

Daiva Verikaitė-Gaigalienė, Loreta Andziulienė
Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

TO BE OR NOT TO BE: AN OVERVIEW OF CLIL IMPLEMENTATION IN LITHUANIA

Summary. CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), as an approach to bilingual education in which both content and a foreign language are taught together, started to be employed in secondary schools of Lithuania more than a decade ago; however, there still exists a diversity of opinions towards its benefits and flaws. The studies on CLIL in the European countries have shown that the success of CLIL very much depends on the existing policy documents on the national level regulating CLIL implementation and providing guidance to schools and teachers. It also depends on the amount of research conducted on CLIL in a particular country. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to analyse the current state of affairs of CLIL in Lithuania in terms of the existing policy documents, implemented projects and conducted research that would serve as a theoretical background highlighting the necessity for further analytical investigation. The results of the analysis have shown that no coherent national policies in terms of teaching CLIL have been developed or legal government regulations have been issued in Lithuania until today. The present study has revealed that systematic approach towards investigation of CLIL in Lithuania has not yet been adopted which resulted in the lack of comprehensive analyses on an overall situation of CLIL in Lithuania as well as on factors ensuring efficiency of CLIL implementation in particular. The findings of the study point towards the need for such analyses in the future.

Keywords: CLIL in Lithuania; European contexts of CLIL; projects and studies on CLIL in Lithuania.

Introduction

CLIL as a teaching / learning approach has been practised since early sixties when bilingual education was introduced in many schools around the world. However, the term *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) was coined and defined by David Marsh, University of Jyväskylä, Finland in 1994. According to Marsh (2002, p. 2), "CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language". This approach has gained a wide popularity in Europe since it was in line with the European Union (EU) policies and it contributed to sustainable multilingualism by developing multilingual skills in monolingual societies. The EU Commission has established CLIL-related goals in multiple declarations (1995, 2003, 2008) by specifying that "secondary school students should study

certain subjects in the first foreign language learnt” and that “upon completing initial training everyone [European] should be proficient in two Community foreign languages” and that “secondary school pupils should study certain subjects in the first foreign language learnt” (1995, p. 47).

Under the influence of the educational trend of bilingualism and multilingualism, Lithuania got acquainted with CLIL through the initiation of Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science in 2002. In 2004 the initiative was joined and supported by the British Council under the auspices of which three events for teachers participating in a CLIL project were held (Andziulienė et al., 2007, p. 16). The project resulted in CLIL publication *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (Andziulienė et al., 2007).

The fairly enthusiastic start of the initiation of the new approach in 2002, however, did not remove barriers to its widely-spread implementation in Lithuania. The fact that no official regulations of CLIL implementation in secondary schools of Lithuania that would facilitate the process of putting it into practice have been adopted so far can serve as a proof of its winding path. However, an attempt to develop the guidelines for implementation of CLIL in general programs of secondary schools was made in 2010 by the working group of CLIL experts (Dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymo(si) gairės. Projektas, 2010). By the time this article was prepared for publication in 2018, the project of the guidelines for implementation of CLIL was still open for public discussions. In addition, there was an attempt made to start formal CLIL teacher training in 2015 by initiating a double degree study programme *History and English Pedagogy* (Andziulienė, 2016). However, not having attracted a sufficient number of students, the programme was shortly closed, leaving teachers with no other choice but specialise in only one subject at a time.

Therefore, the aim of the present article is to overview CLIL models in the EU countries and CLIL development in Lithuania in order to form a theoretical background for further analytical investigation of CLIL implementation in Lithuania. The research method used in the present study was document analysis. The analysis involved examination of strategy documents, reports, studies and research articles.

The article overviews studies and projects on CLIL in the EU countries and in Lithuania and provides implications for further necessary steps to be taken for a more effective CLIL implementation in Lithuania.

