

CLIL AND ITS FORMS IN DIVERSE EDUCATION CONTEXT

Ludmila Hurajová, Gabriela Chmelíková

Slovak University of Technology, Faculty of Materials Science and Technology in Trnava, Slovak Republic
Phone: +421911883939, E-Mail: ludmila.hurajova@stuba.sk; gabriela.chmelikova@stuba.sk

Abstract. *Content and language integrated learning is approach that has been studied longer than 20 years on mostly Primary and Secondary level of education. Scholars conducted their research from various perspectives to find CLIL impacts on students' performance at content subjects, at foreign language (that was used as CLIL language) and also on students' awareness of subject professional vocabulary in mother tongue when the subject was taught via CLIL. The teachers were subjects of studies as well, scholars focus mainly on their linguistic, didactic readiness to establish effective CLIL learning environment, on CLIL teacher competences needed for CLIL application etc. Our contribution aims at presenting our insight about CLIL approach in diverse education context around Europe from practical perspective. It focuses on describing CLIL forms that are applied in the countries (Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Sweden) that were the project partners in an ERASMUS+ project dealing with exchange of CLIL practice at Primary and Secondary schools. Some ways how to enhance CLIL awareness among teachers in Europe are presented. The project findings indicate that CLIL diversity is the way how this approach/method can be implemented into education to support dual integrated learning at Primary and Secondary schools in Europe and at same time demonstrate how Higher Education Institutions can benefit from CLIL application in Tertiary sector to support their internationalization process.*

Key words: *CLIL diversity, education context, cultural context, CLIL in Erasmus+ project*

1. INTRODUCTION

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) approach is not a new phenomenon in education. Since CLIL started being applied into lessons on Primary, Secondary and these days on Tertiary level, there have been some attempts to unify CLIL and also some voices have called for CLIL pedagogy. As CLIL application into education was mainly teachers' initiative in many cases at the beginning, there are some countries where CLIL approach has been systematically applied into education several years such as Spain, Portugal, Finland etc. Besides, CLIL is being implemented into education compulsorily on Primary and Secondary level in Italy, where teachers are supposed to be trained how to build CLIL learning environment. What seems to be a new phenomenon is awareness of what CLIL is and who CLIL teachers are. Some teachers call CLIL – education in English, bilingual study programmes, EMI (English as a medium of instruction) and also ESP (English for specific purposes) might be found CLIL as well. In this contribution we find CLIL dual learning approach, no matter how much English and how often (or other CLIL languages) is used during the lessons. CLIL teachers are considered those ones who can manage to

keep the dual principle of teaching that might lead to students' content and language (CLIL language) development. CLIL language is that language needed to be improved and it is not a mother tongue of students' majority being taught in it.

To fulfil one of the EU missions to provide fair opportunity of education for all EU citizens and to share knowledge, competences, ideas, proposals among professionals common platform is needed. As the real life shows us, from a language perspective, English is that platform for sharing so it seems to be natural that in many CLIL application cases the CLIL language is just English. Although English looks like a major language platform for CLIL, there are many different CLIL forms that occur around Europe. This variety roots both in CLIL approach flexibility and wide range of education contexts within Europe. (Hurajová, 2016) Several international projects have dealt with CLIL application and CLIL impact on students' performance, teachers' burden and readiness for CLIL implementation etc. The aim of the contribution is to describe diverse forms of CLIL application as they have been observed in an ERASMUS+ project with the title "*Transnational exchange of good practice among European Educational Institutions*" and to propose how Higher Education can benefit from CLIL implementation.

2. DIVERSE CLIL FORMS

Within the project mentioned above some lessons in four European countries in Primary and Secondary schools were observed. Diverse cultural, historical and educational context resulted in diverse CLIL forms. CLIL dual teaching principle were more or less followed by teachers who led the lessons. English was mainly used as CLIL language, however, the lessons in French were observed too. CLIL teachers involved in the observed lessons were both foreign language and content teachers. CLIL was applied into full lessons not in partial activities within the lessons. Teachers applying CLIL had different level of experience with CLIL approach. Frequency of switch-code was observed within CLIL lessons.

