

SVETIMŲJŲ KALBŲ STUDIJOS/ STUDIES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ICLHE/ CLIL at the Tertiary Level of Education. State-of-the-Art

Francesca Costa

Abstract. This article represents the introduction to a doctoral thesis in Education (Open University, UK) based on CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) at the tertiary level of education. In this sense CLIL can also be called ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education). Such acronyms underscore the importance of both language and content in the teaching-learning process. In the past, research on CLIL focused primarily on the primary and secondary school levels and did not give much consideration to the tertiary level. Moreover, there are great differences between countries in the English-taught programmes at the university level; these differences depend in part on the policies of the individual university. It is for this reason that an analysis of the state-of-the-art is important as a starting point for the present research, in part because Internationalisation projects are in continuous expansion all over Europe.

Key words: *CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning); ICLHE (Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education); CBI (Content-based Instruction); internationalisation; Bologna Framework.*

ICLHE/ CLIL at the Tertiary Level

This paper aims at introducing a forthcoming Doctorate in Education (Open University) research and state-of-the-art literature review on CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) at the tertiary level. The final outcome of the study will provide data on input presentation strategies of lecturers teaching through English at scientific faculties. This latter issue will not be discussed in this article as the research is still ongoing.

CLIL is a methodological approach that involves the teaching of a specific content through a foreign language. Studies on CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) have continued to increase in terms of its outcomes in primary and secondary schools, but there is still a lack of research at the tertiary level. Moreover, CLIL was a typically bottom-up approach at the primary and secondary levels of education, but it seems to be a top-down one for tertiary education. In this context it is often referred to as: the Adjunct Model (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003), CBI (Content-based Instruction), or Internationalisation. Although CLIL and Internationalisation can be used as synonyms, it is useful to highlight that the term Internationalisation is broader than CLIL at the tertiary level because it implies a whole educational policy. Nowadays other synonyms are being used for Internationalisation, such as transnational education, borderless education, offshore education, and crossborder education (Knight, 2008). In particular, the last term, crossborder education, refers to higher education institutions which have exported their names and institutions (e.g., Phoenix University is now present in Puerto Rico, the Netherlands, Mexico and Canada). Integrating Content and Language in

Higher Education (ICLHE) is more used with respect to the type of pedagogy adopted and its specific features.

Hereafter I will use CLIL, ICLHE and English-medium instruction as synonyms.

Brinton, Snow and Wesche (2003) were among the first to make a terminological distinction regarding content-based teaching at university level in the U.S. They differentiate between 1. theme-based language instruction (where the language teacher chooses several topics for the language activities); 2. sheltered content instruction (content course taught in the local language or L2 to a group of foreign learners); 3. adjunct language instruction (where the foreign students attend two courses, a language course for linguistic support and a content course, together with mother tongue students). Only the adjunct language instruction resembles ICLHE/CLIL, as it is the only case where the language and content are placed at the same level in a context where the two disciplines are linked. However, none of these truly represents CLIL, in which the L2 and subject content are taught simultaneously to students who typically share the local language as a mother tongue (L1).

Academic subjects nowadays are changing very rapidly, and knowledge of disciplines is in one sense constructed but in another sense unchallenged by the members of the community. Students need to deal with continuously developing disciplines. The epistemology of many fields of study is being undermined (Wilkinson, Zegers, 2008). There has also been an emerging population of students who are opting to study abroad rather than at home (Crandall, Kaufman, 2002; Wächter, 2004; Erasmus Student Mobility 1987-2007, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc/stat/table1.pdf>). There are different ICLHE situations depending

on the aim of the programme, the type of institution, and teacher availability.

Students are faced with many teachers and a lot of different sources of knowledge, many of which are in English (Wilkinson, 2004; Wilkinson, Zegers, 2007, 2008; Maiworm, Wächter, 2008). This language, in particular, has become the most widely chosen for Internationalisation programmes where there is a need for academic English language proficiency, since a good knowledge of it is a strong advantage in the job market. This is why in higher education the term English Medium Education (EME) has become very widely used.

However, Wilkinson (2004) warns that usually this type of teaching is intended as simply teaching a content through a foreign language, while not taking into account that both content and language goals should be considered. He thinks that when language teaching is reduced to a pre-professional or adjunct programme, which is not incorporated in the teaching of the content, there is a risk that the language will be considered as purely instrumental.

Wächter (2004) distinguishes between old and new Internationalisation. Old Internationalisation refers to the moving of a person from one country to another (mobility). New Internationalisation concerns policy issues such as structural reforms, standard access and marketing choices. Lately the aim of Internationalisation has moved from cooperation to competition, where universities see each other as sites of economic generation.

