation.

By *language contact*, the simple phenomenon is meant when two or more languages enter into contact due to their coexistence and usage in the same territory. As Odlin (1989, p. 6) explains, "language contact situations arise whenever there is a meeting of speakers who do not share the same language and who need to communicate". Consequently, it primarily describes the interaction of two different languages each belonging to a different individual or community; thus the term here is recognized exclusively with this meaning and the interaction

of two language systems of the same person is not denoted by it. Instead, *language interference* covers it, which is seen by Weinrich as "those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language" (as cited in V. Cook, 2003, p. 1). Accordingly, language interference is realised here as a concept closely connected to bilingualism and bilinguals, a feature being the only distinguishing one between the former notion and *cross-linguistic influence*. Also known as *language transfer* (Odlin, 1989), this latter term is predominantly associated with second or foreign language learning, and focuses on the transfer of various features from L1 to L2 during second language learning. Before rendering this last definition, the relationship of the above defined three notions needs to be explained. On the basis of their accepted scope of meaning, *language contact* is seen as the largest domain within which any kind of interaction between languages may take place; within this domain, *language interaction* specifies for the interaction of the languages of a bilingual person and *language transfer* for the transfer of language elements between the languages of a second language learner.

1.2. Language transfer: definition, approaches and types

Many academic discussions in the topic head off by giving an example of how the clearest support of language transfer is the foreign accent in a second language (Ellis, Odlin, Spada and Lightbown), and then go on to introduce the popular beliefs about it. These, missing only few important features, describe the phenomenon with surprising accuracy.

The first assumption is that "learners draw on their knowledge of other languages as they try to learn a new one" (Spada and Lightbown, 2010, p. 116), or in other words, L1 features appear in the L2 in order to fulfil a gap and substitute for lack of knowledge in a certain language competency field (Odlin, 1989). The second assumption of popular opinion adds

that this is perceived as a negative effect: "the L1 gets in the way or interferes with the learning of the L2, such that features of the L1 are transferred into the L2" (Ellis, 1994, p. 19). These widely shared views are in consonance with the behaviourist approach of the question.

Contrastive Analysis sees transfer happening in two possible ways: either as a negative or as positive transfer. Negative transfer occurs when there is significant difference between elements of the first and the second language, and therefore learners need to acquire new habits (e.g.: new structures to express something), but instead they tend to use their old knowledge (of the native language), which results in errors (Ellis, 1994). Hence, negative transfer is equated with error production, and as a consequence, contrastive analysis is used as means of predicting potential errors (Ellis, 1994, p. 23). In contrast, positive transfer happens when the L1 and L2 share common features which facilitate easy and fast learning of the L2 (Ellis, 1994).

Since its hey-day, Contrastive Analysis has undergone severe criticism, which is reflected in Odlin's (1989) four claims that do not question the principle statements of Contrastive Analysis but simply point out that those are not precise enough. These statements say that "transfer is not simply the consequence of habit formation", it is "not simply interference" and "falling back on the native language", and finally, it "is not always native language influence" (Odlin, 1989, p. 26-27). Accordingly, he defines language transfer as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin, 1989, p. 27). Although Odlin (1989, p. 28) himself admits that this definition is inadequate too, since "a fully adequate definition of transfer presupposes a fully adequate definition of language" which has not yet been created, for the length of this paper the above definition of language transfer is accepted and applied.

1.3. Levels of transfer

Once language transfer is defined, the next to do is to elaborate on what levels language transfer may take place. As Odlin (1989, p. 152) concludes, "transfer occurs in ALL linguistic subsystems", though certain aspects of language are more susceptible to first language influence than others (Spada & Lightbown, 2010). The most well-know of these are connected to pronunciation: phonetics and phonology, and to word use: word order and lexical semantics (Odlin, 1989). Those areas most insensitive to transfer include grammatical aspects, such as syntax and morphology – though transfer *is* possible in these subsystems too. Moreover, learners seem to know instinctively if certain patterns, e.g. idiomatic expressions are language specific and thus not transferrable, and hence tend to avoid transferring them (Spada & Lighbown, 2010). The same applies with significantly different languages: learners make fewer attempts to transfer e.g. from Arabic to English than from Spanish to English (Odlin, 1989).

1.4. Bidirectional transfer

Referring back to the definition of language interaction by Weinrich, V. Cook (2003, p. 1) notes that it concerns "deviation from *either* language. As well as the first language influencing the second, the second influences the first", which fact is noticed by rather few people, and therefore negligible attention has been paid to this second influence. Nevertheless, Odlin (1989) differentiates between *borrowing transfer* and *substratum transfer* much earlier, using the latter with the definition previously provided, and explaining the former as the influence of L2 on L1.

1.4.1. Borrowing transfer

Borrowing transfer typically happens when either an individual or a community moves and stays in an intensive target language environment, where exposure is total not only to the language but to the culture as well. In such cases language attrition or the serious decline of

the first language is frequent. Social factors also play an important role in the alteration process: the target language and its speakers often bear greater social or political prestige and power and/or are of a larger number. Therefore, borrowing transfer might even be consciously fostered by the community or the individual, led by the desire to integrate into the new environment. However, it is important to note that this desire to fit into the new environment in all aspects is understandably more typical among the younger generation; therefore, the data available on language changes mostly concerns the youth. The first instances of transfer are apparent on the lexical level: words and expressions are borrowed from the second language, and syntactic features follow only later. Similarly to L1→L2 influence, phonetics and phonology are highly resistant to change and thus to transfer too (Odlin, 1989).

1.4.2. Evidence for bidirectional transfer

Although borrowing transfer does provide evidence of bidirectionality in language transfer, it applies for cases of ethnic groups or migrants, hence childhood and simultaneous bilinguals, but does not involve "normal" language learners, e.g. of a language classroom. However, a more recent study (Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002) claims that bidirectional transfer happens with post-puberty L2 learners as well. It is Pavlenko and Jarvis (2002, p. 192) who introduce the term *bidirectional transfer* and use it to "refer to the two-way interaction between the two linguistic systems of an L2 user (i.e. L1 influence on the L2 and L2 influence on the L1)". In their study, they examined the narratives of Russian L2 users of English to find evidence for and see the nature of bidirectional transfer. All their participants learned English post-puberty (aged 13-19), after moving to the USA. Their hypothesis supposed bidirectionality of transfer in the categories of semantic extension (loan shift), lexical borrowing and loan translation (calques). The results of the research revealed that in consistence with the hypothesis, L2→L1 influence works in the above mentioned categories – but not only there: framing transfer and subcategorization transfer were proved to be

bidirectional too, and case marking unidirectional with L2→L1 influence. L2 influence was shown in 77% of the narratives, and in addition, Pavlenko and Jarvis (2002, p. 205) notes that the use of native Russian did not sound fully native-like to monolingual Russians.

The results of Pavlenko and Jarvis's research clearly show that *bidirectional transfer* is a relevant and existing phenomenon; however, similarly to Odlin's *borrowing transfer*, it does not regard the majority of EFL learners who acquire English in an institutionalized educational system (in the classroom).

1.4.3. L2→L1 influence in bilingual schools

Although it might not be a wise idea to propose that L2→L1 influence happens in the course of general classroom-based teaching of English, it is not so straightforward regarding a school where the environment ensures much more intensive exposure to L2 e.g. by operating it as the medium of instruction. This is the case in the so-called "bilingual highschools" in Hungary (see section 2.3), which constitutes the environment of Kecskés and Papp's (2003) proposal about the conceptual effects of L2 on L1.

The essence of the proposal is seen in the hypothesis that when foreign language proficiency reaches a certain threshold, it is a so-called *Common Underlying Conceptual Base (CUCB)* that emerges – instead of two separate language systems or an L1 system with additional L2 knowledge –, which operates both language channels and establishes a direct connection in-between, hence enabling direct and easy transfer. Once the *CUCB* is firmly established (which requires high level L2 proficiency), the nature and content of transfer will be positive (i.e. not errors but mutual enriching of both language systems occurs). According to Kecskés and Papp (2003, p. 252), transfer as a *CUCB* phenomenon happens "when knowledge or skills acquired through one language system become ready to be used through the other language channel(s)"; consequently, the subjects of transfer are mainly pragmatic knowledge and skills.

