CLIL implementation in Spain: an approach to different models

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CLIL and the Knowledge Society

One of the characteristics of the Knowledge Society is the creation of innovative working models. These innovations often involve moving away from fragmentation towards integration; following a process of convergence in which there is fusion between sectors which may have been quite separate in the past. Convergence is having a major impact on education, since it has led to creating innovative methods that help teachers adapt good practice to the needs of the communities in which they live and work. (Marsh, Frigols, 2007)

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language”, has become firmly established as an innovative form of language-enhanced education.

In spite of its wide and successful diffusion throughout Europe, CLIL is being unevenly implemented, and the legal frameworks regulating this implementation vary greatly from one country to another within the European Union, and even from one Region to another within the different European countries.

English has been the most common vehicular language, but CLIL-type provision also involves teaching through regional and minority languages.

1. CLIL in Spain

Interest in CLIL has spread exponentially throughout Spain during the last few years, and CLIL programmes have received support from educational
authorities and have been implemented in mainstream schools. The degree and characteristics of this implementation, however, vary greatly from one Region to another, since the political structure of Spain comprises 19 Autonomous Regions that were granted political and administrative power by the 1978 democratic constitution. In the bilingual communities (Balearic Islands, Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Navarre, and Valencia) the regional languages have been granted official status and have thus found their place in the educational systems.

Thus, the curriculum may be covered in at least two different languages (with some subjects taught in a first language and others taught in a second one) in two very different modes:

- it may be taught in the official language of the State (Spanish) but also in a joint official language other than Spanish (Basque, Catalan, Valencian and Galician);
- it may be taught in the official language of the State (Spanish) but also partly in one or two foreign languages (Eurydice, 2006).

A third mode must be added to these two:

- it may be taught partly in the official language of the State (Spanish), partly in a joint official language other than Spanish (Basque, Catalan, Valencian and Galician), and partly in one or two foreign languages.

These three modes allow for a great diversity of CLIL models in Spain and can be illustrated according to three different scenarios:

1. promoting bilingualism in a monolingual community;
2. fostering multilingualism in an already bilingual community;
3. improving competence in English through the ‘Bilingual and Bicultural Project’, also known as ‘MEC/British Council Programme’ (Muñoz, Navés, 2007).

These three scenarios will be illustrated in this article through three case studies which provide a general overview of the current trends in CLIL-type provision implementation in Spain.

Scenario 1: Promoting bilingualism in a monolingual community. the Andalusian model
a. **Number of hours of CLIL**

Primary school: 30% - 50% of the total hours of the curriculum, about 3.5 hours per week;

Secondary school: the number of CLIL lessons varies depending on the programme each school is developing; some 3-4 hours are quite common in compulsory secondary education. About 1/3 of the teaching time of CLIL subjects is delivered in English.

b. **Balance between language and content**

Primary school: fairly equal, slightly biased towards content;

Secondary school: main emphasis always on content, with embedded linguistic objectives and support.

c. **Level of teacher training/professional support**

There is no CLIL training at the pre-service level, although several MA-level courses have recently started to include some credits on CLIL. On the other hand, plenty of in-service training is offered, mainly by the Teacher Training Centres, which provide face-to-face and on-line courses on both language and methodology. Periodical tailor-made courses and seminars are organised as well as teacher meetings to exchange materials and information. CLIL teachers receive external advice and support, and they are funded by the Government to participate in language-training courses abroad. Language assistants are provided whenever possible through the European Commission’s Lifelong Learning Programme for them to co-operate with both content and LS teachers.

d. **Subjects taught via CLIL**

Primary schools are encouraged to offer at least two subjects, of which one must be Science; the other one - of which Mathematics, Art and Crafts, Physical Education, and Music are the most common - depends mainly on teacher availability.

