To use or not to use CLIL? A bird's-eye view of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Norway: 
Teaching practices and student development in secondary school

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Main Objective and Summary

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a bilingual teaching approach in which a non-language subject (such as history or science) is taught in a foreign language. Many countries in Europe have implemented this teaching approach in the belief that it will boost English proficiency (cf. Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Lorenzo, 2007). The goal of this study is to determine if this approach is conducive to learning English in Norway, and if it can address the nation’s insufficient level of academic English. It is an empirical, longitudinal study that will investigate three CLIL classes in three different Norwegian counties. The project will determine how the teachers at these three different schools teach within the CLIL approach, how the students respond to it, and how the students develop their written English skills over the course of a year.

Background and Theoretical Framework

The English situation in Norway

Norway is a country that needs its people to be proficient in English. The 2006 Knowledge Promotion Reform (LK06) emphasizes this, stating that as a small country, its inhabitants will need English for international communication (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006, 2013). Schwach, Brandt, and Dalseng (2012) uncover that 25% of course materials at university level are in English, and 95% of workers in the private industry in Norway report using English to some degree in the workplace (Hellekjær, 2007). This would imply that Norwegians are expected to master a high level of English proficiency as adults.

Although English proficiency appears to be a national priority, few hours are allocated to English class. From 1st - 4th grade, children are taught English for 1 hour a week; from 5-10th grade, 2 hours a week (Skoledata.net, 2015). English language researchers in Norway have found that this is not sufficient, and Norwegians are not prepared for the level of English they will encounter as adults. Hellekjær (2005) illustrated this in the “Acid Test” – a test that proved that 2/3 of senior upper secondary school students would not have managed the level of English required for admission to universities in English-speaking countries. Hasselgren (1994) and Hellekjær (2005) indicated that the largest hurdle for Norwegian learners of English is vocabulary. I investigated this in my Master Thesis (Mahan, 2013), and found concurrent results: half of all lexical errors were due to the fact that Norwegian students had inappropriately used colloquial or simplified words in academic texts. In other words, many Norwegian learners of English do not possess the academic vocabulary that is demanded of them as adults.

The reasons for this are many. In addition to few English hours, the hiring of English teachers is lax: according to Statistics Norway, 43% of English teachers in primary and lower secondary school have no credits in English (Lagerstrøm, Moafi, & Revold, 2014, p. 19). This means that nearly half of all teachers from grades 1-10 have no formal competence in English. A third cause could be the type of English that Norwegians are exposed to outside of school: Norwegian production of English is characterized by the colloquial English found in television, everyday conversation and on the Internet (Mahan, 2013). The job of schools and English teachers should be to counteract this by introducing English texts that will bring Norwegian students of English up to an academic level of English. CLIL
could contribute with more hours in English, and it targets academic English.

An introduction to CLIL

CLIL is a teaching approach that is widely used in Europe and has existed in the Norwegian school system since 1993 (Svenhard, Servant, Hellekjær, & Bøhn, 2007, p. 140). CLIL is called ‘the European label for bilingual education,’ and its implementation is relatively new in comparison with other immersion programs used outside of Europe (Lorenzo, 2007, p. 28). In Europe, this approach is used in over 30 countries (Pérez-Cañado, 2012) and is believed to enhance both language and content learning (Lorenzo, 2007). Most teachers, however, use this approach to improve their students’ English abilities (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). It serves two purposes: it helps students develop their language skills and it transforms the target language into a tool to learn other subjects (Drew, 2013, p. 4). CLIL’s goal is to eliminate the separation between language teaching and subject matter, so it draws on tenets of immersion.