Alexander (2006) presented objectives for Internationalisation programmes. He observed that there are three broad types of ICLHE in Europe: type one uses English from beginning to end and assumes a high level of proficiency in the language (as in Finland); type two involves an increase in English as a medium of instruction (as in Poland); type three uses a foreign language as an additional language to facilitate the transition of international students (as in Germany).

Alexander claims that universities that do not provide English courses risk remaining excluded from the scientific and academic worlds. This will lead to a preponderance not only of English language but also of Anglo-American culture. Contrary to what is sometimes thought, Internationalisation is a strategy that enables countries with minor languages to continue to have their voices heard and to be visible internationally. If German universities manage to provide courses in English and become fully proficient in English, then German scholars will be able to make themselves known and heard in the scientific world as well as to spread the richness of their country's culture. The fear here is that instruction through English will eliminate big-language countries and their own scientific tradition (Knight, 2008). In this respect, Lehtikainen (2004) believes that English-taught programmes have helped Finland to increase its visibility in Europe.

Coleman (2006) highlights the close relationship between English as a Lingua Franca (or even Killer Language) and Internationalisation. In his state-of-the-art article he argues that language policies are closely linked to the economic concept of globalisation. In this respect, there is a tendency

to link the English language to Anglo-American imperialist hegemony. It is likely, though, that English will not eventually kill all other languages and there will be a diglossic future where one language would be used for local communication and another for international communication. This English will be a mix of all the varieties spoken around the world. Knight (2008) analyses the situation of globalisation in higher education. She points out that the other side of globalisation is, paradoxically, regionalisation. In fact, as a consequence of globalisation many regional networks are arising. For example, many Asian countries are establishing themselves as higher education references for the whole world.

In addition, Mellion (2006) found strategies to make a CLIL university project successful. They are called the three Cs. Conditions (the socio-political conditions and funding), Commitment (individual responses of the teachers) and Competencies (linguistic, didactic and multicultural).

Mellion also made a list of elements for success:

- Funding;
- Initial analysis before implementing the programme;
- Full support from the university board;
- Training for teaching staff;
- English language training for students and academic writing support;
- Efficient international office;
- International exchanges for both students and academics.

Crandall and Kaufman (2002) identified challenges for the future as regards CLIL projects at the tertiary level:

- Identifying or developing appropriate content;
- Convincing content faculty to participate in the programme;
- Developing and maintaining communication and collaboration;
- Developing sufficient expertise across disciplines;
- Institutionalizing the effort.

They also presented three descriptive student profiles:

- Profile 1. Students who have acquired social communication skills from introductory ESL courses or contact with an English-speaking environment, but who have yet to acquire academic language skills consonant with their education level.
- Profile 2. Students who, while having developed academic language skills in their mother tongues and initial proficiency in English, still have difficulty transferring concepts and skills from their first language to English.
- Profile 3. Students who either were born in the United States or have lived there for an extended period. Such students have had little or no instruction in their mother tongues, and as a result are usually bilingual yet English-dominant. Although they sometimes perform

quite well in their high school courses, their lack of sufficient experience or systematic instruction in academic reading and writing leave them unprepared for the greater demands of college or university study.

Finally, Ammon and McConnell (2002) and Maiworm and Wächter (2008) performed pan-European surveys on English as an academic language. One of the instruments they used in their investigation was a questionnaire; an instrument that I intend to use in a forthcoming study. It will be employed to provide a state-of-the-art picture of CLIL at the tertiary level in Italy.

The European Context

This section seeks to provide a general perspective on the situation of English-taught programmes in Europe based on studies by Maiworm and Wächter (2008, with 2007 data) and an unpublished dissertation (2005 with 2003 data) in Foreign Languages and Literature at the University of Ca' Foscari, Venezia, Italy¹. The data refer to all higher education institutions (not only universities) and to every kind of English-taught programme (while excluding individual courses or modules). Moreover, where possible I will try to give a brief summary of what is taking place in primary and secondary schools on the basis of the 2006 EURIDYCE survey. In fact, it is very important that CLIL already be introduced in primary schools in order for it to develop most effectively even at the tertiary level. Actually, students will soon be used to CLIL teaching and will expect it to be delivered at Tertiary level as well (Foran and Sancho, 2009).

By definition Belgium is trilingual, and thus has a particular interest in this type of teaching. With Brussels as its capital, it evidently also has a very high level of knowledge of English.

Bulgaria has a long tradition (50 years or so) of bilingual schools at the secondary level. There are some 125 bilingual schools in the country, and the languages taught are: English, German, Spanish, French, Italian and Russian.

