



# Netletter n°2

## e-based Content and Language Integrated Learning Training

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### What is CLIL?

Renata Majewska, Teacher Training College in Bydgoszcz

CLIL is a new approach to foreign language teaching, where L2 is learnt and taught through the content of non-linguistic subjects. In other words, language and the subject content are taught in an integrated way.

There exist about two thousand different varieties of CLIL teaching. The reasoning behind selection is governed by the necessity to adapt to local conditions like the educational system, organizational and personnel resources, the specific aims of CLIL education and their implementation, the learner profile, the learners' needs, in addition to social and political considerations.

The aim of CLIL is not to educate a bilingual person, meaning that a person is equally proficient in both languages at C2 level (there are few such people in general). CLIL aims at developing in the student a high competence in language communication (in general) and in both languages (in detail).

This approach also aims for a relatively tolerant attitude to a language error, which is typical of a communicative approach. Obviously, the aim is not only to develop competence in language

communication, but also learning the contents and skills characteristic of a subject being taught in a foreign language.

A feature of CLIL is to attain such a language level giving the learner the possibility to study a chosen field abroad and to read specialist foreign-language literature; the skills required are not guaranteed to be provided by a standard language course (this sounds very ambitious and may not always be the case). CLIL also aims at an enrichment of a language being taught with so-called academic discourse.

CLIL education should be based on the following principles (otherwise its effectiveness may be low):

- Constructing knowledge that excludes teacher-centred approaches and learning based on memorizing data
- Language develops in social interactions and its use in practice
- Teaching should be learner-centred
- Active role of students in classroom activities
- Co-operative learning should be introduced
- Developing learner autonomy
- Co-operation of foreign language teachers with subject teachers
- Sufficient language input (maximum exposure to language)
- Teaching should be individualized, including learner training and development of learners' strategies
- Task-based approach, process-approach
- Variety of teaching techniques with a variety of materials, including computer-assisted learning
- Learning should always be context-based, placed in natural contexts
- Developing different language skills (reading, listening,





speaking, writing), not restricted to grammar and vocabulary

- Contrastive approach (presentation of different perspectives, methods, approaches to the same concept etc, including intercultural perspective whenever possible)
- Communicative approach; form-focused activities and language accuracy may be dealt with by language teachers or at the end of the subject lessons
- Possibly well-balanced approach to teaching content and language
- Language redundancy (repetition of content with the use of various language means and materials)

The availability of a qualified teaching staff is a common criterion for a subject choice. Another is the degree of difficulty of the subject measured: the amount of essential terminology, the degree of text difficulty, the experience of target students with CLIL, and students' cognitive and linguistic possibilities.

## Why CLIL?

Danica Gondova, Zilina University, Slovakia

In the last few decades CLIL has become very popular. It might be because it tries to address the need for fluency in foreign languages which has become even more urgent in united Europe than ever before. It is believed that CLIL has many advantages and brings considerable benefits not only to learners but also to teachers.

The popularity of CLIL is due to several factors:

### Political factors

EU citizens should – in addition to their native language - speak at least two foreign languages (MT + 2FL) so that they can use them as working languages in their professional lives. CLIL should significantly contribute to achieving the goals of language education, and as such it is supported by the European Commission, the European Council, and it is also one of the priorities of national governments.

CLIL contributes to the development of multilingual interests and attitudes, and to learning to know and understand other cultures. It also prepares learners for internationalization and helps to introduce the wider cultural context.

The combination of subjects and languages offers learners a better preparation for life in Europe in which mobility is becoming increasingly more widespread and should be within reach of everyone. In CLIL learners communicate about their fields of study in a foreign language, and are able to use it as a working language after they have finished their education. This opens the door for them to the job markets in Europe, as well as to education abroad.

### Motivational factors

CLIL is considered to be motivating because it gives learners an opportunity to see how the language they study is used in meaningful contexts, and it also gives them an opportunity to use the target language in interactive situations immediately.