Teaching CLIL in Norway

The Ministry of Education and Research has certain requirements in order for a teacher to use the CLIL approach in Norway – at least 30% of the teaching is in the target language, the students must comply, teaching must correspond to the current curricula and the students have the same exam requirements as non-CLIL classes (Hellekjær, 2005, p. 53). Any CLIL instruction is either initiated by the county or the individual teacher (Paulsen, 2010b). In a national survey of CLIL conducted in 2004, it was estimated that 3-4% of high schools were actively engaged in CLIL, although this number is no longer estimable (Svenhard et al., 2007). The Foreign Language Center confirms that there have been CLIL classes conducted in English, German, French and Spanish for a wide variety of subjects, starting as early as the sixth grade. The typical CLIL classroom in Norway has been the social sciences taught in English in upper secondary school (Svenhard et al., 2007), although successful CLIL teaching has been documented as low as the 7th grade (Brevik & Moe, 2012).

Interest in CLIL grew after the Knowledge Promotion curriculum (LK06) underlined the importance of English in Norway and classified it as a competence (Paulsen, 2010a, p. 9). In 2009, the Foreign Language Center recruited eight schools to participate in a CLIL project. The results of this project (Fokus på språk, 2010, 2012) indicated a great potential for CLIL in Norway as an alternative foreign language teaching approach. However, there is not enough empirical evidence to fully explain the effects of this teaching approach. My project wishes to aid in this area.

CLIL research

CLIL research is growing rapidly and is being conducted all over the world. One challenge is that the CLIL approach (and its success) depends on many factors, and its results vary from country to country. Positive results in Spain may not apply to Norway. Sylvén (2013) stresses this in her article: “CLIL in Sweden: Why does it not work?” She argues that CLIL is not an effective teaching approach in Sweden. She compares empirical results from CLIL research done in Finland, Germany, Spain and Sweden. The article concludes that the success in the other countries can be due to factors such as clear national CLIL policies, bilingual teacher training, low age of implementation and amount of extramural English. Sylvén suggests that the Nordic countries will not see positive results for CLIL: we do not have national policies or teacher training to support the CLIL approach, and we implement it too late (upper secondary school). Furthermore, she believes that since the Nordic countries have such a high exposure to English, CLIL teaching will not make much of a difference.

The few empirical studies of language outcome in Norway have suggested that even between countries as similar as Norway and Sweden, the effects of CLIL could differ. Where the CLISS project
found few results on language outcome gains (Sylvén, 2013), Norway has found completely different results. CLIL students of English in Norway score higher on listening (Brevik & Moe, 2012; Moe, 2010) and reading (Brevik & Moe, 2012; Hellekjær & Hopfenbeck, 2012; Moe, 2010), in comparison with non-CLIL students. Notably, these studies all focus on receptive language skills, and not active ones (speaking and writing). To my knowledge, no studies on active language skills within the CLIL approach have been conducted in Norway. This project proposes a study that will focus on several aspects of CLIL that have hitherto not been researched in Norway: progression of active language skills (writing), observation of CLIL classrooms, teacher perspectives and student attitudes. The aim of this project is to add to the limited repertoire of research that places CLIL in a Norwegian context and answer the question: How does CLIL work in Norway? CLIL is considered by many researchers to be a solution to limited language skills in a country. However, CLIL teaching varies depending on the teacher, class and country. The scope of this project is therefore to investigate how CLIL teaching is executed in Norway and how students develop within this teaching approach.

The false proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
Cummins (2013) distinguishes between two types of language proficiency: BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). He states that these two levels exist in all languages – a level where the speaker communicates on a day-to-day basis through cues and context (BICS), and a more cognitively demanding level in which the speaker can perform with little to no contextual clues (CALP). The second level of language learning takes many more years to acquire, and has gone under many names in English: English for specific purposes, Academic English, Workplace English, Business English, etc. When foreigners move to a new country, a BICS level can normally be achieved within 2 years, whereas CALP will take at least 5 years to develop close to that of a native speaker (Cummins, 2013, p. 2). It has been suggested that Norwegians veer toward the BICS end of the scale, but erroneously judge themselves as mastering CALP as well (Hellekjær, 2007). BICS-competent speakers are often lulled into a false sense of accomplishment, since they manage to communicate well in the language. This is why a study by Menken, Kleyn, and Chae (2012), for example, revealed that students of foreign origin who have attended school in America for seven years or more are often mistaken as native speakers due to their strong oral skills. In reality, these students have not developed a CALP level of English and are as a result not given the language support they actually need. CLIL has been suggested as a viable teaching approach to promote a CALP level of English, as studies have shown that CLIL students have a more varied vocabulary than their counterparts (cf. Ackerl, 2007; Seregély, 2008). My study will use the BICS/CALP framework to examine if CLIL teaching in Norway promotes this level of English.