In Finland the Internationalisation process was already underway at the end of the 1980s. Courses are offered in English even if in the past attempts were made to teach in German. In fact, already in the primary and secondary schools CLIL is often proposed in English, and thus it makes more sense to adopt English as the vehicular language (Lehikoinen, 2004). With Finland's entry into the European Union in 1995 there was a boost to this process. Today the country counts heavily on foreign students. From the point of view of research, the University of Jyväskylä has always been a reference point with regard to CLIL, and it has published many didactic and methodological materials.

It seems that lately the number of English-taught programmes has increased in Germany.

Greece does not have a strong, if any, tradition of CLIL teaching (Eurydice, 2006).

In preparation for its entry into the European Union in 2004, Hungary was very open to Internationalisation. A 2004 survey by Kurtán revealed many institutions where

the main language of instruction was English. Of the 69 institutions examined, 48 had courses in English. The foreign students in particular are the greatest beneficiaries of such courses. The reason for developing English-taught programmes as much as possible is the recruitment of international students (36%).

Table 1. Number of higher education institutions that run programmes in English by countries

Country	Number of higher education institutions	Programmes in English (absolute number including all faculties)
Austria	82	23
Belgium	83	43
Bulgaria	40	36
Cyprus	14	10
Czech Republic	51	41
Denmark	106	96
Estonia	23	13
Finland	53	235
France	417	79
Germany	291	415
Greece	41	8
Hungary	52	49
Iceland	9	1
Italy	142	35
Lithuania	43	31
Latvia	26	12
the Netherlands	62	774
Norway	47	53
Poland	222	90
Portugal	96	9
Romania	53	25
Slovakia	22	24
Slovenia	10	0
Spain	84	18
Sweden	39	123
Switzerland	31	52
Turkey	79	94

Based on Maiworm and Wächter (2008; data from 2007); the number of programmes is presented in absolute numbers based on the institutions that answered the questionnaire survey)

In Italy the situation has slightly changed since the surveys were taken, hence my own forthcoming study. The data from the above surveys show that: according to the ACA (Academic Cooperation Association), Italy is one of the countries in Europe with the fewest English-taught programmes. Internationalisation programmes started there around 1999. The data reveal that Northern Italian universities offer the most English-taught programmes, while the Southern regions are further behind in the Internationalisation process. It should be noted, however, that some of this data can be explained by the fact that several institutions did not even respond to the survey. It is interesting to note that Italian universities offer courses that are taught not only in English but in French and German as well. This is the case in the border regions (Trentino Alto Adige and Valle D'Aosta). The most courses taught in a foreign language

¹ The dissertation is by C. Capozio (2005), *CLIL – A European Response to the Internationalisation of Higher Education: a Survey of Italian Institutions*, unpublished.

are in the Economics and Engineering faculties, while the fewest are in Psychology, Medicine, Environmental Science, Biotechnology, and Art and Design.

In the Netherlands University tuition is paid for privately by students; thus it is very important to attract foreign as well as non-foreign students. In 1987, Maastricht became the first university to institute English-taught programmes. Now students can choose to take most courses in either Dutch or English.

Portugal does not have a tradition of CLIL (Eurydice, 2006).

In Spain, however, the introduction of CLIL in primary schools has followed from a recent educational reform (in the 1990s). The schools that can adopt a CLIL programme are: public primary and secondary schools; schools with an international bachelor degree programme (lasting two years, from 17 to 18); post-secondary vocational schools; and semi-private and private schools (including foreign institutions).

Sweden began to offer English-taught courses at the beginning of the 1990s. At the end of this decade the country faced the problem of avoiding an impoverishment of the Swedish language. For this reason students must be able to sit exams in Swedish as well and have the right, if they so request, to be examined in Swedish.

Conclusions

With the Bologna Framework, initiated in 1999 with the aim of restructuring higher education programmes all over Europe, many universities have become more and more interested in Internationalisation.

In general English-taught programmes have tripled in number since 2002. Seven percent of those institutions that answered the survey offered courses in English, and these schools are concentrated mainly in the north-eastern part of the continent. The typical institution that offers such courses has the following characteristics: large, with many degree programmes, and offering bachelor's, master's and Phd degrees. In terms of student enrolment, the overall number is 121,000.

As already stated, there is a strong need for research and better practices in CLIL tertiary settings. This research seeks to determine these and to make them known to universities applying these types of programmes.

