First Steps in CLIL: Training the Teachers

Los primeros paso para el AICLE: Formación de los docentes

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Abstract

As David Graddol's "World English Project" gains momentum (Graddol, 2006), CLIL is increasingly being taken up by Ministries of Education as an innovative approach to teaching modern languages, as a motivating method for teaching subject areas, or simply as a contribution to internationalisation and the ideal of multilingualism. With this exponential growth, the lack of competent, trained CLIL teachers has become more evident. Content teachers are not infrequently monolingual and may not recognize the benefits of becoming bilingual, while language teachers may not feel proficient in the subject-area knowledge required for content teaching. Education ministries insist on CLIL implementation, but do not oversee a workforce sufficiently competent in all three necessary areas: target language ability, subject knowledge, and CLIL methodology. This paper explores the need to design quality training modules at ITT (Initial Teacher Training) colleges, for PGCSE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) courses at universities, and INSET (In-Service Education and Training) courses so that teachers to feel confident in embarking on CLIL courses at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.

Key Words: training, competences, target language, content knowledge, CLIL methodology.

Resumen

A medida que el "Proyecto de Inglés como lengua Universal" de David Graddol gana ímpetu (Graddol, 2006), los Ministerios de Educación adoptan cada vez más el AICLE como un enfoque innovador para la enseñanza de lenguas modernas, como método de motivación para la enseñanza de las materias, o simplemente como una contribución a la internacionalización y al ideal del multilingüismo. Con este crecimiento exponencial, la falta de docentes competentes, formados en AICLE se ha vuelto más evidente. Los docentes de contenido, son generalmente monolingües y no pueden reconocer los beneficios de ser bilingües, mientras que los docentes de idiomas no se sienten competentes en el conocimiento del área requerido para la enseñanza de contenidos. Los Ministerios de Educación insisten en la aplicación de AICLE, pero no cuentan la fuerza de trabajo suficientemente competente en las tres áreas necesarias: El conocimiento de la segunda lengua, el conocimiento de la materia, y la metodología de AICLE. Este trabajo explora la necesidad de diseñar módulos de capacitación de calidad en las universidades de ITT (Initial Teacher Training), para los cursos de PGCSE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) en las universidades, y en cursos de INSET (In-Service Education and Training) para que los maestros se sientan seguros al embarcarse en cursos de AICLE en los niveles primario, secundario, y terciario.

Palabras Claves: formación, competencias, lengua meta, conocimiento de contenido, metodología de AICLE.

INTRODUCTION

As long ago as the publication of the "Bullock Report" (Department of Education and Science, 1975) in England, I was interested in the connection between content and language. What Bullock said, in a nutshell, was that all content teachers had to be language teachers and, as a corollary, I myself supplemented this notion with the understanding that all language teachers had to be content teachers. To quote from the Bullock Report's principal recommendations:

> Each school should have an organised policy for language across the curriculum, establishing every teacher's involvement in language and reading development throughout the years of schooling. (p. 514)

Of course, it was not called "CLIL" in those days; it was a matter of raising the level of language development in first-language English speakers. As I was teaching English Language, English Literature, Maths, and Geography in what was then the remedial department of a huge comprehensive school in downtown Coventry, England, I found myself very interested in this issue.

As I went on to live and work in a number of other countries—in Singapore, teaching teenagers in a trilingual school; in Saudi Arabia, as K-12 curriculum co-ordinator in a bilingual Muslim girls' school; in Spain, as department head in an international school; and finally in Argentina as head of secondary in three bilingual schools, as director of a teachers' centre that served the professional development needs of 100 bilingual schools, and as a professor at two training colleges in Buenos Aires—finally, as an associate trainer of CLIL at NILE in UK, I began to see how neither language could be separated from content, nor content from language.

Graddol (2006) has observed:

> A new orthodoxy appears to have taken root in the last few years which could be described as 'The World English Project'. If this project succeeds, it could generate over two billion new speakers of English within a decade. (p. 96-97)

If this is so, then how shall education ministries around the world cope with this situation?

IMPLICATIONS OF THE WORLD ENGLISH PROJECT

For a start, Graddol (2006) suggests that global English may mean the end of 'English as a Foreign Language' and that the language will shift over to becoming a basic skill. If so, many constructs will change, among them:

- Ministries will start teaching English at primary school in first grade—or at least by thjird grade.
- Many will begin teaching at least part of the curriculum through English in secondary school.
- Students will be required to be proficient in English at the stage of entry to universities.
- Universities will teach more courses through English or will at least expect students to be able to access and use materials in English.