Research Questions
The overarching research question for this project is:

What characterizes a Norwegian CLIL classroom, its teaching methodologies and its students?

In general, CLIL research can be divided into three areas: teaching methods, content outcomes and language learning outcomes (Brevik & Moe, 2012, p. 215). My project will touch upon teaching methods and language learning outcomes. Classroom research consists of three main agents: the researcher, the teacher and the students. This study will examine the CLIL classroom through the perspectives of these three agents. The main research question is split into three themes that intend to each answer a part of the main research question. The themes are as follows:

1. The CLIL Classroom
   RQ1: What characterizes CLIL teaching in Norwegian upper and lower secondary schools?
   RQ1a: What teaching methodologies are observable in the classrooms?
   RQ1b: Which similarities and differences are observable in three CLIL classrooms? Do these classrooms have a common denominator that embodies the “CLIL” approach?
CLIL teaching has become so popular that it is “on the verge of becoming a victim of its own success” (Georgiou, 2012). The methodologies, approaches and interpretations of it are so varied across different countries, that it is becoming difficult to determine what CLIL even is. In light of this, establishing the contents of a Norwegian CLIL classroom is viewed as important. This theme puts the researcher in focus. In order to determine what characterizes a Norwegian CLIL classroom, it needs to be objectively observed by an impartial third party. The goal of this theme is to identify the main traits of CLIL teaching. Are there any methods in common characteristic of “CLIL”? RQ1 will form the basis for Article 1.

2. The CLIL Teacher

RQ2: How do CLIL teachers perceive their own teaching?
RQ2a: How do the observed teachers describe their CLIL instruction?
RQ2b: What are the CLIL teachers’ thoughts on their teaching approach, and how do they relate this to their own beliefs of second language learning (SLL)?

The results of CLIL classes have, unsurprisingly, depended on the teacher's motivation and skills (Paulsen, 2010b). This theme targets the second agent: the teacher. As a follow-up or elaboration of the first theme, these research questions attempt to uncover how CLIL teachers explain their approach. There must be a reason behind why the CLIL teachers have chosen their teaching methods. RQ2 will probe deeper into the teachers’ reasoning. Will teachers that prescribe to different SLL theories choose a different CLIL approach? RQ2 will form the basis for Article 2.

3. The CLIL student

RQ3: What characterizes a CLIL student?
RQ3a: How do the observed students characterize their CLIL instruction, and what are their attitudes toward (learning) English?
RQ3b: What characterizes the students’ written development in English across a school year?

The last theme comprises many aspects. Firstly, it wishes to examine how students react to the CLIL teaching, and if some methods work better than others do. Secondly, it wishes to control for some of the factors that Sylvén (2013) mentions in her article: attitudes toward English and extramural English. Could these two factors contribute to positive/negative attitudes toward CLIL teaching, and affect their level of English? Lastly, this theme includes language outcomes. This project will investigate the longitudinal effects of CLIL on written English over a period of ten months. RQ3b will use the BICS/CALP framework to determine if this teaching approach fosters this level of language proficiency. Few longitudinal studies have been conducted on language outcomes (Pérez-Cañado, 2012, p. 331). This project will therefore also contribute to the CLIL research community on an international level. RQ3a will form the basis for Article 3, and RQ3b will be treated in Article 4.
Methods
This project uses a mixed-methods approach, as it incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2009, p. 3). Themes 1 (CLIL classroom) and 2 (Teachers) are qualitative, and theme 3 (students) is quantitative. A qualitative approach is considered essential to this study, as it examines human interaction – how/why teachers choose and implement bilingual teaching approaches, and how students respond to them. However, the third theme examines a large number of participants, gathering performance data (written texts) and attitude/habit data (survey/questionnaire). In order to examine the relationship between these variables, a quantitative approach is more appropriate (Creswell, 2009, p. 15). The study furthermore uses a triangulation of methods. Three data sources will be used to investigate the CLIL classroom: video observation, taped interviews and student surveys/questionnaires. The use of several data sources allows for instance interviews and surveys/questionnaires to be cross-checked with observable data. This will allow for more robust data (Bryman, 2012, p. 635).

