Abstract

It is difficult to follow the rhythm of development, technology, and change. Life is always steps ahead of us and we have to struggle not to stay behind and time is never enough to get sufficient qualifications. Foreign languages help us keep track with time and one of the most efficient ways to acquire them is by CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). Using CLIL to acquire a foreign language saves time and makes the unconscious knowledge possible by storing the information into the long term memory.

The main topics covered by this paper are:

- **What is CLIL?** This part consists of the definition of CLIL and explains its procedures and methodologies. "CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language."

- **The European Citizen.** The language policy of the European Union states that every EU citizen is to be able to speak at least two languages of the Union in addition to his native tongue. Through CLIL students can simultaneously study these foreign languages together with the other subjects at school and can reach a good level of multilingualism by the adult age.

- **Proposal.** In this part it will be pointed out the importance of a more extensive preparation in university of the teachers to be. The future teacher should have an integrated education to properly face the work market and prepare the “European citizen”.

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Keywords: CLIL, simultaneous learning, european language policy, teacher training;

1. Introduction

CLIL stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning. As the nominative CLIL itself suggests, the learning of the language is integrated with that of the content (which might be every subject taught at school or not) or as it is the case with many bilingual educational institutions, the learning of the content is integrated with that of the language, where the language is considered and used as a tool rather than a particular area of study. CLIL may be used for the study of one, two or more foreign languages at the same time. CLIL answers this way the change rush and the challenges of the recent world. There is a global need for language learning, especially English. This means the potential for CLIL is enormous. The use of CLIL and the ability to teach it is an investment for students and also for teachers. For teachers of other curriculum subjects, being able to add language teaching to their existing skills and for language teachers, an understanding of how to teach a broader range of curricular subjects, could be the key to greater career opportunities.

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2. What is CLIL?

The founder, David Marsh was born in Australia, educated in the UK and now works in Finland. He has extensive experience of teacher development, capacity-building, research and consultancy in a range of different countries like Africa, Europe and Asia. He is the founder of the term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in 1994. He is still fully active in the issues of CLIL.

When it first appeared the term was CLIL/EMILE, both in English and French: Enseignement d’une Matière par l’Intégration d’une Langue Étrangère (EMILE), but nowadays it is referred to only as CLIL.

There are many definitions about CLIL and some of them will be presented in here as follows in order to better explore and understand its significance.

- CLIL describes an approach to teaching and learning where subjects such as science, history and geography are taught and studied through the use of a non-native language. In CLIL, learning a curricular subject in a second, third or sometimes fourth language involves best practice from a range of different educational contexts. This can be done by the English teacher using cross-curricular content or the subject teacher using English as the language of instruction. Both methods result in the simultaneous learning of content and English.

- As it was said above this term was coined by David Marsh, University of Jyväskylä, Finland (1994): "CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language." His words to explain a CLIL activity are: “Any activity in which foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non language subject in which both language and subject have a joint role” (David Marsh)

- The acronym CLIL is used as a generic term to describe all types of provision in which a second language (a foreign, regional or minority language and/or another official state language) is used to teach certain subjects in the curriculum other than the language lessons themselves. (Eurydice 2006: 8)

2.1 Have you ever practiced this approach?

Most English teachers might have utilized this methodology in their English classes even without knowing its procedures or even not knowing that they are applying it. Many times language teachers use a particular content to illustrate lexical and/or grammatical issues. One of the reasons for applying such methodology is the lack of authentic language of textbooks. The language in textbooks, particularly beginner and elementary level, make use of an oversimplified and as a result artificial language. The difference between CLIL and these short sequences of integrated learning is the length of the content material and the content material itself. Usually CLIL is applied in Modules, that is a particular topic not presented to students before but still part of the subject syllabus, offered in the foreign language. The importance of the content and that of the language is the same. The content is not there only for the sake of the language and vice versa.

2.2 Advantages of CLIL

The growing number of CLIL classes shows that there are many advantages to the CLIL approach. As this paper is a short presentation of CLIL and its main related features, in here there will be mention some of the advantages and they will not appear in order of importance.

- **Motivation.** Students are highly motivated in such classes as language is used to fulfill real purposes. The challenge is high and it is the duty of the teacher to keep it at a normal level, that is high enough to keep them motivated and not too high as to make them quit and lose confidence in their capacities.

- **Language learning is at the centre of curriculum.** There is no more need to talk any longer about the significance of language learning. Through CLIL language practice and study is multiplied with the number of subjects it is integrated with.
• **Meaningful contexts.** Very often the language used in language teaching is artificial and not authentic. Even when the language is authentic the activities are not so, while in the case of CLIL the context is meaningful and after the students get used to this approach they don’t even think about the studying of the foreign language anymore. They concentrate on the content and language is acquired unconsciously and naturally having thus a better chance to foster in the long term memory. Switching the attention to the context lowers the anxiety provoked by the foreign language barriers. Krashen’s hypothesis on the affective filter states that optimum learning occurs in an environment of high stimulation and low anxiety. According to his theory, the emotional state of the learner acts as a filter. Krashen sees the learner’s emotional state as an adjustable filter that may pass or impede input needed for acquisition. Many ESL students come to class in a state of uncertainty. They often feel stopped from their native cultures and fight to adapt, causing a disturbance in their affective filters. Such disturbances can be overcome with the help of CLIL. Using a real context effects in the creation of a more relaxed learning environment, improving both the emotional states and the affective filters of the studentsi.

• **Time saving.** CLIL gives chance to more exposure to language. Better results are expected in less time compared to the traditional language class. Time is getting more and more precious and it is never enough to get sufficient qualifications. It is also difficult to follow the rhythm of development, technology, and change as life is always steps ahead of us and CLIL is one of the ways not to stay behind.