When learners use the target language in a CLIL situation, they use materials written or recorded in the target language, and they also communicate in it thanks to which they experience success and satisfaction, which is another reason why CLIL is motivating. Concentrating on the content helps them to cope with negative affective factors. Learners usually forget about grammatical accuracy and focus on the message they want to communicate or on the task they need to solve.

Furthermore, CLIL makes it possible to use diverse methods and activities of classroom teaching and learning, which also results in higher motivation of learners. Since CLIL is based on constructivist principles of learning, and co-operation and peer learning are a natural part of this approach, learners benefit a lot from it and gain not only communicative competence, but also have a chance to develop other competences that are necessary for life-long learning.

Learners progress faster in language learning and achieve a higher proficiency than the learners who only learn a language in a traditional language class. These factors contribute to increased motivation of learners as well.

### Learning factors

In CLIL the content of language learning is determined by the needs of the content subject, not by grammatical structures as is the case in traditional language teaching. As mentioned above, the foreign language is not the main objective any more – it becomes the means of learning a content subject. It is necessary to stress that the objectives in CLIL are always dual: those that focus on acquiring the communicative competence in the target language, and those which focus on gaining cognitive skills in the content subject.

Experience shows that the learners who learn content subjects through a foreign language acquire a better communicative competence than the learners who only learn a language in traditional language classes.

In CLIL the content subject provides a real context for the communication taking place, and learners communicate in order to achieve a task. Thus, learning a language in a CLIL situation is more natural and resembles situations in which people learn their mother tongues. Learners learn a foreign language to find out something new and to gain new information – either from textbooks, from the teacher, from one another, or from the Internet. In this way CLIL provides the content to language learning and the use of language becomes authentic.

It is generally known that learners achieve a high proficiency





in a foreign language only if they are exposed to it as much as possible, which means they read it and listen to it extensively, and they use it for communication in authentic situations. This is another advantage of CLIL because it provides a lot of exposure to a foreign language and in this way stimulates its acquisition and learning. Moreover, in CLIL, language is not only learned consciously, but is also acquired subconsciously, which means that learners pick up structures and vocabulary while learning the content subject without thinking about learning the language.

It is often claimed that CLIL is only for high achievers or elite students. However, it is not true. If learners who are less academic learn a language in a CLIL situation, they often become more interested, accept the offered challenge, and gain not only better language skills but also cognitive skills.

CLIL lessons are also interesting thanks to diverse methods and forms of classroom teaching and learning, which are based on constructivist principles. This contributes to the development of learners' cognitive and metacognitive skills, promotes their independence and autonomy, and teaches them to be responsible for their own learning.

### Environmental factors

For various reasons, it is often not possible to increase the number of foreign language lessons learners have per week and therefore, the integration of a language and a content subject seems to be a very good solution. The call for such integration is getting stronger, as politicians, head-teachers, parents and pupils realize the importance of language education in multicultural Europe. Thanks to these facts CLIL boosts the prestige of a school, and also stimulates the interest of learners (or their parents) in studying there.

## The pilot course in Greece

Demetra Bechlikoudi, Directorate of Secondary Education of Piraeus

The participation of Greece in the e-CLILT project is a result of an ARION study visit about CLIL (The Hague, The Netherlands October 2006 with PL, IT, and GR participation) and a preparatory visit to Slovakia, Zilina 2007 (with SL, GR, PL, AT, SP, FR and IT participation). From the very beginning, the educational status of Greece, where no bilingual/CLIL schools exist, was a strong challenge for us to create a training course for Greek secondary school teachers, hoping that after the course and their on-line training (120 hours) they will be able to run the first pilot bilingual stream in one or more schools in Greece in the future. Moreover, as in Greece there are no teacher trainers specialized in CLIL at the moment, Greek teachers, after their training, will have been prepared to be the first teacher trainers in CLIL.