If this is so—and it would seem so—my questions are:

- From where are these teachers going to come?
- Are we going to let anybody teach English, even if their language competence is very low?
- Are we going to import thousands of native speakers, at great expense, either to teach the teachers the language or to teach the students directly?

- Are we going to advertise for all current backpackers to apply for jobs with ministries of education around the world?
- Are we going to establish thousands of training colleges with express training courses to train teachers of English to young learners, or to University students, or to the new generation of advanced adolescent learners who will no longer require those pre-intermediate courses since they have been learning English for years?
- And, if we are going to train much larger numbers of teachers, in what methodology do we train them?

These are indeed burning, urgent, and complex questions. But there are additionally many further issues to concern the new "World English Project Teacher":

- CLIL in primary school.
- CLIL in secondary school.
- CLIL in vocational schools.
- CLIL in state schools.
- CLIL at University.

And:

- What age?
- What level?
- What subjects?
- What weightage?
- Where does mother tongue fit into this new paradigm?

Education ministries all over the world are juggling budgets, numbers in the work force, and conflicting solutions. They are seeking advice from so-called experts but without really receiving many answers. The basic problem is that it is all happening too fast and without time to weigh up the consequences, nor to investigate, adequately, the little research that has been published.

THE TREND TOWARDS CLIL

As education ministries worldwide seek new methodologies, new curricula, and new paradigms in general education, the firmly entrenched mindset must change. As Pistorio (2007), exploring CLIL in Argentina, says,

> Given the importance of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) for bilingual institutions, Argentine universities and teaching training colleges need to incorporate this approach in their curricula to certify that graduate teachers are qualified to teach not only English as a foreign language (EFL) but also content based subjects. (p. 1)

I myself am witness to this need. Over the last five years, I have been involved in the training and re-training of teachers, almost all from Europe, for taking up the challenge of the CLIL approach, mainly at NILE, the Norwich Institute of Language Education in Norfolk, UK and also in pockets of interested communities in Argentina and Colombia. At NILE, I have trained the following groups on two-, three-, or four-week intensive courses:

- Catalonian secondary-level content teachers.
- Austrian MA candidates.
- French secondary-level content teachers.
- Madrilenian primary-level language teachers (3 groups).
- Madrilenian primary-level content teachers (2 groups).
- Majorcan primary-level content and language teachers.

- Austrian secondary-level content and language teachers.
- Polish university academic content professors (teaching MA-level courses through English).

When the groups arrive, I always ask them to complete an initial questionnaire to analyse feelings, impressions, and expectations. Below, I cite some real comments made by teachers in the different groups:

- "How do I plan a CLIL lesson? I have *no* idea!"
- "I'm really worried. I don't know the English for the language of sports!"
- "I don't want to do this. I want to teach *my* subject in *my* language!"
- "I'm an English-language teacher, not a science teacher."
- "The parents aren't going to like this."
- "I'm supposed to teach music in English in September. But *how*?"
- "This is not for university. The students expect lectures."

It has been interesting to see how these teachers take up the challenge, and how they can be trained well enough to feel confident to go back home to teach—sometimes in as little as two months after the training course—and then seeing them again a few years later to hear about their experiences.

Of course, there are as many models of CLIL as there are teachers, but the basic types of models can be summarised as follows:

- *Monolingual*: Students are in their home country, learning a subject through CLIL. Some students may be non-native speakers. (For example: Slovenia.)
- *Bilingual*: Students learn 50 % or more of their curricular subjects in a second or foreign language. (For example: Argentina's private sector, The Netherlands, and Canada.)
- *Multilingual*: Students learn curricular subjects in three or more languages. (For example: the Basque Country and Cataluña.)
- *Plurilingual*: Students learn several languages, one or more of which may be learned through CLIL. (For example: Australia.)

THE CLIL APPROACH

CLIL, itself, is not new. Rather it is a new label for an integrated and well-defined approach deriving from the following non-exclusive methodologies that have been employed in EFL environments for many years:

- project work.
- thematic cycles.
- Content-Based Instruction (CBI).
- Content-Based Learning (CBL).
- English for Specific Purposes (ESP).
- Cognitive Academic Language Learning Activities (CALLA).
- Language Across the Curriculum (LAC).
- Task-Based Learning (TBL).