On the basis of this, the primary claim of Kecskécs and Papp (2003, p. 250) is that due to intensive foreign language exposure "the growth of the foreign language proficiency brings about changes in the conceptual system" of the L2 learners, resulting in detectable second language effects on the use of the native tongue. However, since this L2→L1 influence is rather conceptual than linguistic, it is difficult to trace. Nevertheless, three features of L1 use are suggested for examination in order to successfully detect signs of conceptual change: structural well-formedness, lexical quality and cognitive functioning (Kecskés & Papp, 2003, p. 253). Being irrelevant for the purposes of this paper, the methods of measurement are not discussed here – unlike the positive qualitative changes in the L1 use, which does stand in our focus. Though not supported with any quantitative data, the following gains are expected to be attained: improved literacy, text developing, and manipulating skills; improved sentence-construction; more selective use of vocabulary; and a generally more sophisticated use of the mother tongue (Kecskés & Papp, 2003).

1.5. Summary

In summary, it can be stated that although language transfer is primarily understood in SLA and ESL research as an effect resulting in errors in L2 production, it is not necessarily true for L2→L1 influence, which is perceived as a dominantly positive one. This transfer is expected to occur as a *CUCB* phenomena, which emerges on two conditions: first, an adequately high level of L2 proficiency and second, intensive foreign language exposure. Hypothetically, L2→L1 transfer may happen in the case of L2 learners of bilingual high schools too. As the transfer appears to happen dominantly on cognitive levels, its effects are expected to bring about positive qualitative changes in the use of the L1; accordingly, transfer of skills is seen as possible from either language systems to the other one.

2. Bilingual schools

After reviewing how language transfer happens and gaining evidence that L2→L1 effects may arise in a special form of educational system, the focus of attention needs to turn towards these institutions to examine why and how they make room for such an interaction untypical in EFL learning. In order to answer these questions, the following aspects of bilingual education will be discussed: the reasons and typical cases of emergence, its aims, its "types" or versions, its position and general features in Hungary, and the benefits it has to offer to learners.

As the language transfer from L2 to L1 is predicted to be cognitive-oriented and since it requires high level target language proficiency, the form of bilingual education dealt with here concerns only secondary level education, which is considered to be the most adequate form of education catering for the previously mentioned conditions.

2.1. About bilingual education: origins and aims

The primary aim of the initial forms of bilingual programmes were to provide aid for minority language children in acquiring the majority group's language and in developing adequate academic competency in that language via intensive language teaching first in primary schools, and once adequate language proficiency was attained, in secondary education too, where the minority kids attended classes with the target language being the medium of instruction (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010). These institutions are most well-known as immersion schools and are widely spread for example in Canada where both French and English versions were established.

Dual language schools are essentially similar: their aim too is to help non-native students to acquire almost native-like proficiency of the target language both in social and academic aspects, while also cultivating and developing the L1. Hence the word "dual" in the name: these schools operate both languages as the medium of teaching. However, it is important to

note that because this latter concept is variably applied for both immersion-type systems and CLIL-type systems (see 2.2.), it is considered to be a transition between the two.

Summarizing, it can generally be stated that the two archetypes of bilingual education: dual language and immersion schools were originally established for a minority group living in a dominantly homogeneous majority language context, and with the purpose of successful and easy target language instruction as well as successful subject matter teaching. Apart from the mentioned two types, there are numerous other existing variants of bilingual programmes, but as those are recognized only as subcategories of the mentioned two and are not connected to the aims of this paper, they are left unmentioned.

2.2. Content and Language Integrated Learning: CLIL

As Lorenzo, Casal and Moore puts it in a recent article, "the renaissance of European educational bilingualism" is flourishing again "under the contemporary banner of CLIL" (2009, p. 435). And true: *Content and Language Integrated Learning* is one of the most prevailing forms of bilingual education today, the third archetype to be discussed. It resembles to immersion and dual language programmes in that its objective also formulates in providing easily accessible, time- and cost-friendly, high-quality and high-level language knowledge (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010). Regarding its target group and location environment, however, a CLIL school essentially differs from the above two: it provides education of a foreign language which is not the majority group's native language but one that is typically not spoken in the country, and for the majority group's children, often of privileged, elite background. As the name refers to it, CLIL sees the most effective way of foreign language teaching via content. Accordingly, students attending CLIL do not learn English in the EFL classroom but do so in other classes where subject matter is taught in English. This is expected to create a linguistically more demanding and thus more effective context for language learning (Várkuti, 2010). Although theoretically any language may become the

means of instruction in a CLIL-type school, in most cases it is English that is taught (Lasabagaster & Sierra, 2010).

2.3. Bilingual education in Hungary

As Várkuti (2010) explains in her study, the Hungarian bilingual model is "considered to be an adapted version of a kind of partial immersion programme" which, with the words of Vámos, is defined as follows: "education is bilingual if a student within it – either in a continually ascending system or examined at certain points of its studies – learns simultaneously in two languages. Accordingly, a school that provides such an education is called a bilingual [...] school" (as cited in Várkuti 2010, p. 68).

The first bilingual programmes in Hungary started off in the 1980s in secondary school education, cautiously formulating their goal as improving students' foreign language knowledge while attempting to help them in keeping up with peers in normal education in academic progress (Várkuti, 2010). Since then, the initial fears proved to be useless, what's more, even the contrary gained evidence: students of such schools not only acquire much better language proficiency, but they also ace in academic fields both in academic competitions or in the final examinations, and they show improved cognitive and language skills (Várkuti, 2010). Consequently, the number of bilingual programmes has multiplied and today bilingual schools are among the most popular and high-standard secondary education institutes.

Bilingual programmes in Hungary use the CLIL approach, meaning that their students are primarily monolingual Hungarians aged 14-20, studying content in a European language (in most cases English, but French, German, Spanish and Italian bilingual schools are present in Hungary too). In consistency with the national curriculum of the Hungarian educational system, they run for four years, plus one extra year at the beginning (this is the so-called zero-year), which serves the purpose of preparing students for learning content in the foreign

language. This is necessary because students in Hungary do not reach language proficiency high enough for learning content in a foreign language by the time they start secondary school. In the zero-year, emphasis is on the intensive foreign language development of students: they learn the target language in 16-20 classes per week. In the following four years, they learn subjects compulsory according to the national curriculum either in Hungarian or in the target language. Though it can vary depending on the school, in most cases the target language instructed subjects are: Maths, History, Geography, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, PE, and Computing (karinthy.hu).

2.4. Benefits of bilingual education

It is shown by several studies on bilingualism that the knowledge and use of two or more languages have various cognitive benefits. Accepting V. Cook's premise that a monolingual's mind is essentially different from that of a multi- or bilingual person's (V. Cook, 2003), it is not surprising to find many renowned professionals, like Stephen Krashen (2010) claiming that knowing and using more languages helps in keeping the brain young (that is, staying mentally active and healthy longer), improves attention control and the execution of cognitive tasks (Spada & Lightbown, 2010).

If we accept Kecskés and Papp's (2003) previously detailed proposal that a *CUCB*, that would be otherwise typical of a bilingual person, may emerge due to intensive foreign language learning and exposure, such as in the case of the described bilingual education (regarding Hungary), it is necessary to admit that the cognitive benefits of bilingualism also apply to those attending a CLIL or bilingual education. Besides, CLIL education is perceived to be highly beneficial for the learning process in general by bilingual section teachers, parents and students alike (Lorenzo et al., 2009). Specifying this for the Hungarian setting, the high ratio of bilingual high schools graduates accepted into higher education, their above average final exam results and achievements in academic competitions stand as support of this

assumption (Várkuti, 2010). Finally, recent research results shed light on the two main benefits of CLIL programmes: 1) the foreign language competencies of CLIL-students are significantly better than that of non-CLIL students; and 2) CLIL students perform better on cognitively more demanding tasks than their non-CLIL peers (Várkuti, 2010).

Apart from cognitive, language learning and educational benefits, the positive influence of L2→L1 transfer on the students' L1 occurring in bilingual high schools is needed to be re-mentioned. As Lorenzo et al (2009, p. 420) concludes, "Studies into CLIL learners' linguistic competence have suggested that [...] their L1 also appears to benefit from the bilingual experience", which gains are elaborated by Kecskés and Papp (2010) (see section 1.4.3).

