Certifying the language competences of Italian CLIL teachers

Geraldine Ludbrook

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1. CLIL in Italy
2. Research project
3. Test development
4. Recent educational reform
CLIL

Content and Language Integrated Learning

Definition: Learning content through an additional language (foreign or second language)

Wide range of forms:
Bilingual education
Content based instruction
Immersion
English as medium of instruction
Languages Across the Curriculum

Coyle, Hood & Marsh (2010)
European CLIL

Stems from EC Policy for multilingualism:
Mother tongue plus two other languages  COM (2005)

Different models of CLIL in different European contexts

Status of languages (minority, official, foreign)
Target language (English dominant)
Subjects taught (sport → science)
Exposure time (modules, mainstream)  Eurydice (2006)
European CLIL

4Cs Framework
Content
The subject matter that drives the learning process.

Communication
Not only learning language but “learning to use language and using language to learn”.

Cognition
Allowing learners to become aware of the higher order thinking skills needed for the learning process.

Culture
The development of intercultural understanding and global citizenship.
Coyle (2007)
CLIL teachers

Different qualifications in different contexts

• Teachers have a double qualification in both the content subject and the foreign language.

• Classroom teachers use an additional language as the medium of instruction.

• Foreign language teachers teach non-language subject content.

• Exchange teachers from other countries are brought into the classroom of the host country.

• Content subject teacher and foreign language teacher work together to produce materials and/or to team-teach in the classroom.

Eurydice (2006)
CLIL in Italy

- CLIL is mainly delivered through short modules.
- Projects launched throughout Italy, initiated by individual FL teachers within schools.
- Projects supported and funded by regional education authorities, university faculties, and regional institutions for research into education.
- Primary and middle school: sciences, art, geography, technology
  Secondary school: history, biology, ecology, science, economics
- Strong multi-language policy: French, German, Spanish, minority languages such as Slovene and Friulan
- Team-taught CLIL provision

Test development project

University of Venice  CLIL training courses for FL and content teachers

Test structure
1. Written paper
Knowledge of CLIL methodology - Awareness of pedagogical approaches - Ability to adapt authentic materials – Ability to reflect on experience

2. Practical test
   - Performance test of FL communicative abilities.

Pilot project
Language of CLIL provision: English
Content subject: Science
School: Upper secondary
L2 performance testing

Performance tests to assess foreign or second language abilities for specific occupational purposes:

- Business English
- Occupational English Test
- Aviation English

Performance tests to assess teachers’ foreign or second language competence

International Teaching Assistants
Taped Evaluation of Assistants Classroom Handling (TEACH)
Graduate Student Instructor Oral English Test (GSI-OET)

Professional English Assessment for Teachers (PEAT)
Developing tests for specific purpose language use

Construct: analysis of the target language use situation (TLU)

Tasks: authentic, real-world, to elicit TL in testing context

Interaction between language and content knowledge

Research questions

1. What activity types are used in Italian CLIL science classrooms?

2. What roles do EFL and content teachers play in Italian CLIL science classrooms?

3. What language do content teachers use in Italian CLIL science classrooms?

4 a. What communication strategies do Italian science teachers use in CLIL classrooms to manage their L2 production?

4 b. What feedback strategies do Italian science teachers use in CLIL classrooms to manage student L2 production?
CLIL teacher’s competences

Step 1: Review of the literature

Target language competences for teaching CLIL

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) (Cummins)
- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins)
- Language of classroom management
- Language of teaching
- Language of learning activities

Bertaux, Coonan, Frigols-Martín & Mehisto (2010)
### Analysis of TLU domain:
#### CLIL classroom observation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 content teachers</td>
<td>20 hours lesson time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>upper secondary technical school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional experience</td>
<td>10+ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content subjects</td>
<td>electronics, graphics, statistics, IT systems, economics, general science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English background</td>
<td>B1 certification – Dialang B2 – professional use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIL training</td>
<td>Italy and abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIL experience</td>
<td>6-7 years – co-teaching</td>
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Brief review of findings
Activity types

CLIL Classroom Activity Types
Italian data

- **Whole Class Interaction**: 40%
- **Group/Pairwork**: 26%
- **Teacher Monologue**: 27%
- **Student Monologue**: 7%

Lemke’s (1990) science classroom activity types
EFL & content teachers

Two main models in Italian classrooms

1. Collaborative team
2. Separate roles

Factors that may influence the choice of model:

Teaching style: communicative vs. teacher-fronted
Interdisciplinary skills: crossover between teachers

- Level of content teacher’s general foreign language proficiency

Menegale (2008)
Content teacher language

CLIL classroom observation schedule
Developed from Elder (1993) by CLIL expert informants

1. General language proficiency:
   • Intelligibility
   • fluency and flexibility of expression
   • accuracy

2. Using subject-specific language:
   • the knowledge of subject-specific terms and their appropriate use,
   • the ability to structure scientific discourse, and
   • the use of scientific language suitable for the level of the class

3. Using the language of classroom interaction: negotiating for meaning

4. Using L1 and L2
General language proficiency

B1-B2 level not much higher than students’ level of proficiency.