Graddol (2006) suggests that:

> English seems so much in demand in the world today that it may be perverse to suggest that English teachers are becoming an endangered species. This, however, may be one consequence of a global shift towards CLIL. (p. 1)

What he means by this is that English teachers, as we know them and their methods today, will become defunct. It will be important to compare the differences between the old EFL/ESL approaches, already espoused at ITT (Initial Teacher Training) colleges and updated in INSET (In-Service Education and Training) courses worldwide, with the new CLIL approach and to see if teachers can be retrained to take up new positions in the new CLIL era.

With regard to CLIL itself, the glossary produced by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (2009) offers the definition:

> CLIL is an approach in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and the subject have a joint role. (p. 1)

In another form, Marsh (2002) describes CLIL as:

> Any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content. (p.15)

In other words, CLIL teachers need three separate but intertwined abilities in order to operate within this new approach: target language ability, content knowledge, and CLIL methodology. In order to combine these three areas, the course content and methodology I devised at NILE consisted of

- Intensive language development, input, and output, stressing classroom language and content-orientated language (appropriate to the content in question).
- Content knowledge in terms of syllabus contents, concepts, and skills at the cognitive level.
- CLIL methodology, especially in terms of output from students, the use of graphic organizers, Bloom's taxonomy of thinking skills, Cummins's BICS and CALP, the diversity of CLIL approaches (as expressed in Figure 1), and "learning as doing" in interaction.

Key Features	Foreign language teaching		Subject teaching in FL (CLIL)
	Conventional FL teaching	Content-based language teaching	
Priority in Planning	Language	language teaching	Subject
Taught by:	Language or class teacher	Language or class teacher	Class teacher
Assessed as:	Language	Language	Subject
Viewed as:	Language teaching	Language teaching	Subject teaching
Materials	Language	Language/Subject	Subject
Syllabus	Language syllabus: general purposes	Language syllabus: CALP	Content syllabus and CALP
Methodology	FLT methodology	Language-supportive teaching	Language-supportive subject-teaching desirable

Figure 1. Primary foreign language teaching and subject teaching in FL compared (after Clegg, 2003).

TEACHER COMPETENCES FOR CLIL

The teacher competences required for successful CLIL teaching in real classrooms are extensive and clearly delineated in *The CLIL teacher's competencies grid* (Bertaux, Coonan, Frigols-Martín, & Mehisto, 2009) but can be summarised as follows (Mehisto, P., Frigols, M.-J., and Marsh, 2008, pp. 232-236):

- Knowledge of methodology for integrating both language and content.
- Ability to create rich and supportive target-language environments.
- Ability to making input comprehensible.
- Ability to use teacher-talk effectively.
- Ability to promote student comprehensible output.
- Ability to attend to diverse student needs.
- Ability to continuously improve accuracy.

I would add that an essential first element in developing such competences is a shift in attitude to include a willingness to change, the desire to learn something new, motivation to learn the "whys, whats, and hows", a willingness to work with others (and to link the CLIL programme with school ethos), a willingness to design materials, and—above all—a belief in the efficacy of CLIL.

As should be clear from the list above, the teacher competences needed for CLIL are extensive and require considerable assimilation time for any teacher embarking on teaching in a CLIL programme. In terms of professional skills, a teacher needs to be prepared to be able to show themselves adept at defining CLIL, adopting an approach to CLIL, adapting CLIL to the local context, integrating CLIL into the curriculum, and articulating quality-assurance measures. Perhaps the greatest innovation pertains to the teachers' new understanding and application of the difference in practice between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins & Swain, 1996).

Cummins's research has had a profound effect on teacher-training policy and is producing a new breed of teacher aware of the great need to teach thinking skills alongside the language and content knowledge. The two models represented in Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the essential skills a teacher must develop in order to design suitable materials in their own context.
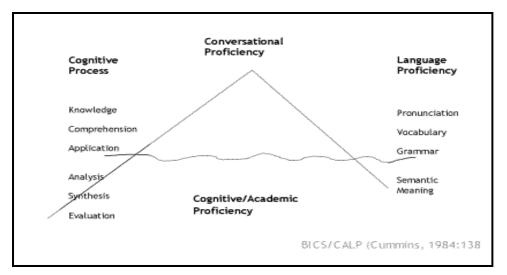

Figure 2. Cummins's "Iceberg" model of BICS and CALP (after Cummins, 1984, p.138).