2.5. What is missing

Although a vast amount of research has been conducted on CLIL and bilingual education, studies and researchers seems to forget about two things. First, to ask the question that within bilingual education, what *exactly* accounts for the above listed gains – are those exclusively the blissful counter-products of FL instructed learning? And second, the fact appears to be neglected that in the bilingual programmes in Hungary foreign language teaching continues *after* the zero-year too, i.e. simultaneously with the content-learning in the target language; and as the students reach the level of language proficiency required for entrance into higher education (B2 level in CEFR) by the beginning of the first year (Várkuti, 2010), the question arises: what do they do in the foreign language classroom in the remaining four years? As an English teacher of a bilingual highschool answered: "Anything. And that makes the difference: we have time for such skills development others don't" (interview) – which could be the key to answer the non-raised question of researchers, were they to ask it.

Therefore, in order to find out what those special skills are that bilingual highschool students develop thanks to extra time in EFL classes, a very effective language and skills

development activity has been chosen rather rarely used in normal EFL classes but frequently practiced among bilingual EFL learners: debate.

3. Debating

With the purpose of demonstrating the potentials of debating both as language skills and "general" (i.e. non-language specific) skills development tool, the activity is shortly introduced in the following section, with focus on its nature, aims, formal practice, and benefits.

3.1. About

"Everyone knows how to argue, but only few people know how to argue well" (Meany and Shuster, 2003, p. 13). Debating is the art of arguing; arguments are the essential builder-stones and argumentation is the primary tool of it (Trapp, 2009). Recognizing that "arguments are the driving force of everything from science to politics" (Meany & Shuster, 2003, p. 12) and therefore debating is a central activity of not only everyday but academic, political and social life as well, Anglo-Saxon cultures (USA, GB, Australia) established long ago a well-functioning and extensive tradition of the activity.

A clear-cut definition is provided by Trapp's (2009, p. 2) description: "Debate is defined as the process of arguing about claims in situations where the outcome must be decided by an adjudicator." In need of an external power of judgement, debating grew to become an activity practiced in very strictly regulated formal settings, following a similarly strictly prescribed procedure. There are a number of types of formal debate, the two most well-known and often practiced being the Karl Popper Debate and the Parliamentary Debate format. On excuse of their complex structure, irrelevance for the main topic and limit of space, these are not going to be discussed here (for a list of and details on different formats, see:

www.idebate.org/about/debate/formats). Instead, the general build-up of the procedure is to be roughly outlined.

In every debate, the most essential thing the whole activity revolves around is a topic/proposition. There are two groups or teams: one has to argue *for* the proposition, trying to prove it true, and the other one *against*, arguing that the statement is *not true*. The first group is often called the affirmative or proposition group and the second one the negative or opposition group. Each team have to prepare arguments in favour of their side, and appoint speakers to present these. There are two basic types of speeches: one that presents the team's prepared arguments and one that reflects upon the other group's arguments (Quinn, 2005). Speaking times are always limited; their length varies among different formats, just like the process of taking turns and the number of allowed speakers. In certain formats, teams are allowed to prepare for the debate well in advance: this involves the thorough research of the topic, gaining evidence and often the writing of a so-called resolution. In other types of debate this is not required – on the contrary, debate teams are allowed only limited time for preparation directly before the debate takes place. This format advocates spontaneous and quick thinking and decision making as well as delivering spontaneous formal/semi-formal speeches. Debates are conducted by the already mentioned adjudicator or chairperson, who, after the process has finished, decides on the winning party by marking the debaters' argumentations on the basis of a prescribed set of qualities. In competitions, the judging may be the responsibility of a table of trained chairpersons (Quinn, 2005). Debates by their nature are to be performed before an audience (a practice descending from the ancient Greek's view on the nature and use of debating), but again, this can vary, since debate today is not primarily pursued for the sake of winning over large numbers of citizens in public questions (www.idebate.org).

3.2 Skills and values fostered by debating

The reason for putting so much emphasis on the teaching, practicing and spreading debate is that it is seen as an outstanding tool for cultivating a set of democratic values, training citizens with democratic ideals, and thus indirectly building a democratic society made up of tolerant, open-minded, reasonably critical yet cooperative individuals. (www.idebate.org)

Duo to debate's inevitable intertwining with argumentation, the principal skills associated with it are those closely connected to good arguing: evaluating information, critical thinking, logical reasoning and effective persuasion (Schlichter, 2010). From an educational point of view, however, the improvement of the following skills is at least equally important: thinking individually and becoming more creative, facing and handling conflicts in a cooperative manner, fighting inhibition, becoming more initiating, more confident, and keener on exchange of ideas (Schlichter, 2010). As for values, tolerance stands in the centre of attention, involving international understanding and acceptance of different opinions (www.idebate.org).

3.3 Language skills developed by debating

Grounding upon the findings of a former Ma thesis paper on debating, it is accepted that debate is a "highly efficient and useful tool in the development of all basic language skills" (Schlichter, 2010, p. 1). By reviewing the relevant literature and interviewing a number of professionals of the field, the author concludes that though the method has vast benefits for foreign language development, it operates better in extracurricular settings due to lack of time for practice in classes. (It is important to note that the thesis examined the use of debating in general secondary education EFL class and not in a bilingual one.) Nevertheless, the language skills found to be developed by debate are appropriate to be reviewed, as the skills whose transfer from L2→L1 is examined are partly based on these.

As debating is believed to create a truly communicative situation and consequently gives room to truly authentic language production, it is regarded particularly effective for speaking skills development: for expressing opinion more coherently and with a more fluent speech, using more sophisticated and a wider range of words when giving a speech – and building these into the active vocabulary –, and applying more complex sentence structures. Besides speaking, listening and reading skills were also considered to be improved: attentive and focused listening to speakers, reading for gist, and selecting only relevant information from a text. Apart from these language-specific skills, those listed previously (see section 3.2) were found to be cultivated as well by using debate as a language development tool (Schlichter, 2010).

4. Summary

In the first chapter, the necessary academic background of the topic was briefly reviewed: first the "field of action", cross-linguistic influence and the connected concepts – with focus on language transfer – were clarified. Having understood the functioning of language transfer, evidence was gained of the existence and relevance of bidirectional transfer and reverse transfer in bilingual schools, showing also that conceptual transfer and thus transfer of skills is possible. Afterwards, the closer context of the study was introduced: the origins, aims and working frame of bilingual schools were shortly described, which revealed that among its various benefits one neglected aspect is that it creates opportunity for such skills development that is generally not possible in "normal" secondary schools in Hungary. Therefore, debating was selected as an activity which is used in the English classes of bilingual schools but not in the traditional ones. The aim was to uncover its potentials in both "general" and language skills development to show what the "extra" skills students of bilingual high schools get armed with.

III. The Case Study

1. Aims, justification and methods

    1.1. Aims and hypothesis

A case study was conducted with the aim of finding support or disproval of a hypothesis that follows from the previously detailed findings. Accepting that 1) L2→L1 influence in bilingual high schools is possible, 2) this transfer happens in cognitive levels too (and has positive effects on the L1 use), and 3) bilingual / CLIL education provides its students with various cognitive benefits and special skills, my hypothesis was that the skills that are improved by a chosen special language and skills development tool (debate) are transferrable to the L1 and affect it in a positive way. To phrase it as a question: are the skills developed by practicing debate in the English classroom transferrable into Hungarian? This hypothesis stands in accordance with the second research question of the paper and serves as a specification of it to a set of well-defined skills.

    1.2 Justification and limitations

I decided in favour of a case study producing qualitative results and not of a more elaborated quantitative research for two reasons: firstly, because the length of the present paper and available resources (time, money and knowledge) do not allow for such complex research, and secondly, because the close study of a small group of target language learners was expected to lead to a better understanding of both the circumstances and the results. Therefore, the data and results produced by this study should not form the basis of any generalization; they exclusively apply in the examined environment and for the chosen particular group of students. The results are expected, however, to carry wider implications that might form the starting point of more complex quantitative studies inquiring into the same matter.