At secondary school any subject in the school curriculum can be taught via CLIL, Social Studies being the most popular.

e. **Assessment**

At primary school level, pupils are usually assessed for content learning by the content teacher. At secondary school level, CLIL subjects are evaluated following the same criteria as non-CLIL subjects. A comprehensive assessment of CLIL programmes is likely to be forthcoming.
f. English language and subject level of students
English language learning:
- primary school: starting A1; ending A2/B1;
Subject learning:
- generally higher than average Spanish-medium mainstream education.

g. Programme size (participating schools/students)
Approximately nine thousand primary school pupils are participating in the Bilingual Project in Andalusia. In September 2007, figures showed four hundred and two CLIL schools, of which two hundred and two were primary and two hundred secondary. Three hundred and forty three are developing programmes in English, fifty in French and eight in German. There are also twenty eight vocational branches offering CLIL modules. After the most recent selection of applicant schools (April, 2008), there are currently five hundred and eighteen CLIL schools.

h. Main reasons for CLIL programme implementation
The reasons for CLIL implementation vary slightly from primary to secondary education. At primary level, building intercultural knowledge and understanding; enabling pupils to access international certification; and increasing learner motivation and building self-confidence towards learning English, are most common. At secondary level, giving added value to the learning of content; preparing for future studies and/or working life; and enhancing school and Region profiles, are the most commonly quoted. Diversifying methods and forms of classroom practice, and improving English language competence are common for both levels.

i. Materials and methodologies
Translations of Spanish primary course books into English have been done with quite unsatisfactory results since they do not provide the English language support required to learn the content. Most teachers have developed their own materials specifically for CLIL. They usually feature a lot of visual support, games, ICT applications which aim at making the teaching/learning units as attractive and as up to date as possible. The Internet has become the main source of materials for Andalusian teachers.

j. Future prospects
It is still early to make statements about the future prospects but the following features appear to be widespread:
- pupils are increasing their motivation towards learning English;
- drop-out rates are reasonably low;
- schools are experiencing a considerable change: more staff, technological equipment, more opportunities, etc;
- teachers involved have opportunities available to improve their professional and language skills;
- pupils’ oral expression and communication skills are improving notably;
- new forms of collaborative and methodological co-operation between content and English teachers are being developed;
- new methodological approaches are being explored;
- intercultural understanding is being widely promoted.

A process of expansion is currently the official line, but right now the most important issue for the educational authorities is to consolidate the programmes being currently implemented. There is also a great interest among private schools to be allowed to implement CLIL programmes.

Scenario 2: Fostering multilingualism in a bilingual community: the Valencian model

a. Number of hours of CLIL
Primary school:
- first cycle: 1.5 hours per week;
- second cycle: 1.5 hours per week;
- third cycle: 1 hour per week.

b. Balance between language and content
Primary school:
- first cycle: mostly on language;
- second cycle: fairly equal;
- third cycle: slightly biased toward content.

c. Level of teacher education/professional support
Primary teacher initial education at university may include combined specialisation, but no CLIL training is provided. Therefore most CLIL teacher education is in-service at the moment. Since last year, when an agreement ‘Plan de Apoyo al Aprendizaje de las Lenguas’ (PALE) was signed by the National Ministry and the Autonomous Boards of Education in order to promote foreign language learning by teachers, teacher education schemes may include language and methodology courses both in Spain and
the UK. In-service education courses are provided by the Board of Education through both the Teacher Training Centres (CEFIRES) and the Department of Valencian Language Teaching. Some CLIL seminars have been organised as well over the last three years. Specific financial support is provided to schools and teachers developing research projects related to the design, implementation and evaluation of CLIL courses, as well as to the design of teaching/learning materials. CLIL teachers are encouraged and funded through Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) to do language training in English-speaking countries. Participation in European projects and teacher exchanges are also promoted, with CLIL teachers being prioritised.

d. Subjects taught via CLIL
It is a school-based decision concerning which subjects are taught through CLIL, usually depending on the availability of English-speaking teachers. Except for Science, which has to be taught in Valencian, any subject in the curriculum can be offered as CLIL.

e. Assessment
Content and language are assessed separately. Content is assessed in content classes by the subject matter teacher, while linguistic skills are assessed by the English teacher in ELT hours. An external evaluation has been carried out on children in year 1 and year 3 to assess language achievement.