CLIL contexts across Europe

In different countries of Europe CLIL as an approach in education has acquired different forms, models and terms. The diversity of interpretations of this approach has resulted in a variety of the terminology that is being used to denote it. The most popular term denoting this approach in English is *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) which is usually considered to be synonymic to French *Enseignement d'une Matière par l'Intégration d'une Langue Etrangère* (EMILE) or German *Integriertes Inhalts und Sprachlernen* and is defined as "a dual-focused teaching and learning approach in which an additional language or two is used in content classes for promoting both content mastery and language acquisition to pre-defined levels" (Mehisto, 2014, p. 4) or as "a foreign language enrichment measure packaged into content teaching" (Dalton-Puffer, 2011, p. 184). According to Marsh (2002, p. 58), the term gained its popularity due to the fact that "it placed both language and non-language content on a form of continuum, without implying preference for one or the other". Despite a wide-spread use of CLIL, in English we can encounter other terms related to CLIL such as *Teaching Content through Foreign Language*, *Dual Focused Instruction*, *Bilingual Content Teaching* or *Content-Based Language Teaching*, *Bilingual Integration of Languages and Disciplines*, *Foreign Language Immersion Program*, *Languages Across the Curriculum*, etc.

The diversification of CLIL is reflected not only in a wide range of terms denoting it, but in the way and the extent it is implemented across different countries. As underlined in the study by Sylvén (2013), "this diversification can be taken as evidence that CLIL in one country is not necessarily the same thing as in another, implying that CLIL as the object of research may differ a great deal from one country to another" (Sylvén, 2013, p. 316). This divergence stems from different language policies implemented across different countries

as well as from different level of regulation on the side of officials responsible for education of their countries. The study of the four EU countries, i.e. Sweden, Finland, Germany and Spain, has shown that none of these countries has a thorough policy regulating CLIL; however, the presence of some policy document in combination with research would contribute to more efficient implementation of CLIL (Sylven, 2013). As argued by Sylven (2013, p. 314), "the mere fact that CLIL is recognized makes it stand out as a teaching model worth implementing." Ruiz de Zarobe (2013, p. 231), referring to data from Eurydice (2006) and Eurydice network (2012), concludes that numerous European strategies have been fostered to promote CLIL, with different countries responding in different ways, although today almost all EU states have implemented some form of CLIL with varying degrees of success in compulsory education. But, as maintained by Dalton-Puffer (2011, p. 185), "(...) few of the 27 national education systems have actually responded with substantial investments into CLIL implementation, teacher education, and research, leaving the impetus to the grassroots stakeholders" with the exception of Spain and the Netherlands: in Spain, numerous research and development projects are being conducted; in the Netherlands, a national accreditation system for CLIL schools has established explicit quality parameters.

Most scholars agree that policy documents are an essential part of any school activity. They provide guidance to schools and teachers involved, and they ensure equity in a national school system. As pointed out by Sylven (2013, p. 303), "without a policy document at national level stating what CLIL is, and is not, CLIL may, and does, take any form or shape at the individual school".

This leads to the assumption that the success of CLIL very much depends on the existence of the policy documents regulating CLIL implementation on the national level that provide guidance to stakeholders. In addition, the amount of research on CLIL in a particular country is directly proportional to the development level of CLIL in that country, i.e. the higher the number of research studies is in a particular country, the more widely spread and more effective CLIL implementation is in that country. Thus, to evaluate the current situation of CLIL in Lithuania in terms of the research studies conducted and the projects implemented, in the following sections,

the research studies and projects on CLIL in Lithuania in the background of European context will be overviewed.