Table 1 gives an overview of all participants, and table 2 provides a full overview of data collection and analysis.

Table 1. Participants in three case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>School #1</th>
<th>School #2</th>
<th>School #3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study program</td>
<td>Lower secondary (LS)</td>
<td>General studies (GS)</td>
<td>General studies (GS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>CLIL in all subjects except Norwegian (full immersion)</td>
<td>CLIL in Social Science (one subject)</td>
<td>CLIL in Science (one subject)</td>
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<tr>
<td>program</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>Data collection at schools will happen between August 2016 - June 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td><strong>Student sample 1</strong>: 9th grade CLIL students in one class</td>
<td><strong>Student sample 2</strong>: Vg1 students in one CLIL class</td>
<td><strong>Student sample 3</strong>: Vg1 students in one CLIL class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Teacher sample 1</em>: The content subject teacher(s)</td>
<td><em>Teacher sample 2</em>: The content subject teacher(s)</td>
<td><em>Teacher sample 3</em>: The content subject teacher(s)</td>
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Table 2. Full overview of data collection and analysis.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Quantitative and qualitative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>The CLIL classroom</strong>&lt;br&gt;Key words: Observation, Traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main research questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>RQ1:</strong> What characterizes CLIL teaching in upper and lower secondary schools?</td>
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<td><strong>Sub questions</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>RQ1a:</strong> What teaching methodologies are observable in the classrooms (video)?&lt;br&gt;<strong>RQ1b:</strong> Which similarities and differences are observable the three CLIL classrooms? Do these classrooms have a common denominator that embodies the pedagogical methodology “CLIL” (video)?</td>
<td><strong>RQ2a:</strong> How do the observed teachers describe their CLIL instruction (interviews)?&lt;br&gt;<strong>RQ2b:</strong> What are the CLIL teachers’ thoughts on their teaching approach, and how do they relate this to their own beliefs of second language learning (interviews)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data collection</strong></td>
<td><strong>Video observations (RQ1a,b and RQ2b):</strong> 4 consecutive lessons in each classroom will be recorded using the LISA design¹.</td>
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| Data analysis | Video observations: Use the PLATO manual to code the videos. | Teacher interviews: Categorize the self-reported data according to the PLATO manual. | Student questionnaire: Use SPSS to analyze the survey data. Present in graphs. |
| Articles | Article 1: **Observations of CLIL classrooms** Article 1 will report the findings on teaching methodologies from all three cases in the form of RQ1. It will compare the three CLIL classrooms to determine if there are any common traits that these three classrooms may possess. This article can be written in collaboration with a researcher familiar with PLATO. (Write Spring 2017) | Article 2: **I'm a CLIL teacher: How bilingual teachers in Norway define their methodologies** Article 2 will discuss the perceptions that CLIL teachers have of themselves as CLIL teachers and how they interpret bilingual teaching. It will examine the relationship between the video data and teacher interviews. This article will answer RQ2 and can be written in collaboration with a researcher experienced in qualitative research. (Write Fall 2017) | Article 3: **I'm a CLIL student: Attitudes and use of English inside and outside the CLIL classroom** Article 3 will discuss the results from student attitudes toward English/CLIL and their English use outside of school in the form of RQ3a. (Write Spring 2018) |
| | | | Article 4: **Language learning outcomes in a CLIL classroom after one year** Article 4 will report the findings on student texts from all three cases in the form of RQ3b. (Write Fall 2018) |
Reference List


Skoledata.net. (2015). *Fag- og timefordelingen i grunnappløringen*. Retrieved from...