1.3 Methods

Two means of investigation were chosen: a guided interview and a questionnaire. The interview was conducted with an English teacher who uses debate in her classes in a bilingual high school; it serves the purpose of gaining insight into the circumstances and possibilities of the group for practising debate, as well as the finding out about her practice and aims of teaching debate and her beliefs about the skills and values it fosters. The questionnaire was designed for a group of students of this teacher and inquired how they perceived the effects of debating in their L1 use, that is, it was a questionnaire of self-evaluation on skills improvement in Hungarian thanks to debate.

2. Description of the case study

2.1. The environment: the English-Hungarian Bilingual Highschool

The choice of case study environment fell on an English-Hungarian Bilingual Highschool partly because of its fame as a high-standard institution of bilingual education and partly because it was among the first schools offering such a dual language programme. It opened in the late 1980s with an English-Hungarian bilingual programme, which runs successfully ever since. In consistence with the operational framework of bilingual schools in Hungary, the school uses the CLIL approach: in the first, preparation year (zero-year) of the 5-year cours students acquire foreign language proficiency (CEFR B1) high enough to continue learning content in the target language – English – in the next four years, and those passing the compulsory end-of-year language exam (Cambridge First Certificate) study Maths, History, Geography, Biology and Physics in English till graduation. The school sets as its principal aim the preparation of its students to excel in *all* academic subjects either English or Hungarian instructed, and recognizes English language as not only the objective, but also the medium of instruction. Nevertheless, for the continuous improvement of language

proficiency, students do attend 6-7 English classes per week; therefore, the proposal that there is more time for special skills development in the English classes applies here as well. In the light of these, this school is an archetype of the bilingual education model in Hungary (see section 2.4.).

In order to ensure opportunities for authentic and intensive language practice besides the compulsory classes, the school offers a wide range of extracurricular programs. These include trips to English-speaking countries (Scotland, England), exchange programmes (Netherlands, Germany, Norway − varies depending on year), formal debate competitions in English (DeBuT: Debaters Budapest Tournament, organized by the school, for more information, see: www.debut.karinthy.hu) and an international student conference, KarMUN (Karinthy Model United Nations). This latter two offer genuine possibilities for students to practice debating in formal settings and thus improve their skills even further. About half of the participants of the survey attended KarMUN several times, but none has attended DeBuT. For this reason, a short introduction of MUN and KarMUN conferences is included in the appendices to help better understanding of debate possibilities of the students.

2.2. The interview and the interviewee

2.2.1. The interviewee ("E.S.")

There was one main consideration when picking the subject of the interview: that the person should be a teacher of a bilingual highschool and that she/he should possess considerable experience in teaching and applying debate. As E.S. suits these conditions perfectly and was kind enough to offer her time and help, the interview was conducted with her. She is a core member of the English teaching department of the school since its opening, the main organizer and "mother" of KarMUN.

2.2.2 The interview

The interview was a guided one with questions prepared in advance (see appendices). It kept debating in the centre and was aimed at finding out about E.S.'s experience with teaching debate in a bilingual high school environment, how she succeeds in adapting it to an English class, the methods she teaches it with, her opinion about the skills developed by it and finally, her opinion about these skills being transferred to Hungarian. Relevant parts of the interview are included on the appendices.

To the opening question: how and why she started teaching debate, E.S. replied that she does not remember the exact time, but it was more than 15 years ago. She met with the activity in British environment and realized that "partly it was a great challenge to students, it was something new for them as well, party, I am actually the type who loves arguing" – so she decided to adopt the method. Her motive was also that she "always wanted to make students think. Not just say what the teacher lectured or what they've read in books or in an article, but their own ideas".

E.S. considers debating a very effective pedagogical tool "partly because students have to think, partly because they have an opportunity to express their own opinion, their own ideas, and partly because they feel that they speak about something that they might be interested in". Therefore, she usually picks topics that interests students, because it helps them to engage actively in the activity. A recent story of hers supports her idea that once they feel the taste of debate, they really become "debating" persons (for details, see transcript in Appendixes). She also sees the usefulness of debating in that it can be applied anytime when working on other fields or topics, and because "it teaches skills that are useful in other fields as well".

About the teaching and using of debate in class E.S. told that she debates with and teaches all of her groups how to take part in formal debate too. However, the debates first practiced in

the EFL classes do not follow any type of formal debates, but are specially adapted for the language development needs of the group:

> "I usually ask them first to brainstorm individually, and then I ask them to get together in groups and discuss their arguments, so there is a group who are for and a group who are against. They discuss their arguments, add new ones to their lists on the basis of what they hear from the others, them put them in a sort of order. So it may take 15-20 minutes, then I ask them to pair up and debate about the topic in pairs, so that everybody has a chance to speak."

She conducts group against group and formal debates as well, and sometimes also asks the students to do research on the topic in advance – although, according to her, spontaneous and quick preparation and debating has its own merits as well. After she has taught a group how to participate in formal debates (meaning the formal debate used in MUN), they "regularly have formal debates as well, so they learn how to do debate in this kind of environment too. Then they also have to make speeches, they have to write a policy statements, they must be able to defend their points and so on and so on". In this way, she creates room for the development of all the skills debate may improve.

To the question whether it is difficult to fit debating in the EFL class (a problem raised earlier by debate experts – see Schlichter, 2010) E.S. answered with a sound "no" and as an explanation only said that "this is a bilingual school" (cf.: section 2.3. in Chapter II and Appendices 3).

When asked about language skills development, she listed all four language skills as being improved by a certain element of debating: listening, because debaters need to pay attention to each other, otherwise they lose track and cannot argue properly; reading skills during the preparation; writing skills when writing argumentative essays after a debate – though she notes that it is another business – and speaking skills of course, because "it's all about speaking." As for "other skills" development, she highlighted critical thinking, effective (logical) arguing and evaluating ideas, which are needed "to see what is important and what is

less important when arguing. Because I think this is a vital question: how to structure your arguments. Start with the strongest argument, or leave it to the end...?"

However, E.S. does not agree with the claim that debate facilitates effective and cooperative conflict handling. As she explains, "I usually tell my students that it is very important that they can defend their opinions in a cultural and human manner, not shouting or fighting, but with sound arguments, and that it is important to have conflict, but I'm not sure whether debating in class would change people in this way (viz. effective conflict handling)".

As for values enhanced by debate, she mentioned tolerance and respect of other people's opinion: "you have to accept and tolerate other people's opinions and be able to come to some kind of compromise". In support of this, she recalled her first encounter with debate (for the story, see transcript in Appendixes) and told how the tolerance she saw struck her: "It was so surprising that people can tolerate other's opinions so very well. And it's because they learnt it. It was (is) in the culture of England. But not here." Therefore, this is also one of her aims with teaching debate: to pass on this kind of tolerance, respect and acceptance of the other people and their opinions or ideas.

E.S. is absolutely convinced that the skills that are acquired in a language are transferrable and applicable in another one. She told about her experience teaching German in the school for a year and how it was much easier with beginners because

> "they used all the skills they had been taught for before in their English classes. It was amazing that after 3-4 weeks they invented wonderful dialogues [...], stood up and role played [...], and made fun. Which is very rare that after a month you can make fun in a foreign language. Usually it takes time."

Accordingly, she is also certain that the skills learnt through debate are applicable in Hungarian as well. Though she herself does not teach Hungarian, she hears from colleagues and experiences that "these kids usually can stand up and speak much better than those who

haven't learnt any debating" and that "they learn to express their opinions in a more accurate way".

Concluding, E.S. would expect to see her students perform and actively use the skills that they learn through debate. In the case of language-specific skills, all four are expected to be transferred with particular focus on speaking: elaborate and accurate expression of ideas, coherent and confident speech, and effective arguing. As for "general skills" (non-language specific), she puts emphasis on critical thinking, logical structuring and evaluating ideas. Besides these, it is high-level tolerance and respect of other people's opinion that she would like to pass on to her students. Finally, there is no disadvantage she could attribute to debating.

2.3 The group and the questionnaire

2.3.1 The group

The group which filled in the questionnaire is one of E.S's; there were 15 students aged 17-19 all in their 4th year in high school (last-but-one before graduation), 9 boys and 6 girls. Being the group of E.S., they have been debating for years and have done formal debate as well as debate with language development purposes (see interview); they still regularly debate in their English classes. 8 of them have attended MUN conferences, 7 have not. Two of them have done the Karl Popper debate as well while on of an exchange programme. With the exception of these two students, the group appeared to be fairly balanced regarding their debating experience.