Studies and Projects on CLIL in Lithuania

In Lithuanian the use of terms related to CLIL is rather complex and complicated. The first term used in Lithuanian was IDUKM (*Integruotas dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymas*, Eng. [*Integrated Subject and Foreign Language Teaching*]) (Andziulienė et al., 2007, p. 4; Mačianskienė et. al., 2012). It was followed by UKDIM (*Užsienio kalbos ir dalyko mokymas*, Eng. [*Foreign Language and Subject Integrated Teaching*]) (Būdvytytė-Gudienė, Roikienė, 2006, p. 3; Rusecka, 2014), DUKIM (*Dalyko ir užsienio kalbos integruotas mokymas(is)*, Eng. [*Subject and Foreign Language Integrated Teaching / Learning*]) (Dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymosi gairės. Projektas, 2010, 1), IDKM (*Integruotas dalyko ir kalbos mokymas* Eng. [*Integrated Subject and Language Teaching*]) (Sušinskienė, 2009, 3; Dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymo(si) gairės. Projektas, 2010, p. 1; Vilkančienė, 2016, p. 168) or CLIL (Būdvytytė-Gudienė, A. et al., 2010). A considerable variety of terms is not only confusing, but it also highlights the fact that in Lithuanian we could not manage to coin a wholly satisfying term. The possible reasons for this variety of existing terminology could be the inability of its users to coin a term that would denote equal balance between the content and the language and would satisfy the needs of the majority. The variety of terminology could also reflect the zest of CLIL scholars and experts in Lithuania for the creation of new terms which is not entirely positive due to the fact that it causes misperception; therefore, standardization of the very term and its abbreviation would be the first step towards valid interpretation of the educational approach.

The existing variety of terminology, however, does not closely correlate with the number of studies carried out in the area of CLIL in Lithuania, i.e. there are only few studies that analyse the current situation of CLIL in Lithuania which were conducted and published as a result of the EU-funded projects and/or projects funded by other organizations (e.g. British Council, Goethe Institute or French Institute).

As a result of the Project ARIADNE *Development of Scientific Competences for International Collaboration in Master Study Programmes*¹⁸ subsidized by ESF Funds (according to 2004–2006 BPD II priority *Development of Human Resources 2.5 means Improvement of Human Resource Quality in the Sphere of Scientific Research and Innovations*), the methodology for integrated teaching of foreign language and subject was developed (Būdvytytė-Gudienė, Roikienė, 2006). The methodology aimed at overviewing CLIL as an educational approach, discussing its benefits and flaws and promoting its application in MA studies at Šiauliai University. The methodology was intended for the second cycle studies at the university.

Another project that resulted in CLIL publication was *The Synergy of Foreign Language and Subject* (Užsienio kalbos ir dalyko sinergija)¹⁹. The project's outcome was the teaching material *The Development of Didactic Competences for Integrated Teaching of Subject and a Foreign Language (English, German and French) (Integruto dalyko ir užsienio kalbos (anglų, vokiečių ir prancūzų) mokymo didaktinių kompetencijų ugdymas)* (Mačianskienė et. al., 2012). This teaching material was prepared for four modules of the project implementation activities and covered such topics as methodological and theoretical concept of CLIL, the use of IT in CLIL classroom, teaching strategies in teaching CLIL and active methods used in learning through CLIL. In addition, the teaching material provided practical tasks for CLIL implementation in the classroom. This project was carried out from 2011 to 2013 and was coordinated by Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. Under the activities of this project, 121 teachers from secondary schools of Lithuania had a chance to get acquainted with the principles of CLIL as well as to develop their foreign language and didactic competences.

The project *Development of CLIL in Educational Process (Integruto dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymo (IDKM) plėtra ugdymo procese)*, project no.VP1-2.2-ŠMM-05-K-02-011 coordinated by Vilnius University intended to develop subject teachers' CLIL competences in the period between 2011 and 2013 but no publicly available publication on the results of the project could be accessed by the authors of this article. The above-mentioned projects were

¹⁸ Project no. BPD2004-ESF-2.5.0-03-05/0075

¹⁹ Project no. VP1-2.2-ŠMM-05-K-02-025

coordinated and implemented by universities and pursued the aims to advance CLIL methodology for either secondary school or university and to develop teachers' competences for teaching CLIL.

