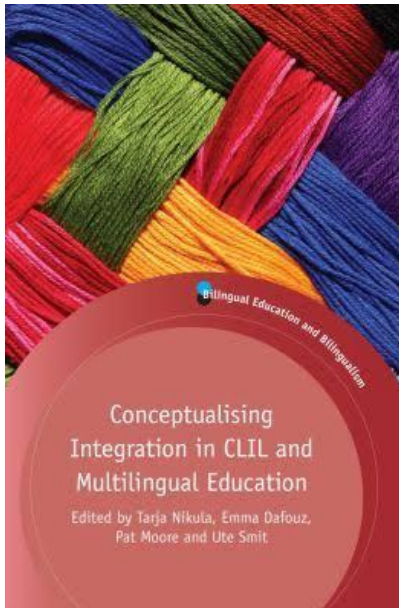# BOOK REVIEW

CLIL: COMBINING LANGUAGE AND CONTENT

Tarja Nikula, Emma Dafouz, Pat Moore and Ute Smit (Eds.).

Some twenty-three years after the term was first coined by David Marsh and Anne Maljers there is still much to be discussed concerning the implementation and theoretical underpinnings of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). The notion of CLIL was initially conceptualized in response to a political desire for integration in a linguistically diverse Europe. From those initial, isolated, European experiments at the level of compulsory schooling, CLIL has expanded into a worldwide phenomenon spanning all levels of education.

One of the long-standing claims of the proponents of CLIL is that it focuses equally on both content and language, and that like bilingual education it provides excellent language-learning outcomes without negative effects on content learning (see for example Willig, 1985). Indeed for the earlier stages of education to which the term CLIL initially applied, there does seem to be some evidence that this "two-for-the-price-of-one" claim holds water (although see also the critique by Bruton, 2013). However, the readers of *ESP Today* will probably be more interested in the situation in tertiary education. Here, claims of language learning gains with no effects on content learning do not seem to hold up. Met and Lorenz (1997) and Duff (1997) have suggested that at higher levels of education limitations in a

second language (L2) may inhibit students' ability to explore abstract concepts. They warn against the unreflected generalization of the positive effects of bilingual education or CLIL beyond the system in which the research was carried out. Indeed, a number of authors have documented quite substantial *negative* effects on content learning when changing the teaching language from a first language (L1) to an L2 in post-compulsory education (see for example Barton & Neville-Barton, 2003; Gerber, Engelbrecht, Harding, & Rogan, 2005; Klaassen, 2001; Marsh, Hau, & Kong, 2000; Yip, Tsang, & Cheung, 2003).

Despite these negative findings, there are, of course, a number of important pragmatic reasons for teaching tertiary level courses in an L2, such as the use of an overseas lecturer or presence of international students. Thus, in my recent overview for the *Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes* (Airey, 2016) I suggest that the majority of courses taught in L2 in higher education actually fall into the category of English Medium Instruction (EMI) rather than CLIL, since language learning in such courses is often viewed as either a secondary goal or incidental. There are also, of course, EAP courses with primarily linguistic goals, but true CLIL is a form of bilingual education that places an equal emphasis on both content and language-learning outcomes. This seems to be rare in higher educational contexts. Consequently, of the nine chapters in the book, only one deals with the university level, and here the authors of this chapter choose to talk about multilingual settings rather than CLIL.

Actually, none of this really matters. As de Graaff points out in his foreword to this volume, content cannot exist without language and language cannot exist without content. In essence this means that all content teachers are language teachers to some extent, even in monolingual settings (Airey, 2012). Clearly, the ways in which the integration of content and language can be conceptualized and implemented are just as relevant for higher education settings as they are for compulsory schooling and the reader will thus find interesting and thought-provoking material in every chapter of this volume.

As the title promises, the book discusses how we can conceptualize integration of content and language in CLIL classrooms and is the final product of an international research project ConCLIL (2011-2014) funded by the Academy of Finland. After the foreword, the book proper opens with an introduction by Nikula, Dalton-Puffer, Llinares and Lorenzo where they explain the reasoning behind the original ConCLIL project and argue for a broad definition of the term integration. A comprehensive literature review is presented around the issue of integration of content and language and the division of the book into sections on *Curriculum and Pedagogy Planning*, *Participants* and *Practices* is explained in terms of dealing with the what, the who, and the how of CLIL.

In the first chapter, Dalton-Puffer introduces the construct of "Cognitive Discourse Functions". These are "verbal routines that have arisen in answer to recurring demands" (p. 29) within disciplines. She identifies seven functions (Classify, Define, Describe, Evaluate, Explain, Explore, Report) and argues that

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these form a fundamental basis for transdisciplinarity. This is important work and should be of interest to all teachers of ESP. Similarly the focus of the second chapter by Lorenzo and Dalton-Puffer on the concept of historical literacy and its problematization will be interesting not only for those working with history in one way or another, but also for content and language specialists struggling with the definition of disciplinary literacy in other fields. In the third chapter, Berger deals with the integration of mathematics and language. In my opinion this is the most convincing of the chapters, with the author presenting a particularly clear and well-motivated model of the integration of mathematics and language. The section on *Curriculum and Pedagogy Planning* is rounded off by Barwell, who uses a number of constructs from Bakhtin in order to conceptualize integration in terms of expansion of students' language repertoires.