f. English language and subject level of students
English language learning:
- higher than non-CLIL pupils;
Subject learning:
- although there are no official data available, classroom observation results indicate that CLIL pupil content achievement level is by no means lower than that of non-CLIL pupils.

g. Programme size (participating schools/students)
Fifty three primary schools started the ‘Bilingual Teaching Enriched Programme’ (PEBE) during the school year 1998-99. Last official figures, dating from September 2007, state that two hundred and ninety primary schools are now offering CLIL education through the official programme.

h. Main reasons for CLIL programme implementation
- improve English language competence;
- give added value to the learning of content;
- prepare for future studies and/or working life;
- enhance school profile (or Region/Municipalities);
- increase learner motivation and build self-confidence towards learning English.

i. Materials and methodologies
In general, teachers have developed their own CLIL-specific materials, mostly with the support and advice of teacher trainers at the Teacher Training Centres. A selection of these have been edited and published, both in paper-based and electronic format, by the Board of Education. They all feature activities aiming at developing children’s competence in communication, and include a lot of visual support, computer-based tasks, and realia with the aim of making the teaching/learning units as attractive and up to date as possible. Methodology involves a communicative, participatory, active and motivating approach. Activities are carried out in small groups, and considerable coordination between content teachers and English language specialist teachers is required. The following is a set of methodological recommendations making reference to the Act regulating the implementation of the CLIL programme ‘Bilingual Teaching Enriched Programme’ (PEBE).

The ‘Bilingual Teaching Enriched Programme’ (PEBE):

- will aim at getting pupils to acquire competence in communication in Spanish, Valencian, and in a foreign language;
- integration of co-official and foreign languages as media of instruction will be core to the teaching and learning process;
- the foreign language will be introduced in the initial stages as a means to revising content matter already taught through Spanish and/or Valencian;
- co-operative and peer work will be promoted in the classroom;
- pupils will be encouraged to produce output, and teachers will aim at creating communicative situations which respond to pupils’ needs and interests;
- the foreign language will also be used as medium of instruction in cross-curricular modular projects;
- teachers are expected and encouraged to make use of mimicry and visual aids, take into account different learning styles, promote activities for the practice of lower and higher order thinking skills, and encourage teacher-pupil, pupil-teacher, and pupil-pupil interaction;
- action, communication and understanding will be core to all activities and tasks;
- teachers will co-ordinate and agree on the methodological approach to be used, the content to be taught, and the metalinguistics necessary at each stage.

j. Future prospects
Implementation of the CLIL programme through English is linked to the concept of moving from bilingualism to multilingualism in an autonomous Region where two languages, Spanish and Valencian, already co-exist as official in the school curriculum. The ‘Bilingual Teaching Enriched Programme’ (PEBE) was started in Primary education in 1998; since then two hundred and ninety more schools have joined. In 2004, a CLIL pilot project was set up in a vocational college which has now extended to fourteen vocational schools. The Board of Education has recently approved an experimental project to implement CLIL in secondary schools in the forthcoming school year.

Scenario 3: Improving competence in English through the ‘Bilingual and Bicultural Project’ (‘MEC/British Council Agreement’) in Madrid

a. Number of hours of CLIL
Pre-primary and primary school: 5 sessions of 45 minutes per week;
Secondary school: 3 hours per subject (Science and Social Science) amounting to 6 hours per week

b. Balance between language and content
Pre-primary and primary school level: mostly on language;
Secondary school level: fairly equal, slightly biased toward content.

c. Level of teacher education/professional support
Initial teacher training does not include a CLIL specialisation, or combined degrees in a content-subject and English. Therefore most training is in-service at the moment. Teacher education schemes may include both language and methodology courses both in Spain and in the UK, as well as exchange schemes, mainly through the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP):
- pre-primary and primary school level: in-service courses; assistant teachers provided when possible;
- secondary school level: limited in-service teacher development courses.
d. Subjects taught via CLIL
Pre-primary and primary:
- Science, Arts and Crafts, Maths, Music, and Physical Education;
Secondary school level:
- Science, Social Sciences (in some cases Technology).