2.1. Latvia

Daugavpils – the town in Latvia. Official state language is Latvian, however, Russian is used in some schools in this region, as Russian community lives there. Historically, Latvian language became official state language and the language at school when Latvia got its independence in 90s. In some cases Latvia was so-called CLIL language when it was implemented at schools. The lessons observed within the project were taught in English at a primary school and at two secondary schools. The CLIL forms are described in the following table 1.

2.2. Lithuania

The Lithuanian partner was not experienced in CLIL application into education. Teachers willing to implement it into their lessons got some know-how from participating in some international projects and trainings. The lessons observed in a primary school in Vilnius were in English and in French. Most of the teachers applying CLIL were content teachers with little or no experience with CLIL. Not so vivid and mutual cooperation among FL teachers and content teachers were observed. One of the teachers had dual qualification in French and in Music. The official school language is Lithuanian. Our findings are described in the table 2.

Table 1 CLIL forms in Latvia, SS – secondary school; PS-Primary School

School type	CLIL teacher	CLIL lesson	CLIL students
SS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an English teacher ▪ Active cooperation with a Geography teacher ▪ 10 year experience in CLIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geography ▪ Voluntary lesson ▪ CLIL language English ▪ Well-organized ▪ Switch-code not often used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12-13 years old ▪ Students' native language Russian ▪ Interactive in response in English
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English and Science teachers both in presence ▪ Science teacher didn't follow CLIL dual teaching very well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular Science lesson ▪ CLIL language English ▪ Lesson led by the Science teacher ▪ The lesson a bit disorganized ▪ Switch code not often used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9-10 years ▪ Lower level of English ▪ a bit confused
SS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ English teacher ▪ CLIL experienced ▪ At the beginning cooperation with Biology teacher ▪ Currently she prepares CLIL lessons herself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular Biology lesson ▪ CLIL language English ▪ Switch-code not often used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 15-16 years ▪ Great response in English ▪ Students were aware of required professional language

Table 2 CLIL forms in Lithuania, PS – Primary School

School type	CLIL teacher	CLIL lesson	CLIL students
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an English teacher ▪ non experienced in CLIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular English lesson ▪ CLIL language English ▪ Content – forest animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 8 - 9 years old ▪ Basic level of English
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Music and French teacher ▪ Good in FL didactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ optional Music lesson ▪ CLIL language French 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9-10 years ▪ Great response to French instructions
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Math teacher ▪ Non experienced in CLIL ▪ Linguistic mistakes made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular Math lesson ▪ CLIL language English ▪ Switch-code not often used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9-10 years ▪ Great response to English instructions
PS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Science teacher ▪ Non experienced in CLIL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular Science lesson ▪ CLIL language English ▪ Too much content in English delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9-10 years ▪ Good response to English instructions

2.3. Italy

The partner from Italy was considered as well-experienced in CLIL methodology as subjects taught in English are compulsory at schools on Secondary level of education in Italy and teachers are pushed to be trained how to implement English into their lessons. We observed several lessons in diverse subjects such as English Literature, Social Studies, Science, etc. The lessons delivered by content teachers were with no support from FL teachers. This calls for teachers to have a good level of English from linguistic perspective and at the same time to be able to apply FL didactics when CLIL is implemented to keep its dual teaching principle. The teachers tried to speak only in English, in some cases explained the instruction in Italian to ensure students what to do. It seemed to be more teaching in

English than dual teaching approach. Most of the students were used to it. In some lessons a foreign pre-teacher delivered the lesson with the content teacher that enhanced authenticity. Students preparing for becoming teachers from foreign countries are addressed to come to teach Italian students during their internship. E found it very effective way how to arrange authentic international learning-teaching environment where English is medium for communication and enhancing intercultural awareness. From a language competence perspective, teachers' level of English who were observed varied. We were not provided the information about their level of English according to CEFR. We can state based on our observations that Italy is trying to implement English into education via full lessons taught in English.