In our first international meeting in Coventry (Great Britain) and especially in our second international meeting in Logroño (La Rioja,

Spain), the content of the course was prepared in detail and the time allocated for each part decided. So the course (18 hours in total) will take place in Piraeus between 18–22 November 2008 in Ionideios Experimental School in afternoon classes for the first four days of the course and in morning and afternoon classes for the last day. ICT workshops will be available for the needs of training. Greece is represented by the Directorate of Secondary Education of Piraeus. Our Institution belongs to the Peripheral Directorate of Secondary Education which is a branch of the Ministry of Education in Attiki. It supports secondary school teachers (in-service) and aims at improving their teaching skills and broadening their experience through their participation in the project. The Directorate of Secondary Education is in charge of the organization of the course in Piraeus.



Location of the pilot course in Piraeus, Greece

Composition of teachers: at least 30 secondary school teachers are going to attend the course. These include foreign language teachers (who are in some cases also subject teachers), 5 or 6 philologists (Philologists in Greece usually teach many subjects e.g. History, Literature, Sociology, Ancient Greek, Modern Greek, Latin, Philosophy), 1 or 2 teachers of science (Physics and Chemistry or Biology) and possibly 2 or 3 ICT teachers.

Dr. Demetra Bechlikoudi, a state school advisor and the contact person in the project has undertaken all the co-ordination of the participants and has already interviewed them and supported by the Director of Secondary Education of Piraeus, Mr. John Xanthopoulidis, at the beginning of September is going to prepare everything for the course. First of all she is going to call all the Greek teachers (participants) to a preparatory meeting before November.

In conclusion, we believe that familiarization with:

- a variety of chosen methodological concepts including a skills approach, learner autonomy (learner-oriented methods), co-operative learning and a task-based approach
- the concept of cultural dimension
- what CLIL is and its existing practices in Europe
- the idea of tolerance and understanding of other cultures and mentalities





- the need to develop a high competence in language communication for themselves and their students
- the need to achieve bi-cultural and inter-cultural competence in the framework of the European Community
- the importance of learning a variety of teaching techniques with a variety of materials, including computer-assisted learning

will give our teachers a valuable chance to refresh their pedagogical and teaching approaches, to focus on some new ideas, attitudes and ways of organizing classroom activities, to exchange beliefs and thoughts, to be in a foreign language speaking environment and to benefit from the experience of 16-17 brilliant and professional teacher trainers from other European countries. In addition, it will be a great honour for all of us to meet David Marsh, the 'father' of CLIL in Europe, who will be working with the teacher trainers on our course.

### The E-CLILT meeting in La Rioja

José María Pérez Rivas, Rioja Centre of Educational Innovation

Mr Luis Alegre, Regional Minister of Education of La Rioja, decided to visit the partners of the e-CLILT project in the partners' working room in the same Educational Administration building on the first day of the meeting.



The regional Minister of Education of la Rioja (Spain) visits and supports partners during the working sessions at the Centro Riojano de Innovación Educativa

He showed himself quite satisfied that some European countries could co-operate with la Rioja in a project to promote learning and teaching methodologies for foreign languages. He added that La Rioja Government has decided to strengthen the learning of foreign languages as one of its priorities and has striven in recent years to train its teachers as a fundamental touchstone in the improvement of teaching and learning. He explained he had just come back from Canada to open new ways of collaboration and exchange for teachers and students at university level, which also come under the same policy.

Mr Alegre stressed the importance of the work which was being developed to be able to provide Riojan, Spanish and European teachers with materials they can use to promote languages in a real and authentic context to acquire knowledge and language at the same time.



Pausing for a photo with the Regional Minister of Education

Partners were also invited to live and experience, apart from the intensive working time, the culture, way of life and hospitality of Riojan people, and of course encouraged to try and enjoy the famous RIOJA WINE.

As part of the leisure programme, on the second working day evening, the group visited "Bodegas Ontañón" (a winery) in Logroño where paintings and Greek and Roman sculptures connected with wine culture were on display. Wine making and ageing in barrels was explained by the Bodega guide, who finally offered the visitors a short tasting of two red wines and one white.