Aiming to promote awareness of CLIL benefits as well as to support teachers in their educational work through continuous self-improvement, Lithuanian Association of English Teachers participated in several international projects (Nordplus Adult: Green English in CLIL; Leonardo da Vinci: Growing Innovation for Teaching (GIFT); Erasmus+: Cooperation and Innovation in Teachers' Associations (CITA)) and together with partners organised teacher training seminars both for novice and experienced CLIL teachers (Andziuliene, 2013; Almasi et al., 2016). Representatives of secondary schools of Lithuania participated in the above-mentioned projects as well as in other projects (e.g. *Nordplus Junior: SEAL: SEA in our Life*) not only for teachers' competences development (Rusecka, 2014) but for the design of regulations for implementation of CLIL in their schools (Sušinskienė, 2009).

Other research on CLIL implementation in Lithuania mostly focused on tertiary level of education, i.e. on universities. Some of the research gave general analysis of CLIL implementation problems at universities (Liubinienė, 2010; Vilkancienė, 2011); some concentrated on CLIL teacher competences (Vilkancienė, 2016) or provided methodological guidelines for development of particular language skills in CLIL, e.g. listening (Liubinienė, 2009) or effective use of tools facilitating CLIL effectiveness, e.g. application of IT in CLIL (Bijeikienė et al., 2012).

Secondary school's case of CLIL implementation was studied by Leščinskij (2014) who conducted a study at Petras Vileišis progymnasium that aimed at clarifying teachers' attitude towards CLIL and identified the problems that limit the implementation of the approach. In addition, Bijeikienė & Pundziuvienė (2015) examined CLIL module at Šiauliai Didždvaris Gymnasium, which could serve as an example of know-how for other secondary schools of Lithuania. All the above-discussed studies, however, did not aim at providing an overall situation analysis in terms of the data concerning CLIL implementation in Lithuania in general or in terms of stakeholders' attitude towards CLIL implementation in particular.

CLIL in Lithuania from the European Perspective

In addition to analysis of research studies on CLIL in Lithuania, analysis of the EU official documents was conducted in order to identify data concerning CLIL implementation. A reliable source that annually presents information related to CLIL implementation in Europe is a joint Eurydice/Eurostat publication *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe* which is produced in close cooperation with the European Commission. Its aim is to combine statistical data and qualitative information on European education systems. The information for the report is taken from official sources and covers organisational aspects such as the number of languages taught, the age range of students involved and the teaching approaches used, including CLIL (Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe, 2012, p. 7).

However, analysis of *Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe* (2012, 2017) did not prove to be very fruitful – in neither of the reports accurate data on the current situation of CLIL implementation in schools of Lithuania were provided. Edition 2012 indicated that data on the number of schools implementing CLIL when the Lithuanian language is integrated with the English language were missing, only the data on the number of schools that integrate the Lithuanian language with French and German as well as the number of schools that integrate the Lithuanian language with either Belarusian, Polish or Russian were presented (*Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe*, 2012, p. 156). The data provided in the reports were incomplete to be used for drawing valid conclusions. As concerns Edition 2017, it did not provide any data concerning the number of CLIL schools. It only indicated that in Lithuania 1 state language is integrated with 1 foreign language, i.e. Lithuanian is integrated with either English, German or French and that 1 state language is integrated with 1 regional / minority language without official language status, i.e. Lithuanian is integrated with either Belarusian, Polish or Russian (*Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe*, 2017, p. 162).

The data collected, however, allowed the authors of Eurydice report Edition 2012 to state that “in most European countries, there are schools that offer the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) model whereby

some, or all, non-language subjects are taught through a foreign language <...>. However, despite the fact that this model of learning exists in almost all countries, in the majority, it is provided in only a small number of schools" (Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe, 2012, 94). In five years, the situation obviously had not improved as Edition 2017 declared that "Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is limited in Europe and its development presents great challenges" (*Key data on teaching languages at school in Europe, 2017, p. 14*).