The volume then moves on to two chapters that examine the views of *Participants* (in this case, teachers). One criticism here is that for completeness it would have been interesting to have some input from students about their experiences of combining content and language. In chapter five, Dafouz, Hüttner and Smit study eighteen university lecturers' beliefs about content and language integration analyzing the data in terms of the ROAD-MAPPING framework (Dafouz & Smit, 2014). This framework examines: the Roles of English (RO) in relation to other languages, the Specialisation of Academic Disciplines (AD) in terms of their traditions of teaching and assessment and discursive conventions, Language Management (M) through policy documents and the like, Agents (A) i.e. the various stakeholders in higher education, Practices and Processes (PP) and Internationalisation and Glocalisation (ING). The selected quotes from the lecturers make for fascinating reading. The same can be said about the next chapter where a similar approach is taken by Skinnari and Bovellan in their interviews with twelve secondary school teachers.

The final section of the book deals with *Practices*. In chapter seven, Morton and Jakonen use conversation analysis to reveal how students work together to discover the meaning of language items during classroom interactions that are focused around content. This is particularly useful as it gives teachers an insight into what is going on from a language-learning perspective in terms of the wide range of resources brought into play when students work in small groups in CLIL settings. Having demonstrated how students can spontaneously work together to tease out the meaning of an incidental vocabulary item – in this case the unfamiliar word "bruises" – the authors conclude their chapter by suggesting that it ought to be possible to leverage student interactions of this type with respect to vocabulary items of functional importance for the content area. Here the authors suggest more tightly engineered designs using pre- and post-tests focused on content-based tasks. In chapter eight Llinares and Nikula use Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and pragmatics to examine teacher and student use of evaluative language in CLIL science and social science classrooms. Here the focus is not on the language used to evaluate student performance in the areas of content or language, but

rather on the evaluation of content itself – that is, the authors are interested in the language used by teachers and students to express judgments about content knowledge. There are three types of evaluative language, "attitude" e.g. "It was one-sided agreement", "engagement" e.g. "I think the object must be influenced by gravity", and "graduation" e.g. "The size of the effect is quite small". The authors' interesting conclusion is that the types of evaluative language used differ both geographically and by discipline.

Teachers in language classrooms often go to great lengths to avoid students communicating in their L1. It was therefore particularly interesting to read Moore and Nikula's chapter about translanguaging – what might previously have been termed "codeswitching" or "codemixing" – in CLIL classrooms. As the authors point out, the majority of bilingual research has had a monolingual, L2 focus rather than a multilingual focus – that is, it has encouraged students to use L2 rather than encouraging the use of multilingual practices. The chapter studies the actual language use in CLIL classrooms and concludes that translanguaging serves two distinct purposes: in social interactions it is used to aid continuity, whilst in content-oriented situations it is used to scaffold meaning negotiation. The twenty-six examples given span three countries and six subject areas and all demonstrate how students and teachers can move seamlessly back and forth between L1 and L2 in order to disambiguate disciplinary and other meanings.

In the concluding chapter Leung and Morton summarise each chapter's approach to language and learning. Using Bernstein's notion of pedagogic discourse they create a framework where each chapter's approach to integration in CLIL can be classified in terms of disciplinary orientation to language on the one hand and visibility of language pedagogy on the other. Those chapters that had a higher disciplinary orientation to language either strongly focus on subject literacies (high visibility of language pedagogy) or more generally emphasize language as a tool for participation in content tasks and disciplinary thinking (low visibility of language pedagogy). Similarly, the chapters that described CLIL with a lower disciplinary orientation to language could also be categorized in terms of high or low visibility of language pedagogy. Here the chapters focused either on explicit language knowledge (but not necessarily related to content) or on the CLIL classroom as an arena for choice, creativity, and contingency. The authors point out the tensions between these four very different focuses. They conclude that trying to agree on one definition of integration of language and content may not be a meaningful project as this may lead to certain aspects of integration being emphasized over other important aspects.

CLIL was first proposed as a solution to a European language problem. This original linguistic bias is still evident. In her survey of university-level research into content and language integration, Jacobs (2015) reports that the overwhelming majority of articles have been written by linguists. This language focus continues. Of the sixteen authors involved in this volume only Barwell and Berger can claim to be content specialists. At the same time, none of the authors

would have difficulties passing themselves off as linguists of one form or another. In a volume on integration of content and language, one might have hoped for more input from mainstream content specialists. This small issue aside, the range of contributions in terms of geographical spread, educational level and type of content is particularly well balanced. However, perhaps the most impressive aspect of the volume is the diversity of well-developed theoretical and methodological lenses employed. Although there is still much work to be done on the integration of content and language, the field has come a long way in a short period of time.

In conclusion I can warmly recommend *Conceptualising Integration in CLIL and Multilingual Education*. The book will be of interest to linguists, teachers of ESP and EAP, and CLIL practitioners.

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