Francesca Costa

IDUKMAM / IDUKM aukštajame moksle. Dabartinės situacijos analizė

Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje pristatomi įžanginiai rengiamos daktaro disertacijos (Open University, JK) apie integruotą dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymo (IDUKM) sistemą aukštajame moksle, teiginiai. Tuo būdu terminas IDUKM gali įgyti plėtinį IDUKMAM (integruotas dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymas aukštajame moksle). Tokių akronimų atsiradimas rodo dalyko ir užsienio kalbos integruoto mokymo aktualumą ir svarbą. Anksčiau IDUKM tyrimai didžiąja dalimi buvo vykdomi pradiniam ir viduriniame švietimo sistemos lygmenyje, nekreipiant per daug dėmesio į šios metodologijos taikymą aukštojo mokslo sektoriuje. Tai galėjo būti dėl keleto priežasčių: dėl didelės įvairovės tarp šalių ir universitetų, kurie siūlo daugybę programų, dėstomų anglų kalba, bei dėl skirtingos atskirų universitetų politikos. Todėl pradiniam tyrimo etape yra labai svarbu atlikti išsamią dabartinės situacijos analizę. Kita vertus, europiniai projektai ir europiniai nuostatai bei dokumentai nustato naujas tendencijas, kurios turi būti derinamos tarp atskirų šalių ir universitetų.

Straipsnis įteiktas 2009 10

Parentas spaudai 2009 11

About the author

Francesca Costa, Contract Lecturer in Scientific English (University of Pavia, Italy), Contract Lecturer in English Linguistics (Catholic University of Milan, Italy), EdD student (Open University, UK).

Research interests: CLIL, EST (English of Science and Technology).

Address: Via Bordonì 24, 27100, Pavia, Italy

E-mail: fgc.costa@open.ac.uk

References

1. Alexander, J. R., 2006. International Programmes in the German-speaking World and Englishization: a Critical Analysis. In: R. Wilkinson & V. Zegers, eds. *Realizing Content and Language Integration in Higher Education*. Maastricht: Universitaire Pers Maastricht.
2. Ammon, U., McConnell, G., 2002. *English as an Academic Language in Europe*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.
3. Brinton, D., Snow, M. A., 1990. *Content-based Language Instruction*. New York: Newbury House.
4. Brinton, D., Snow, M. A., Wesche, M., 2003. *Content-based Second Language Instruction*. Michigan: Classics Edition.
5. Coleman, J. A., 2006. English-Medium Teaching in European Higher Education. *Language Teaching*, 39, 1, pp.1-14.
6. Crandall, J., Kaufman, D. eds. 2002. *Content-Based Instruction in Higher Education Settings*. Alexandria: VA, TESOL Practice Series.
7. Kinginger, C., 2002. Defining the Zone of Proximal Development in US Foreign Language Education. *Applied Linguistics*, 23, 2, pp.240-261.
8. Knight, J., 2008. *Higher Education in Turmoil*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.
9. Kurtán, Z., 2004. Foreign-Language-Medium Instruction in Hungarian Higher Education. In: R. Wilkinson, ed. *Integrating Content and Language. Meeting the Challenge of Multilingual Higher Education*. Maastricht: Universitaire Pers Maastricht.
10. Lehtikoinen, A., 2004. Foreign-Language-Medium Education as National Strategy. In: R. Wilkinson, ed. *Integrating Content and Language. Meeting the Challenge of Multilingual Higher Education*. Maastricht: Universitaire Pers Maastricht.
11. Maiworm, F., Wächter, B., 2008. *English-Taught Programmes in European Higher Education. The Picture in 2007*. Bonn: Lemmens.
12. Mellion, M. J., 2006. The Challenge of Changing Tongues in Business University Education. In: R. Wilkinson & V. Zegers, eds. *Realizing Content and Language Integration in Higher Education*. Maastricht: Universitaire Pers Maastricht.
13. Stryker, S. B., Leaver, B. L. eds., 1997. *Content-Based Instruction in Foreign Language Education*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
14. Wächter, B., 2004. *Higher Education in a Changing Environment*. Bonn: Lemmens.
15. Wilkinson, R. ed., 2004. *Integrating Content and Language. Meeting the Challenge of Multilingual Higher Education*. Maastricht: Universitaire Pers Maastricht.
16. Wilkinson, R., Zegers, V. eds., 2007. *Researching Content and Language Integration in Higher Education*. Maastricht: Universitaire Pers Maastricht.
17. Wilkinson, R., Zegers, V. eds., 2008. *Realizing Content and Language Integration in Higher Education*. Maastricht: Universitaire Pers Maastricht.

DOI: 10.5755/j01.sal.1.15.43351