2.3.2 The questionnaire

The questionnaire's chief objective was to gain evidence that the skills developed by debating in English are transferred and applied in the mother tongue by means of asking about the target group, the students' assumptions.

The questionnaire is built up of three main parts: the first one asked about general information (age, sex, MUN attendance) and the other two were considered to be the "body", with the questionnaire's 21 questions divided between them. Part II included questions on the transfer of language-specific skills and Part III questions on the use of non-language specific skills and values. All the skills included were selected either on the basis of the interview or according to the findings of Schlichter (2010).

Questions were introduced as statements about the influence of debate on the use of Hungarian. Participants were asked to mark on a Likert scale (marks 1-5) how much they felt each statement true for themselves. 1 stood for "not true at all" and 5 "absolutely true". This means of marking was preferred because it gave the respondents the chance to indicate the degree of agreement more precisely than a simple yes-no way of answering.

In Part I, students were asked about their experience with formal debate through the attendance on the extracurricular programs the school has to offer. As the division was 7:8 (no:yes), it was expected that additional practice would influence responses and those who had the extra opportunities to debate would find the statements more true. Results are discussed in the following section. A sample empty questionnaire is enclosed in the Appendices (Appendices 4).

3. Results and evaluation

3.1. Method of evaluation

In order to get comparable results, the answers marked on the Likert scale were converted into positive and negative values, and an average was counted of them for every question, which allowed for an average "score" to be assigned to each. Since in the questionnaire only the two extreme values were defined (1: "not true at all" and 5: "absolutely true"), this was found justified. However, it must be highlighted that the Likert scale is not an interval scale, therefore its values are not appropriate for mathematical evaluation or statistical representation (which is not the aim of this research). Accordingly, the scores should be viewed only as representative values used for the sake of comparison between the results.

The conversion was as follows: the middle mark, 3 was understood as neutral and thus was converted to a 0; the positive answer marks, 4 and 5 were assigned 1 and 2 as values, whereas the rather negative answers, 2 and 1 were given -1 and -2 as values. It obviously follows that the averages ("scores") counted for each question on these grounds are to be compared and understood on a -2 − +2 scale, where -2 means the statement is not perceived to be true at all (and consequently, the skill is seen as not transferred to Hungarian), 0 indicates either mostly neutral or polarized (on the two extremes) answers, and +2 signs positive majority answers. The average of the two main categories and the smaller sub-groups are also counted on the basis of this method.

A detailed table showing exact data on the numbers and percentages of answers given for each mark on each question can be found in the appendices, as well as a table showing the converted values, number of answers and averages.

3.2. Evaluation of results

In this section, answers to each question are not presented one by one, as their primarily characteristic feature, the average score is easily seen in the summarizing table (Table 1)

below and needs no extra explanation. Instead, questions are taken into account in their original groups (language specific or non-language specific/general) and smaller sub-groups, first according to their score value and second according to skills areas, and presented in this way. It is only questions with outstandingly high or low results that are discussed separately. A summarizing table with the detailed division of answers and averages can be found in the Appendices (Table 4, Appendices 6).

First of all the already introduced MUN attendance needs to be addressed. In contrast with the expectations, additional experience of debate via this programme did not influence answers in any ways: no pattern was found to emerge either in individual items or in overall summary. A detailed table shows division of MUN – non-MUN students' answer division in the Appendices (Table 3, Appendices 5.)

To turn to the body of the questionnaire, the average of the average scores is a good point to start with: it is generally indicative of the results with the score 0,76 for all the items, which could be interpreted as a fairly positive result showing that participants generally perceived skills transfer as a happening and relevant phenomenon. The majority of the scores fell between 0,46 and 0,86 with only a few "extremes" compared to these results, which again, indicates that students assume that though transfer happens with most skills, they not always have a considerable impact on the L1 use.

It is also interesting to examine the difference between the total average scores of Group I (Language specific skills) and Group II (Non-language specific skills): according to the averages, language specific skills seem to be perceived as less transferred to Hungarian (score: 0,69) than non-language specific skills (score: 0,84), which finding supports the hypothesis. However, it is also important to note here that polarization in Group II is stronger than in Group I, both among question score values and among participant answers, which suggests being careful and rather examining the scores individually before interpreting them.

Question No.	Skill	Score
Group I : Language specific skills		
Q.1	*reading for gist*	0.86
Q.2	*picking out relevant information from a text*	0.53
Q.3	*carrying out research*	0.46
Q.4	*broader vocabulary*	0.2
Q.5	*attentive listening*	0.86
Q.6	*coherent expression of opinion*	0.93
Q.7	*use of broader vocabulary in speech*	0.46
Q.8	*use of more sophisticated words in speech*	0.6
Q.9	*logical argumentation*	1.06
Q.10	*evaluating arguments*	0.8
Q.11	*effective persuasion*	0.8
Average score Part I:		0.69
Group II : Non-language specific skills and values		
Q.12	*critical thinking*	1.33
Q.13	*facing conflicts*	0.46
Q.14	*handling conflicts*	0.53
Q.15	*standing up for opinion*	1.06
Q.16	*being keen on exchange of ideas*	0.86
Q.17	*creativity*	0.8
Q.18	*confidence when expressing opinion*	1.06
Q.19	*being initiating*	0.33
Q.20	*individual thinking*	1.33
Q.21	*tolerance*	0.66
Average score Part II:		0.84
Average score All:		0.76

Table 1: Average scores of questions

In the language specific group, the 0,69 average score resulted from a majority of middle-scores with 1 outstandingly low and 1 outstandingly high averages (see ranks table). An attempt to seek a "popularity pattern" quickly fails: there is no correlation between the subgroups scoring high. An example is Q1 and Q2, which are sisters in the sense that both ask about a reading skill element. Despite that due to their relevance to reading more similar answers could be expected, Q1 scored 0,3 higher than Q2. It was Q4 that scored the lowest, and not only in its category but also among all the questions. It was also the only one that received "not at all" (that is, 5/-2) answers and with that is the most strongly polarized item: with its 5 answers on the negative, 8 on the positive and only 2 on the neutral side it stands the closest to 0 and thus to neutral position. Hence, it must be regarded as unstable data: there is no reliable evidence that Hungarian vocabulary is improved thanks to debating in English.

Q9 was the item in Group I that received the highest score (the 2nd highest overall) with answers very strongly converting to the positive side. It might be attributed to the fact that logical argumentation cannot purely be regarded as a language specific skill, as logic is essentially connected to thinking as well. And as it will be seen in the discussion of Group II results, thinking and cognitive skills scored much higher thanks to their being perceived as more likely to be applied in Hungarian as well. The rest of Group I items are not discussed in detail because their distribution is fairly homogeneous with scores high around the middle values. Their ranking may be checked in Table 2.

Rank	Question No.	Skill		Score
1.	Q.20	*individual thinking*		1.33
	Q.12	*critical thinking*		1.33
2.	Q.18	*confidence when expression opinion*		1.06
	Q.15	*standing up for opinion/fighting inhibition*		1.06
	Q.9	*logical argumentation*		1.06
3.	Q.6	*coherent expressing of opinion*		0.93
4.	Q.16	*being keen on exchange of ideas*		0.86
	Q.5	*attentive listening*		0.86
	Q.1	*reading for gist*		0.86
5.	Q.10	*evaluating arguments*		0.8
	Q.11	*effective persuasion*		0.8
	Q.17	*creativity*		0.8
6.	Q.21	*tolerance*		0.66
7.	Q.8	*use of more sophisticated words in speech*		0.6
8.	Q.14	*handling conflicts*		0.53
	Q.2	*picking out relevant information from a text*		0.53
9.	Q.7	*use of broader vocabulary in speech*		0.46
	Q.13	*facing conflicts*		0.46
	Q.3	*carrying out research*		0.46
10.	Q.19	*being initiating*		0.33
11.	Q.4	*broader vocabulary*		0.2

Table 2: Table of skills ranked according to score
(grey shading indicates items of Group I)

In contrast with the homogeneous Group I, Group II shows more polarization: it includes four of the five highest scores (Q20, Q12, Q18, Q15), two of the five lowest scores (Q13 and Q4) and only three items from the eleven in the middle fields (see Rank Table). The highest scores, as expected, are connected to thinking: individual and critical thinking received the highest values from all questions with only a few neutral and in majority positive answers.