Having analysed the development of CLIL in Lithuania and its status in the EU, we consider it to be highly relevant to investigate the current situation of CLIL implementation in Lithuania by shedding some light on the perspective the stakeholders (administration, teachers and students) have toward CLIL and its implementation as well as by identifying the organisational aspects of CLIL implementation such as the number of languages taught, the age range of students involved, and the teaching approaches used.

Conclusion

CLIL as an approach to bilingual education was introduced to academic community of Lithuania in the first decade of the 21st century. However, no coherent national policies in terms of teaching CLIL have been developed or legal government regulations have been issued until today. The guidelines for implementation of CLIL in general programs of secondary schools in Lithuania have not yet been officially approved. This can be regarded as a complicating factor in CLIL implementation in Lithuania as policy documents are an essential part of any school activity, they provide guidance to school administrators and teachers, and ensure equity in a national school system.

The studies on CLIL in Lithuania can be considered as rather sporadic since no comprehensive analyses of an overall situation in terms of the data concerning CLIL implementation in Lithuania in general or in terms of stakeholders' attitude towards CLIL implementation have been performed. Only few studies that analyse the current situation of CLIL in Lithuania have been conducted as a result of the EU-funded projects. The studies carried out in other European countries point to the evidence of the importance of research

on CLIL and link the amount of research to the level of CLIL development in that country, i.e. the higher the number of research studies is in a particular country, the more widely spread and more effective CLIL implementation is in that country. In the background of the stated above, the research on the current state of CLIL in secondary schools of Lithuania can be perceived as a necessary step towards evaluating the present-day situation and highlighting the pathway to its more systematic implementation. The major limitation of the present study that is being addressed in the research paper submitted for publication by the authors of this article is qualitative analysis of CLIL situation in secondary schools of Lithuania and stakeholders' (school administrators', teachers' and students') perspective on CLIL. The present study is intended to lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive research study.

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Daiva Verikaitė-Gaigalienė

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, Lietuva;
daiva.verikaite-gaigaliene@vdu.lt

Loreta Andziulienė

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, Lietuva;
loreta.andziuliene@vdu.lt

BŪTI AR NEBŪTI: CLIL TAIKYMO LIETUVOJE APŽVALGA

Santrauka. CLIL (Integruotas dalyko ir užsienio kalbos mokymas/is), kaip dvikalbio ugdymo metodologija, pagal kurią dėstomas tiek dalyko turinys, tiek užsienio kalba, pradėta taikyti Lietuvoje daugiau nei prieš dešimtmetį, tačiau vis dar egzistuoja nuomonių įvairovė apie jos privalumus ir trūkumus. Europos šalyse atlikti tyrimai parodė, kad egzistuoja tiesioginis ryšys tarp CLIL įgyvendinimo sėkmės ir toje šalyje priimtų CLIL įgyvendinimą reglamentuojančių teisės aktų ir dokumentų. Taip pat buvo nustatyta, kad CLIL sėkmė priklauso nuo atliekamų tyrimų kiekio – kuo daugiau vykdoma CLIL tyrimų, tuo didesnė tikimybė, kad įgyvendinimas bus efektyvesnis. Šio tyrimo tikslas – išnagrinėti CLIL raidą Lietuvoje, atliekant dokumentų, tyrimų ir projektų rezultatų analizę. Atlikus tyrimą nustatyta, kad nuoseklios nacionalinės politikos CLIL metodologijos taikymo klausimu Lietuvoje nėra, trūksta duomenų apie dabartinę CLIL taikymo padėtį Lietuvos švietimo ir ugdymo įstaigose. Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, kad prieš priimant tolimesnius sprendimus CLIL taikymo Lietuvoje klausimais, reikėtų atlikti išsamią bendros situacijos analizę ir suinteresuotųjų subjektų, tokių kaip mokyklos administracija, mokytojai ar mokinių tėvai, požiūrio į CLIL įgyvendinimą tyrimą.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: CLIL Lietuvoje; europinis CLIL kontekstas; CLIL projektai ir tyrimai Lietuvoje.