L1 interference – typical errors of Italian learners
Tenses
Question forms
Prepositions
Lexis
Pronunciation

EFL teacher corrects content teacher’s language inaccuracies.
Using subject-specific language

Control of subject-specific terms and their appropriate use

Simple connectives used to structure scientific discourse: and, but, so, then, if.

Challenge of using scientific language suitable for the level of the class:

- Experienced content teachers, so know content needs.
- Many scientific concepts can be expressed using basic language constructions (present tense, modal verbs) and subject-specific lexis.
- Use familiar and concrete examples to help student understanding.
Language of classroom interaction

Main activity type: Whole Class Interaction (40%)

CLIL pedagogy invites negotiation of meaning

but

IRF pattern dominates

• Teacher retains control of topic, which student answers, which answers are correct

CLIL pedagogy encourages student production stimulated by open, referential questions

but

Teacher questions mainly closed, display

• Common in content classrooms as opposed to language classrooms
• Linked to language proficiency
Principled use of the L1 can be a resource in fostering a cross-linguistic awareness.

- Most of the teachers attempted to use English only policy.
- Rare use of a deliberate strategy of translating key terms.
Communication strategies

Strategies used to overcome difficulties and monitor production

Principal difficulties observed
- Gaps in lexis, both general and subject-specific
- Gaps in structures or morphological and syntactical errors
- Consistent non-standard pronunciation or intonation

Principal strategies observed
- Use of Italian
- Reformulation and self-correction
- Appeal for assistance to the EFL teacher

Tarone (1980)
## Feedback strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student error types</th>
<th>Teacher feedback strategies observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsolicited use of L1</td>
<td>Reminder, ignored, clarification request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>Direct correction, some elicitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Ignored, recast, direct correction, metalinguistic information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Direct correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hesitation</td>
<td>Elicitation, questioning</td>
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Test construct

General language proficiency: Can construct a reasoned argument; develop an argument; explain a problem; speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations; use cohesive devices to link sentences into clear, connected discourse; express him/herself fluently; use a broad lexical repertoire; use communication strategies to overcome gaps.

Subject-specific language: Can use specialist terms; use cohesive devices to structure scientific discourse.

Language of classroom interaction: Can make effective use of an interactive style using questions, imperatives, feedback strategies.

Language of classroom management: Can give instructions.

Use of L1 and L2: Can make strategic use of code-switching.
Test tasks

Task 1: Deliver a short (20 minute) lecture
Using own teaching material
Simulated class of postgraduate students

- To elicit sustained cohesive speech and subject specialist language
- To elicit language of classroom interaction
- To elicit strategic use L1/L2

Task 2: Give instructions for and organise a pair/group activity.

- To elicit language of classroom management
Reporting results

Language performance evaluated by two raters:
FL expert
CLIL expert

Report on language performance
• Accuracy of grammar and pronunciation
• Fluency
• Flexibility
• Knowledge of subject-specific language
• Interaction with students
• Classroom management

Overall recommendation
➢ Language competence sufficient to teach alone
➢ Language competence insufficient to teach alone – co-teaching with FL teacher recommended
Recent education reform in Italy (2010)

CLIL compulsory
  from 2012-13: last three years of *licei linguistici*
  from 2014-14: final year in all other secondary schools

Issues to be addressed:
Teaching materials
Examinations

Higher stakes for all agents
  School principals
  Students & families
  Teachers: need for high quality training in CLIL language and pedagogy
Teacher training

Some implications for CLIL content teacher training:

• Level of general language proficiency that allows independent teaching.

• Specialist language: not only knowledge of terms but ability to structure subject-specific discourse.

• Awareness of communication strategies to manage production.

• Awareness of strategies to scaffold and provide feedback for student production in language and content.
REFERENCES
Thank you

ludbrook@unive.it