Items connected to expressing opinion followed: confidence and fighting inhibition were also uniformly considered beneficial in expression opinion in Hungarian, and thus were ranked second highest. The skill with the lowest score in this group, unlike in the previous one, was not neutral-close due to high polarization, but on the contrary: the majority marked a neutral answer of 3/0. In contrast with this, the second lowest score skill, facing conflicts was a fairly polarized item, consequently in its case the neutral-close result is misleading: the assumptions about it are not homogeneous at all. The rest of the skills in Group II were either scoring in the mid-fields with fairly homogeneous distribution (Q14), or scored higher with answers leaning towards positive valueees (Q17).

For the final evaluation of results, skills are ordered in a hierarchy based on their scores to present which were those realized by the majority as skills most likely to be applied in Hungarian as well (See table below). First of all, it needs to be highlighted that no skills received a negative marking overall (not in individual marking). The "worst" (lowest) score is still above 0, and 0 is still not a negative but a neutral value. It accordingly follows that though to varying degrees, all skills and values were assumed to be transferrable and applicable from English to Hungarian.

As already mentioned, the holders of the top scores are skills very closely connected to cognition, thinking and logic – and interestingly, to the personal strength of confidence and brevity (fighting inhibition) when speaking up. The connection between these and the cognitive-related skills might lie in the former bringing about the latter: succeeding in debates and /or public speeches due to effective critical and individual thinking may result in strengthened confidence and willingness to speak up. Moreover, it worth noticing that despite the fact that they got relatively high scores, language-associated skills stand only in the middle and around the end of the field, which highlights the prominence of cognition and thinking related skills even more. On the other hand, language-specific skills are still

perceived to be more improved than conflict-related skills. Furthermore, the ordering within Group I items should be a point of interest: speaking skills with cognitive relations scored the highest (Q9 and Q6) and vocabulary-connected skills the lowest with mixed items in-between.

3.3. Results: comparison with interview

The results are compared with the expectations of the group's English teacher on the basis of what she has revealed in the interview as her goals, hopes and assumptions with the teaching of debate.

E.S.'s principle aim with teaching debate condensed in two skills: thinking (equalled to individual thinking) and tolerance. For thinking, the results clearly signal that her expectations are fulfilled, as the skill got the highest marks with uniformly positive answers. On the other hand, this was not so the case with tolerance: it mostly gained neutral answers with a slight shift towards the positive side – which result still lives up to E.S.'s expectations, yet, for some reason, it is not as overwhelmingly enhanced as it could be. Regarding language skills, the seen order verifies E.S.'s claim that debate is all about speaking and accordingly those skills are most improved in Hungarian as well. As for other language skills, reading and listening skills do not seem to be as strongly influential in Hungarian as speaking. Two other points of interest should be highlighted: first, that in contrast with E.S.'s belief that research skills will be improved by debate, student responses do not support this convincingly: highly homogenously neutral values were chosen. Secondly, conflict-matters: facing and handling it need to be mentioned. E.S. did not expect it at all to be helpful or of any effect, which opinion is partly echoed by students' view on the matter. Though none of the relevant items scored high but medium values (Q13 – 0,46, Q14 – 0,53) were assigned, it is obvious from the rank list that these values – in comparison with other results – count as rather low-rank, which partly supports E.S.'s hypothesis: it may be assumed that debating is not *as* helpful and

influential for improvement in conflict handling as in the case of other skills. Nevertheless, since one score was neutral due to high polarization (Q13) and the other one due to majority neutral answers (Q14), we may regard both as unreliable result and leave the question open for further, more objective means of investigation.

4. Summary

The case study was intended to test the hypothesis that in a group of students who practice debate with enhanced intensiveness the skills improved by it in English are transferrable to Hungarian and affect the latter in a positive way. On the basis of the above detailed results of the case study, it can be stated that the hypothesis appears to be supported with evidence: the interview and the questionnaire results showed that though not to the same degree, but both language-specific and non-language specific skills are perceived as transferrable to and beneficially influential on the use of the mother tongue. However, as the questionnaire was based on self-report, results and findings should not be handled as genuinely trustworthy and credible. Moreover, it originates from the nature of the study that all results and conclusions apply exclusively in the scope of the investigation context, which in the present case narrows to the surveyed group.

IV. Final Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to find answer to a research question phrased in two parts. The first part strived to find out whether reverse transfer was an existing and verifiable phenomenon in bilingual highschool settings, to which pertinent support was established through the thorough overview of the latest findings and literature of the relevant academic background. The second part of the research question concerned the transfer of special skills thanks to bilingual education from L2 to L1. In order to answer it, first bilingual education was looked at with special focus on its position in Hungary and its comprehensive and cognitive benefits for students. Realizing a gap which has not yet been addressed by experts of the field – that the additional time of English classes in Hungarian bilingual highschools creates outstanding opportunities for skills development – a language activity (debate) special of bilingual highschool EFL classes was chosen and examined in order to enumerate the skills and values students develop through practicing it. Having done this, a case study was conducted in an English-Hungarian bilingual highschool where students regularly practicing debate were asked about their assumptions on how they perceived their skills developed through debate being applied in Hungarian.

On the basis of the results of the two-way investigation carried out in the topic, two main conclusions may be drawn. Regarding the first research question, it can be stated with sound certainty that reverse language transfer is an existing phenomenon which is relevant in bilingual highschool settings too. The second research question, however, cannot be answered with such confidence, since the empirical study carried out produced though positive, but unreliable evidence. As it follows from the nature of a case study, the results are only relevant and indicative of the surveyed context and should not be generalized. The strength of the results is even further weakened by the nature of the method: since the questionnaire enquired

about self-assumptions, resulting data should be regarded as subjective and hence not adequate for forming the base of comprehensive predictions. In order to achieve a more reliable picture, objective data would need to be gained by further studying of the field, which was beyond the scope of this paper.

Keeping in mind the above described limitations of the results, it can be stated that both language-specific and non-language specific skills were perceived to be applied in Hungarian, with skills related to thinking and expressing opinion strongly scoring the highest. The results imply that debating is not only a useful foreign language development tool, but also that it teaches skills that are transferrable to Hungarian – and that are not taught elsewhere in the Hungarian curriculum. This suggests that providing genuine opportunities for students to learn and practise debating either in Hungarian or in English would prove to be a profitable investment. Moreover, if transferability of skills among languages is possible and it enriches the use of mother tongue as well as teaches democratic values, the empowerment of existence and necessity of bilingual education appears to be even more justified than before. These are only a few of the far-reaching points of later discussion and consideration that objective results may lead to.

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Appendices

1.   Bilingual education: clarification of the term

Supposedly, the term *bilingual education* has never been in use in any English-speaking culture; which is supported by the facts that neither a library/journal research with this keyword nor questioning any foreign university instructor of the field would lead to satisfactory results. Nevertheless, the term is widely known and used in Hungary (though not in academic discourse), which might be owing to an initial mistranslation of the Hungarian equivalent, "két tanítási nyelvű oktatás" or "kéttannyelvű iskola" into English. But since the environment which this paper's investigation is conducted in is the Hungarian educational system that uses this term (for definition in Hungary see section 2.4), *bilingual education* is kept for the length of the paper and applied as an umbrella-term, including all forms of secondary education that involve the operative and balanced use of two languages.

2.   MUN and KarMUN Conferences

The Model United Nations was originally organized with the aim of introducing students to the working of the UN through copying its structure and simulating its processing. It also sees its goal in educational purposes: in training cooperative, tolerant and open-minded individuals sensitive to political and societal issues and ready to initiate action or solution. By now it is present from the USA through Europe to Australia almost all over the world and involves thousands and thousands of participating students. It is organized in a conference format, usually lasting 3-5 days. Due to MUN's international popularity, most conferences attract numerous foreign participants, hence ensuring real internationality and earnest formality to the conferences. The official language of MUN conferences is English. The target

group is primarily secondary school students, but there are MUN conferences for university students as well, e.g. in the USA.