e. Assessment
Primary:
- assessment on both content and language learning is carried out through classroom observation. At the end of primary education, pupils are awarded a certificate stating that they have completed the CLIL programme. A certification in English language is also provided through Trinity College exams;
Secondary:
- prior to their enrolment in the programme pupils have to sit an initial test to assess their level of competence in English. As regards content learning, standard Spanish-medium assessment is carried out every three months. Pupils are also expected to be taking ICGSE Cambridge exams at the end of secondary school cycle.

f. English language and subject level of students
English language learning:
- primary level: starting A1; ending A2;
- secondary: starting A2; ending B2.
Subject learning:
- pre-primary and primary: generally higher than Spanish-medium average;
- secondary: mainstream.

g. Programme size (participating schools/students)
- 2007-08: ten secondary schools (MEC/British Council);
- 2007-08: one hundred and forty seven primary schools (Comunidad de Madrid).

h. Main reasons for CLIL programme implementation
- improve English language competence;
- give added value to the learning of content;
- prepare for future studies and/or working life;
- enhance school profile (or Region/Municipalities);
- increase learner motivation and build self-confidence towards learning English.
i. Materials and methodologies
A set of recommendations for teaching materials are provided as follows:

- teachers involved in this project should be ready to prepare their own materials and to face difficulties created by the shortage of special teaching materials when choosing the textbooks to be used;
- it is not advisable to use an established textbook, as books on the market are intended for pupils studying English as a foreign language and are not therefore adapted either to the real knowledge of pupils receiving CLIL type provision or to the objectives of this programme;
- it is preferable to use teaching units prepared by the teacher. Local network efforts have been supported by the British Council leading to an on-line network and materials resources being available, e.g., www.factworld.info.

Methodology is kept uniform at both educational levels. It involves a communicative, participatory, active and motivating approach. Activities are carried out in small groups, and considerable coordination between content teachers and English mother tongue or English language specialist teachers is required. Curricular development is meant to be the responsibility of both Spanish teaching staff and English mother tongue or English language specialist teachers, which implies substantial coordination between them.

j. Future prospects
The ‘Bilingual and Bicultural Project’, also known as ‘MEC/British Council programme’ has its origin in the agreement signed in 1996 by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the British Council. Its main aim was to raise English language levels of children in mainstream schools as well as to provide them with the opportunity of following an official bilingual and bicultural curriculum. A case in point is the Comunidad de Madrid, which set up a programme in 2004, now without the intervention of the British Council, which added one hundred and fourteen new schools to the initial thirteen that were already participating in the project. The number of pupils involved is now over six thousand and the number of schools one hundred and fourteen.
2. Conclusion

In 2001 Hugo Baetens–Beardsmore wrote:

The variety of bilingual education programmes now available as models is striking, while constant monitoring by solid research is providing sophisticated insights into aspects of learning through a second and third language not known before. (...) In Spain ever more schools are beginning early second language learning from the age of three onwards, leading on to some form of bilingual content-matter teaching in primary school. A further breakthrough is the development of trilingual programmes where content-matter may be taught through two different languages while a third is added either as a subject or for content-matter. (Marsh, Maljers, Hartiala, 2001)

The variety of CLIL-type provision models, as well as their extension, has dramatically increased in Spain over the last decade. Although not all the Autonomous Regions have fully implemented these programmes as part of mainstream education, the great majority have done so through pilot and/or experimental programmes. The Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, Navarre, and Valencia all share the ‘Fostering Multilingualism in a Bilingual Community’ scenario, although their approaches follow different models. Madrid and the Balearic Islands have signed the ‘MEC/ British Council Agreement’, and are implementing the ‘Bilingual and Bicultural Project’, although Madrid is also implementing a programme similar to the Andalusian ‘Plan de fomento del plurilingüismo’, paradigmatic for the ‘Promoting Bilingualism in a Monolingual Community’ scenario.

Bibliographic references

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