• **Variety of teaching methods.** As every subject has got its own didactic means to transmit knowledge, in CLIL classes they double. Every potential is doubled in such classes. For example in geography classes there is a large use of maps and visual aids which is not encountered in the same amount in language classes. On the other hand in the language class there is a more intensive use of listening activities. By integrating these two disciplines there will be a greater variety of teaching methods, activities and resources.

### 3. CLIL methodology

CLIL materials encourage noticing language within texts and as this is one of the main features of the Lexical approachii it is used in CLIL. CLIL assumes that subject teachers are able to exploit opportunities for language learning. The best and most common opportunities arise through reading texts. CLIL draws on the lexical approach, encouraging learners to notice language while reading.

Text based learning is another approach used in CLIL. In this approach the primary focus of classroom activity is the task and language is the instrument which the students use to complete it. The task is an activity in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome. The activity reflects real life and learners focus on meaning and they are free to use any language they want. In the task-based lessons the aim is to create a need to learn and use language. The tasks will generate their own language and create an opportunity for language acquisition.

A CLIL lesson is not a language lesson neither is it a subject lesson transmitted in a foreign language. According to the 4Cs curriculum (Coyle 1999), a successful CLIL lesson should combine elements of the following:

- Content - Progression in knowledge, skills and understanding related to specific elements of a defined curriculum
- Communication - Using language to learn whilst learning to use language
- Cognition - Developing thinking skills which link concept formation (abstract and concrete), understanding and language
- Culture - Exposure to alternative perspectives and shared understandings, which deepen awareness of otherness and selfiii.

In a CLIL lesson, all four language skills should be combined. The skills are seen thus:

- **Listening** is a normal input activity, vital for language learning
- **Reading**, using meaningful material, is the major source of input
- **Speaking** focuses on fluency. Accuracy is seen as subordinate
Writing is a series of lexical activities through which grammar is recycled.iv

4. CLIL and the European Citizen

The language policy of the European Union (every EU citizen is to be able to speak at least two languages of the Union in addition to his native tongue) has resulted in bilingual curricular instruction having gained a high level of acceptance and support in all of Europe.

4.1 EU Language Policy

The EU’s language policy promotes multilingualism and aims for a situation in which every EU citizen can speak at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. This follows the call by EU leaders at the March 2002 Barcelona European Council that every child in the EU should be taught at least two foreign languages from an early age.

4.2 Language Teaching

Knowledge of languages is at the heart of a successful Europe. Multilingualism enables communication and understanding, key elements in inspiring Europe's many diverse cultures to work together towards common goals. Language teaching is therefore of central importance. By encouraging students to learn other languages from an early age, language teachers are helping young Europeans to become:

- more open to other cultures
- more able to move and work freely across borders
- more able to compete effectively in the global economyv

This is a general background about the European language policies and CLIL. The requirement that every citizen of Europe should speak two further languages in addition to their native language has given CLIL a great importance and has resulted in its establishment in many schools all around Europe. According to Eurydice and other reports the languages used in CLIL classes are, as would be expected; English a long way in front in all countries, followed by French and German.

Albania is trying to be part of the European Union and we should get ready to prepare our students to fulfil the requirements set by the European Union’s Language Policy.

5. Proposal and conclusions

The final part of this paper is dedicated to pre and in-service teachers (especially pre-service teachers) in relation to CLIL.

When speaking about CLIL there are two main actors to be kept in mind: Students; the ones that take advantage from it and teachers; the ones that make it happen.

But, is CLIL easy to be applied? Does it require a lot of effort to be put in practice? Can all teachers apply CLIL? Does it need specialized studies? Are teachers motivated to apply this approach to holistic education? If so, what are their benefits?

Well, CLIL is not easy to apply and it requires considerable effort to be put in practice. It requires quite a strong collaboration among subject teachers and language teachers. CLIL classes need a great range of activities, more than in normal classes. The material that will be used in class has to be well prepared and accurate. This process takes time and in the case of CLIL it also takes good time management as the material would better be compiled by both teachers.

All teachers can apply CLIL and it does not necessarily call for specialized studies, but extra work yes. The fact that CLIL is generally realized in collaboration of subject teachers and language teachers means that teachers combine and integrate their subject knowledge.
CLIL teachers are not paid extra money and they perform extra work, so why do it? Since CLIL is not yet obligatory many teachers are reluctant to use this approach. As all novelties even this one has encountered resistance, but still many teachers find the motivation to work on it. This is a holistic approach to education and it has many advantages for students and for teachers. It enriches the teachers’ portfolio, it enlarges their knowledge respectively on content and language, and it improves their teaching competences, gives them better career opportunities and prepares them for the coming challenges of the teaching profession.

My proposal is related to the pre-service teachers. I think it is more fruitful to invest on the teachers to be as far as the promotion of CLIL is concerned. In practical terms I suppose it would be appropriate to start training teachers at the university level for the CLIL classes. This training should consist on knowledge about the CLIL approach, and integrated degrees should be offered to teachers. 15 years ago people had hardly heard about CLIL but at present it is not applied to a minority of countries only. It is clear that this approach has the approval of European policy makers for all reasons mentioned earlier in this paper, so its quick expansion is very predictable. A teacher with knowledge about CLIL and possibly an integrated education will properly face the work market and prepare the “European citizen”. For example a teacher with an integrated degree of English and History, or a teacher of History very fluent in English would have better career opportunities and lead faster to the unavoidable multilingualism.

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