2.4. Sweden

Swedish project members were little or no experienced in CLIL application into their lessons. They were a bit skeptical if this approach is the suitable way how to start fostering students' competence in professional English. All of them teach at a secondary vocational school. After being trained within the project they attempted to go off CLIL implementation. They were inspired by CLIL forms they observed in project partners' countries and we could observe the lesson led by two teachers as we saw in Latvia and some lessons led by content teachers whose level of English was fluent enough for communication in English. Particularly the lesson led by two teachers - one English teacher and one content teacher - focused on the sanitary procedure to eliminate transmission of infection for students studying health care was a great example of mutual cooperation and of good preparation. The lesson also approved how important is to exchange practice among teachers within Europe or other continents. As the teachers told us their students loved the lessons and asked them for English and content driven way of learning. Swedish partners found the way how to extend interdisciplinary cooperation and the English teacher will cooperate and support other content teachers at school to prepare CLIL lessons or activities within their content subjects.

2.5. Slovakia

Within the project there were no CLIL lessons observed in Slovakia, but we can provide some information about CLIL in our country, as we have been involved in several projects focused on CLIL and have cooperated with some CLIL teachers while they were implementing CLIL into their lessons. CLIL application has been initiated by teachers mainly FL teachers and they started integrating content from various subjects into their English lessons as at that time CLIL was found a good way how to teach and develop students' English competences based on real life. This CLIL piloting took longer than one decade when CLIL approach was recommended by Slovak Ministry of education as the approach that can develop English and subject knowledge at the same time. Some studies were conducted to investigate CLIL impact on students' performance in English and in subject taught via CLIL, also on national level. However, CLIL application into education is still school decision if, when, how and who will implement CLIL into the lessons. A few CLIL courses are available for teachers in service and pre-teachers are taught about CLIL at universities. CLIL practice is exchanged by conferences and participating in international projects. Nobody is appointed to monitor CLIL application into education. Sometimes we noticed that teachers who are eager to apply CLIL in their lessons they did not estimated capacity of their students properly and

prepared too much subject content for being integrated into CLIL lessons. This resulted in overloading students but also themselves.

3. CLIL IN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

CLIL has been applied into education on Primary and Secondary level for more than two decades, but CLIL and its usage in Higher Education is a quite new issue to debate. How CLIL can be utilized on Tertiary level of education and why? Many approaches are mentioned in literature concerning foreign language development in Higher Education for instance ESP (English for specific purposes), EAP (English for academic language), EMI (English as medium for instructions), immersion programmes, etc. All of them were established on needs analysis what university students are required to achieve and deliver in foreign language particularly in English. Since Bologna process to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications, internationalization of higher education has been enhanced. There is a great support in students' and teachers' mobility to ensure vivid and effective cooperation in academia in all areas, research, pedagogical services and curricular cooperation. To fulfill the Bologna Process missions a unified platform is needed. As it was mentioned before, linguistically, English seems to be that language platform for scholars, students, university management and other staff to cooperate deeply. Internationalization process in higher education means more courses in English taught at all degrees to provide studying environment for international students. Providing courses in English leads us to consider education context in particular university to be able to prepare the process of internationalization in effective way. In some cases it is not possible simply to start providing courses in English as the teaching staff, university management and also students might not be ready for this sudden and great shift because of various reasons. We think in these cases CLIL can be a good tool for enhancing the internationalization process, as it can ensure gradual deployment of English. Integration of English into subject courses requires close cooperation among English teachers and content teachers at university. ESP or EAP lessons might support CLIL application and can help students be ready for subject activities or full courses taught in English. Another issue is described in Chmelíková (2016, p.73) where she states the solution to the difficult situation at the universities, which currently suffer from lowering the load of English lessons could be in close cooperation with subject-specific departments at the faculty or university in various interdisciplinary projects.

7. CONCLUSION

For providing fair opportunity for gaining comparable education and qualifications all around Europe a unified platform is needed. In terms of language, English can play the role of such a platform also for higher education. Although one language platform is required, diverse forms can be applied to build studying environment utilizing English. CLIL as an umbrella approach how to integrate subject content and language seems to be the way for achieving the goals and mission of the Bologna process and it can enhance the internationalization process of higher education in diverse contexts, as it can reflect them while it is applied into education.

Acknowledgements. *This contribution is published as a partial product of the international project ERASMUS+ 2015-1-SK01-KA201-008937 Transnational Exchange of good CLIL practice among European Educational Institutions. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



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