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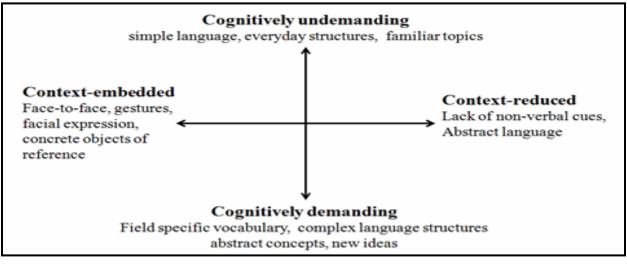
**Figure 3. The range of contextual support and degree of cognitive involvement
in communicative activities (after Cummins & Swain, 1996, p. 153).**

In addition, CLIL teachers must master the implementation of Bloom's New Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) at the level of the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) rather than the Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS), as well as Vygotsky's scaffolding techniques for knowledge and language, which is to say "the temporary assistance by which a teacher helps a learner know how to do something, so that the learner will later be able to complete a similar task alone" (cited in Gibbons 2002, p. 10).

In terms of teachers' own language abilities, they must be proficient, preferably at C2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) or holding a Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) from the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). More importantly, CLIL teachers need to be effective in the language of teaching, explaining, giving instructions, eliciting techniques, the language of classroom management, and the language of learning activities. They must be comfortable in using English at all times in the classroom and never resorting to the mother tongue except in special circumstances.

Because CLIL is such a complex approach and so different from traditional ELT methods, although many new ELT techniques are included in CLIL, teachers must be thoroughly trained in lesson planning and have knowledge of lesson preparation, translating plans into action, ensuring outcomes, understanding of second language attainment levels, promoting cultural awareness and interculturality, applying knowledge about second-language acquisition in the classroom, and having knowledge and awareness of cognitive and metacognitive processes and strategies in the CLIL environment.

If the CLIL approach is to work, teachers must change their perception of their role, becoming both proficient and sensitive, taking into account the affective side of learning. They must be sure in knowing about and applying assessment and evaluation procedures and tools. Because CLIL is still evolving, teacher must be prepared to keep up with new developments in the field and must learn to use ICTs as a teaching resources in the development of interactive methodologies.

DEVELOPING CLIL TRAINING IN THE UK

Although CLIL has become widespread in Europe, the situation is somewhat different in the UK. As Hunt, Neofitou, and Redford (2009) state, "this approach is still considered to be innovative practice and is not widespread" (p. 110). They additionally report on:

- trainees' evaluations of their teaching of CLIL lessons in a range of secondary schools, and the impact of the CLIL approach on *learners, their own teaching, and the school departments* in which they were teaching.
- challenges trainees encountered in using this approach.

The stated aim of their project was to develop and enhance CLIL practice in schools by designing training input for modern foreign language trainees over a controlled four-year period:

> Consequently trainees received an initial in-service training programme on the CLIL approach, a more detailed session on how to plan CLIL lessons, as well as a planning surgery before they embarked on the final planning and teaching of CLIL lessons during the final placement. (Hunt, Neofitou, & Redford, 2009, p. 113).

They go on to explain the process in detail and—despite citing some challenges, such as maintaining good pace without leaving anyone behind, finding CLIL lessons more time consuming to plan than normal lessons, needing to start from the basics, and to make time to meet with colleagues from other subject departments—the comments were more positive than negative:

> The teachers' experience of CLIL was very positive: they found that the enriched content gives language learning a purpose, it is challenging and discursive, and encourages thinking skills, opinion giving and justification. (Hunt, Neofitou, & Redford, 2009, p. 114)

Trainees reported interest from all teachers who were willing to embrace new ideas and involve themselves in collaborative work. In addition, they particularly appreciated pupils' involvement, the fact that pupils were responsible for their own research, and even the fact that pupils with special educational needs were particularly successful. The CLIL approach has an impact on attainment of transferable skills: independent learning, risk taking, problem solving, listening skills, and thinking skills. Moreover, it seems likely the teachers included themselves as part of this new learning paradigm.

In summarizing the findings, one teacher spoke very positively when asked to present the CLIL approach to their whole department and to write an article for their school magazine:

> "I hope the positivity and enjoyment that we all got out of these sessions may be understood by the lesson plans and evaluations as they were a fantastic experience for all concerned. The Geography Teacher, Head of Department and Director of Studies were present and the lessons were video recorded." (Hunt, Neofitou, & Redford, 2009, p. 115)

The project culminated in five trainees being set the task of showcasing their experiences at a conference organised by the Association for Learning, UK. Following the success of this action research, there was a plan to repeat it for primary trainees at Warwick University, UK, beginning in 2009.