The basic idea is that students take part as delegates of a country different than their own and attempt to represent it and its interests as credibly as possible in the committees (taken over from the UN). Every committee has a problematic issue known well before the conference, about which delegates are required to prepare a policy statement/position paper of their represented country and also a so-called resolution (a highly formal document proposing solutions for the raised issue). Discussion and debating of the issues happens in committee sessions in a strictly regulated procedure and in a most formal manner. The debate of MUN is a special type of its own, but is closest to the parliamentary format: delegates give prepared and non-prepared speeches, make points of information and motions, discuss and write resolutions and amendments and also vote on them. (MUN Manifesto)

Resulting from this complexity, MUN (and KarMUN) requires a wide range of skills for successful participation: advanced research and writing skills during the preparation period (understanding of issue and represented country's position, writing of policy statement resolution), advanced speaking skills, critical thinking, logical and effective arguing and very attentive listening skills are needed during the participation of debate sessions. On the basis of these, MUN conferences are seen as outstanding opportunities for the enhancement of all skills and virtues debating can develop – in a most formal environment.

MUN conferences in the school in question have been running for 8 years now, with the very first one organized in 2005. These are exclusively organized by the students of the high school, who participate in significant numbers as delegates and chairs (leader of a committee) as well, with the only adult helper being the interviewed English teacher. In the last conference (2013 spring) there were around 220 delegates, 30 chairs, 30 organizers, 100 admins (administrative staff), 11 different committees and schools from 8 different countries

(Germany, Croatia, Poland, Serbia, Egypt, USA, Slovakia) besides Hungary. As the interviewed teacher said: "By now everything runs really smooth, because all the necessary information is passed on, and all the organizers know what to think and care bout, who to ask [...] and so on." Students of the school also regularly participate in other MUNs in Europe.

3. Extract of interview

1. TEACHING DEBATE

Q.: How and why did you start to teach debate?

A.: I don't remember when I started...but at least 15 years ago. I was to British environment quite a lot, and I realized that partly it was a great challenge to students, it was something new for them as well, party, I am actually the type who loves arguing.

Q.: What was your very first experience with debate?

A.: I know when I first encountered with debate – it was not exactly debate, but it was an extremely interesting experience. In 1987, before the bilingual programme started, teachers were sent to England for 3 month, to be prepared. We visited several schools and observed classes and so on. Once we went to an excellent grammar school and observed an English class. And the teacher read out poems which were written by the students. The title was The Wind. The students had to vote for the best 5. When they did so, the teacher assigned different groups, and they had to go to different classrooms, and improve the poems, each group one from the best 5. And I was going with one of the groups, and was there sitting, listening. And the kids came up with different ideas: we should change this word, we should change the word order here or there, this line should be crossed out etc. It went on for about half an hour like that, and finally they came up with a quite different poem. And at the end, before we went back to the teacher, I asked them if the poet was among them. And one of the boys said yes, I was the one who wrote the original poem, and I said: "You didn't argue about anything. Do you agree with all the changes they made? They completely changed your poem!" And he said: yes. And this kind of tolerance really struck me. It could never happen in Hungary. It was so surprising that people can tolerate other's opinions so very well. And it's because they learnt it. It was (is) in the culture of England. But not here.

Q.: Why did you adopt this tool to the Hungarian EFL classes?

A.: Maybe...maybe the reason is that I always wanted to make my students think. Not just say what the teacher lectured or what they've read in books or in an article, but their own ideas. I remember how strong they opposed to my wish to argue about something they did not agree with. I mean, I appointed a group who had to argue and one that had to argue against, and they said: 'But I am FOR it and I don't want to argue against it!' – and I had to explain that they had to learn to see the other side, to figure out what the opposition would say in a given debate. Finally they succeeded. And nowadays they don't even argue about it, they accept it that it's needed. And students love debates, really.

Q.: Would you consider debating a useful pedagogical tool?

A.: Definitely yes. Partly, because students have to think, and partly because they have an opportunity to express their own opinion, their own ideas, and partly because they feel that they speak about something that they might be interested in – of course it depends on what the topic is, but usually we pick topics they are interested in. Recently there was a presentation – somebody came to give a presentation from Amnesty International, and this person gave our students different brochure and there was quite a lot about death penalty. When she left, the student started to debate about death penalty at once, without any body asking them or ordering them to do so. And then they asked me to deal with the problem in class – so we did, and they were really enthusiastic, because this was a topic they wanted to speak about. But usually, if you debate, it is really important that the topic is debateable. That there are different viewpoints and there are sound arguments for a yes and for a no side as well. And then, that provokes students to think.

Q.: When you have (conduct) a debate with a class, do you require your students to do background research before?

A.: Sometimes yes; sometimes, it's spontaneous and we don't have any chance for that, but sometimes I ask them to come up with background info, with facts.

Q.: How much time do you give them to come up with arguments?

A.: I usually ask them first to brainstorm individually, and then I ask them to get together in groups and discuss their arguments, so there is a group who are for and a group who are against. They discuss their arguments, add new ones to their lists on the basis of what they hear from the others, them put them in a sort of order. So it may take

15-20 minutes, then I ask them to pair up and debate about the topic in pairs, so that everybody has a chance to speak. Sometimes we have group against group but usually I like them to work in pairs so that everybody must speak.

Q.: What opportunities do your students have for practicing formal debate?

A.: There's another thing I do, and this is the Model UN: here we do formal debate. I always teach all my classes how to prepare the resolution first of all, and then we regularly have formal debates as well, so they learn how to do debate in this kind of environment too. Then they also have to make speeches, they have to write a policy statements, they must be able to defend their points and so on and so on.

Q.: Is it difficult to fit formal debate into and EFL class?

A.: No.

Q.: Why?

A.: This is a bilingual school.

Q.: How is it different?

A.: They reach the level that they need to be at the end of the whole secondary education by the end of the first year. Afterwards, you actually do whatever you want in the EFL classes in the remaining four years.

Q.: Why exactly debate, why not all the other areas – theatre, media, culture, literature...?

A.: We do all these things as well, but while you work on one of these fields, you can have debates. And it teaches skills that are useful in other field as well.

2. SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH DEBATE

Q.: What language skills do you think debate develops?

A.: Speaking, first of all. It's all about speaking. And listening: you have to listen to the others, understand what the opponent says. If you ask them to prepare, then of course reading skills as well: they have to browse on the Internet, find reliable sources, read and understand them, pick the most important ideas etc. And also writing skills: we also write argumentative essays on the basis of debates, for example – but that's another thing.

Q.: What other skills do you think debating develops?

A.: Critical thinking, evaluating ideas, for example. To see what is important and what is less important when arguing. Because I think this is a vital question: how to structure your arguments. Start with the strongest argument, or leave it to the end...?

Q.: Is it useful for learning how to handle conflicts?

A.: ...I don't think so. I'm not sure. I don't agree that we humans usually try to avoid conflicts – a lot of people don't like conflicts, which is very bad, which ends up in a much more serious conflict – if you keep avoiding conflicts. I usually tell my students that it is very important that they can defend their opinions in a cultural and human manner, not shouting or fighting, but with sound arguments, and that it is important to have conflict, but I'm, not sure whether debating in class would change people in this way. But you know what? I'll try to figure this out in the future whether it is true or not. It's a very good question."

Q.: What values would you say debate teaches?

A.: Good question. Respect of other people's opinion and tolerance. Hard questions you have. But basically that is the most important one that it teaches: tolerance. That you have to accept and tolerate other people's opinions and be able to come to some kind of compromise. But yes, I think this is the most important, tolerance.

3. ON SKILLS TRANSFER

Q.: Do you think that these language skills or any of the other mentioned skills are transferrable?

A.: Definitely. I remember teaching German in the school for a year (one of the first classes in the bilingual system, and that was in 1990 and all of a sudden a lot of language teachers were needed) and that how very nice it was to teach these kids to another language, because they used all the skills they had been taught for before in their English classes. It was amazing that after 3-4 weeks they invented wonderful dialogues, they used what they already knew in a very creative way. It was mostly in speaking, though. And you know, German is not so easy at the beginning. And my kids did not really care too much about der-die-das and all that – they used what they knew and spoke. And they stood up and role played, and made up dialogues and made fun. Which is very rare that after a month you can make fun in a foreign language. Usually it takes time.