AN EXAMPLE CLIL TEACHER-TRAINING INITIATIVE FROM ITALY

Recent years have seen significant advances in the development of CLIL in Italy. Issues of provision and access, syllabus and certification, quality assurance, and training of trainers are core items for CLIL implementation at national and regional level. As Langé (2005) indicates, it has been a gradual and varied process:

> The regional education authority in Lombardy provided face-to-face courses, but in 2001 it opted for a web-based in-service training course, ALI-Clilonline (Apprendimento Linguistico Integrato-C), for both language teachers and subject teachers. A team of experts and trainers was organised and a precise programme designed.

In order to spread the methodology more widely, a team of experts and trainers was organised and a precise web-based programme designed. Teachers were encouraged to create CLIL didactic modules as a team and to work in small, online groups. Participants were able to use data communication services autonomously and, through interaction in professional development, they have created productive dynamics in the schools. They have also gone on, as in the Hunt research cited above, to describe their positive experiences at conferences and in media interviews. (For further similar examples, see the **Error! Reference source not found.**).

As Langé (2005) observes for her context, "In the space of this short period, CLIL materials and teacher training no longer seem to be an Achilles heel in Lombardy." This may well prove to be the future method of developing teacher competences in CLIL methodology all over the world.

TRAINING MODELS

The question of teacher training is massive and complex. It must be understood that this type of training does not happen overnight. It is a long process. The most efficient approach, if neither the speediest nor cheapest, may be to train a group of teachers who then teach in real classrooms for two years while attending monthly meetings to reflect on problems and successes, and who then participate in a "train the trainers" course in which they learn how to train other teachers using a "cascade" model, thereby disseminating the methodology as widely as possible.

CLIL can be a motivating force for both teachers and students, but it is important that the training is planned in a controlled and positive manner if it is to be implemented successfully. As one of Do Coyle's trainee teachers confirms (Doyle, 2007):

You change your mind about what is possible – I would never have believed it before doing this that beginners could make so much progress so quickly [...] other more older kids with attitude have responded in such a mature way because they see it as relevant and special and so do I … (p. 7)

It is also important to learn from the Malaysia English Policy (Graddol 2010), in which the Malaysian government switched to teaching science and maths through the medium of English in 2003 but, six years later, in July 2009, announced that the policy was to be reversed. The then-Minister of Education admitted that only 10% of primary teachers were sufficiently proficient in English when the policy was introduced. As Graddol warns (2010), "The Malaysian experience shows the dangers of introducing a 'one size fits all' national policy, without first ensuring that it can be effectively implemented" (p. 93).

CONCLUSION

If a new paradigm in ELT is to be implemented in accordance with the paradigm of the World English Project to propel both teachers and learners into a more efficacious and speedy language development plan, then the most important areas of initial teacher training programmes (such as ITT, INSET, Master's programmes) need to include carefully designed modules in their curricular planning.

At least, the following suggestions should be considered:

- ITT programmes:
  - A module on language and globalization.
  - A module on CLIL.
  - Comparative studies of models for ELT.
- INSET programmes:
  - networking.
  - professional development courses.
  - centres of excellence.
  - school led initiatives: pairing, clustering, international networking.
  - pilot experiences, dissemination of experiences, training courses.
  - online courses.
  - MA Degrees (face-to-face, on-line, at distance, or blended).

Likewise, education ministries must always remember the vital maxim "think globally, act locally" if plans are to be successful and if new paradigms are to have a positive impact on both teachers and learners alike.

APENDIX

Remarks from the NILE RUCLIL Course (July 2010)

The following are comments from a group of Polish university professors (who teach in such areas as business and business administration, marketing, economics, mathematics, chemistry, and physics at Master's level) about their experience in the course:

Paulina: When I first started the course … I felt that it was easy. It was a different way of teaching. At the end of the course I knew that it isn't easy. It requires me to be a teacher at 100%. I have to prepare new materials and change my thinking for the role of teacher.

Mariola: When I came to England I didn't know much about CLIL and its methods. I was curious to know about its practical applications. Working with students is interesting, but sometimes requires a lot of teacher's involvement. While carrying out lessons it's worth knowing various techniques, which are very helpful. In the end, I was very satisfied that I was able to get to know different techniques increasing student's level of activity. In my opinion they will help students to understand the particular subject and remember the most important problems. I am sure I am going to use them in improving the quality of lessons.

Iza: I was very excited! I was afraid a little ... and I hoped I would learn a lot of new things and I would speak English all the time. I am sure I will use all these CLIL techniques during my classes, both in Polish and in English. I felt better with my English language skills.

Bogdan: I thought it is something strange. I cannot use it in my teaching. I have changed my mind and now I am still working on my lessons in the context of what I have learnt.

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