Q.: These skills being transferred to Hungarian: though she does not teach Hungarian, she hears from colleagues and experiences that "these kids usually can stand up and speak much better than those who haven't learnt any debating. They can express their ideas better. They learn to express their opinions in a more accurate way than those who

have not learnt any debating, I think. If you learn to express your ideas in another language, than it can be transferred to another one. I am absolutely sure.

Q.: Is this taught in the general Hungarian system too?

A.: I usually say that kids who are admitted to Karinthy, whether bilingual or the normal class, are like this (are almost at the very same level, the kids in the bilingual classes being only slightly better). And by the end, it looks like this. (Bilingual kids being way higher than the normal class, which has raised level only a tiny bit). The bilingual classes go so much up, because we have a lot of time to teach skills, that's why. In the zero year we can do a lot of things other kids cannot: discuss moral problems, you learn a lot of things: thinking, you make them think and even start with easy debates, you must be creative in the English class, because you have to invent dialogues, you have to role play, use your imagination, and these really make a big difference."

Q.: One last question: do you see any disadvantages of debate?

A.: No. Not at all.

4.   Sample Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I would be very grateful if you would fill in the following questionnaire, which is about skills transfer, more precisely about how the skills learnt through debate in your English lessons are applied - if they are applied at all – in Hungarian. The data collected via this questionnaire are needed for my BA thesis (English studies, ELTE BTK) and will be used exclusively for that purpose. The questionnaire is anonymous and your answers will be handled with the utmost discretion.

Part I. – General information

Male / Female   Age:

Have you ever attended KarMUN or any other MUN conferences *as a delegate*?Yes   No

    If yes, how many times? _____

Part II. – Skills transfer (language)

The following questions are about your language skills and language skills use in *Hungarian*. It might help you in answering the questions to think back and consider what your skills were like when you started your studies in Karinthy, and compare it to the present.

Please indicate in a 1 to 5 scale how much you find the following statements true for you. (1 stands for *"not true at all"* and 5 means *"absolutely true"*).

Thanks to preparation for debating in English (searching and reading sources), I have improved...

    1. ...in reading for gist (scanning text for general understanding) in Hungarian.

        1   2   3   4   5

    2. ...in picking out only relevant information from a text in Hungarian.

        1   2   3   4   5

    3. ... in carrying out research in Hungarian.

        1   2   3   4   5

    4. ... my vocabulary so that it is broader in Hungarian too.

        1   2   3   4   5

Debating in English helps/has helped me to...

5. ...improve in listening more attentively to anybody speaking to me.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6. ...express my opinion more coherently (in a well-structured manner) in Hungarian.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. ...use a broader vocabulary when giving a speech/speaking up in a more formal setting* in Hungarian. (*E.g.: in class, oral examination, presentations etc.)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. ...use more sophisticated words when giving a speech/speaking up in a more formal setting in Hungarian.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

9. ...improve in logical argumentation in Hungarian.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10. ...improve in evaluating arguments in Hungarian./...improve my evaluating skills in Hungarian.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. ...become more effective in persuasion in Hungarian.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part III. – General skills and values transfer

The following questions ask about general skills (those not closely connected to language use) and values fostered by debating.

Debating helps/has helped me to....

12. ...improve in critical thinking (E.g.: seeing both sides of a case).

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. ...face conflicts more easily.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. ...handle conflicts in a cooperative manner.

 1   2   3   4   5

15. ...dare to stand up for my opinion (fight inhibition).

 1   2   3   4   5

16. ...become keener on exchanging ideas.

 1   2   3   4   5

17. ... become more creative.

 1   2   3   4   5

18. ... become more confident when expressing my opinion.

 1   2   3   4   5

19. ...become more initiating (initiating a debate, a discussion, an activity etc.).

 1   2   3   4   5

20. ...improve in thinking individually.

 1   2   3   4   5

21. ... become more tolerant (able to accept opinions different from/opposing mine).

 1   2   3   4   5

Thank you for your kind contribution!

☺

5. Table 3: Division of answers according to MUN attendance

Mark	1		2		3		4		5	
Question No.	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference
Language-specific skills										
Q.1	-		1		5		4		5	
	-		6.6%		33.3%		26.6%		33.3%	
	-	-	1	-	1	4	3	1	4	1
Q.2	-		2		3		6		4	
	-		13.3%		20%		40%		26.6%	
	-	-	1	2	2	1	2	4	3	1
Q.3	-		2		5		7		1	
	-		13.3%		33.3%		46.6%		6.6%	
	-	-	1	1	2	3	4	3	1	-
Q.4	3		2		2		5		3	
	20%		13.3%		13.3%		33.3%		20%	
	2	1	-	2	1	1	4	1	1	2
Q.5	-		1		4		6		4	
	-		6.6%		26.6%		40%		26.6%	
	-	-	1	-	1	3	2	4	4	-
Q.6	-		2		3		4		6	
	-		13.3%		20%		26,6%		40%	
	-	-	2	-	1	2	1	3	4	2
Q.7	-		3		4		6		2	
	-		20%		26.6%		40%		13.3%	
	-	-	1	2	1	3	5	1	1	1
Q.8	-		3		3		6		3	
	-		20%		20%		40%		20%	
	-	-	2	1	2	1	3	3	1	2
Q.9	-		1		3		5		6	
	-		6.6%		20%		33.3%		40%	
	-	-	1	-	1	2	2	3	4	2
Q.10	-		2		2		8		3	
	-		13.3%		13.3%		53.3%		20%	
	-	-	2	-	-	2	3	5	3	-
Q.11	-		2		2		8		3	
	-		13.3%		13.3%		53.3%		20%	
	-	-	2	-	-	2	4	4	2	1

Mark	1		2		3		4		5	
Question No.	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference	Attended MUN conference	Never attended MUN conference
Non-language specific skills and values										
Q.12	-		-		2		6		7	
	-		-		13.3%		40%		46.6%	
	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	3	4	3
Q.13	-		5		2		4		4	
	-		33.3%		13.3%		26.6%		26.6%	
	-	-	1	4	-	2	3	1	4	-
Q.14	-		3		4		5		3	
	-		20%		26.6%		33.3%		20%	
	-	-	-	3	2	2	3	2	3	-
Q.15	-		1		4		3		7	
	-		6.6%		26.6%		20%		46.6%	
	-	-	-	1	1	3	1	2	6	1
Q.16	-		2		1		9		3	
	-		13.3%		6.6%		60%		20%	
	-	-	-	2	-	1	7	2	1	2
Q.17	-		2		3		6		4	
	-		13.3%		20%		40%		26.6%	
			-	2	1	2	4	2	3	1
Q.18	-		2		3		2		8	
	-		13.3%		20%		13.3%		53.3%	
			-	2	1	2	-	2	7	1
Q.19	-		2		7		5		1	
	-		13.3%		46.6%		33.3%		6.6%	
	-	-	1	1	3	4	3	2	1	-
Q.20	-		-		1		8		6	
	-		-		6.6%		53.3%		40%	
	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	4	5	1
Q.21	-		1		6		5		3	
	-		6.6%		40%		33.3%		20%	
	-	-	1	-	2	4	4	1	1	2

6.   Table 4: Converted values, distribution of responses and averages

Linkert scale	1	2	3	4	5	Average
Converted value	-2	-1	0	1	2	
Question No.	Language-specific skills					
Q.1	-	1	5	4	5	0,86
Q.2	-	2	3	6	4	0,53
Q.3	-	2	5	7	1	0,46
Q.4	3	2	2	5	3	0,2
Q.5	-	1	4	6	4	0,86
Q.6	-	2	3	4	6	0,93
Q.7	-	3	4	6	2	0,46
Q.8	-	3	3	6	3	0,6
Q.9	-	1	3	5	6	1,06
Q.10	-	2	2	8	3	0,8
Q.11	-	2	2	8	3	0,8
	Non-language specific skills and values					
Q.12	-	-	3	6	7	1,33
Q.13	-	5	2	4	4	0,46
Q.14	-	3	4	5	3	0,53
Q.15	-	1	4	3	7	1,06
Q.16	-	2	1	9	3	0,86
Q.17	-	2	3	6	4	0,8
Q.18	-	2	3	2	8	1,06
Q.19	-	2	7	5	1	0,33
Q.20	-	-	1	8	6	1,33
Q.21	-	1	6	5	3	0,66