

Pedagogical and  
Technological Innovations  
in (and through)  
Content and Language  
Integrated Learning



# Pedagogical and Technological Innovations in (and through) Content and Language Integrated Learning

Edited by

Alba Graziano, Barbara Turchetta,  
Fausto Benedetti and Letizia Cinganotto

Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



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This book first published 2021

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-6855-5

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-6855-6

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Learning and Innovating with CLIL <i>Alba Graziano</i>	
<b>Section I: CLIL Language</b>	
Chapter One.....	18
The Content of CLIL and Beyond: Classifying Typologies of Microlanguages for Teaching and Learning Purposes <i>Matteo Santipolo</i>	
Chapter Two .....	29
Designing CLIL Teaching Activities: The Impact of Corpus Analysis Software on the Study and Teaching of Specialised English Lexicon and Language Patterning <i>Fabio Ciambella and Valentina Piunno</i>	
Chapter Three .....	58
Language Resources for the Expression of Content in CLIL: Students’ Use of Clause Complexes <i>Ana Llinares and Andrea Navarro Sanz</i>	
Chapter Four.....	80
Content and Language Integrated Learning in an ELF-aware Perspective <i>Lucilla Lopriore</i>	
<b>Section II: CLIL Learning Technologies</b>	
Chapter Five .....	100
Technology-supported Learning and CLIL <i>Alessandra Fazio</i>	
Chapter Six.....	112
“Projectile Motion”: A Physics Unit in CLIL with Technologies <i>Ornella Fioravante and Alison Hayman</i>	

Chapter Seven.....	124
Technology Enhances CLIL Model United Nations Preparation and Simulations	
<i>Lori Zenuk-Nishide, Michael Hollenback and Donna Tatsuki</i>	
Chapter Eight.....	141
Developing CLIL Competences through an Online Postgraduate Course: IUL University Teaching Model	
<i>Letizia Cinganotto and Fausto Benedetti</i>	
<b>Section III: CLIL Teaching Innovation</b>	
Chapter Nine.....	160
Teaching through English as an Additional Language: Self-assessment of Competences	
<i>David Marsh and Letizia Cinganotto</i>	
Chapter Ten .....	178
Teaching History and English Literature at Lower Secondary School through CLIL: A Classroom Case Study	
<i>Maria Elisa Montironi and Manuel Pace</i>	
Chapter Eleven .....	187
The Value of Task-based Learning in CLIL	
<i>Magdalena Jiménez Naharro</i>	
Chapter Twelve .....	205
ELF, MUN, & TIGs: Three Realities in a CLIL Context	
<i>Marina Morbiducci and Donna Tatsuki</i>	
<b>Finale</b>	
Chapter Thirteen.....	220
CLIL/EMILE: The Good, the Bad and the Future in a Global Context	
<i>Gisella Langé</i>	

# INTRODUCTION

## LEARNING AND INNOVATING WITH CLIL

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Why yet another publication on the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach/methodology? Since the acronym was coined in 1994 by David Marsh, whom we have the honour and pleasure of hosting among our contributors in this volume, the related bibliography has grown impressively and almost at an exponential rate. This research in the fields of applied linguistics, pedagogy and cognitivism is now over 20 years old and it has collected teaching and training experiences from all the countries where CLIL has been implemented, with or without official provisions. Studies of the actual impact of CLIL on the improvement in both language and content learning are still infrequent, yet they are becoming more and more welcome because they are very significant—as is the case of the Spanish experience.<sup>1</sup>

AILA CLIL-ReN, the Research Network of the International Association of Applied Linguistics dedicated to CLIL and Immersion Classrooms, promotes continuous research, with a focus on linguistic issues, whilst also presenting innovative tools and projects through annual meetings and publications. In 2019, AILA CLIL-ReN collected approximately one hundred titles of interest from all over the world, thus doubling the number of the previous year's bibliography. In Italy, Christopher Williams of Foggia University Language Centre produced a 120-page international CLIL-related bibliography updated to November 2018, which represents

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<sup>1</sup> For a general overview of the early years of CLIL results in Spain, cf. Lasagabaster and Ruiz de Zarobe 2010. However, almost all Spanish universities produced analytical reports and a lively debate about CLIL's pros and cons in all grades of education in the past fifteen years.

an invaluable support to anyone who wishes to study CLIL from its very beginning.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, it would be pretentious to retrace the whole history of CLIL or to detail at length its motivations, foundations and evolutions.<sup>3</sup> Suffice it here to recollect that CLIL originated in the early '90s as a filiation and an alternative to both the full-immersion programmes adopted in bilingual-bicultural geographical areas such as Canada<sup>4</sup> and the more mainstream Foreign/Second Language Teaching (FLT/SLT). FLT/SLT focussed on the language as a subject matter of its own and was practised all over the world, often in connection with a natural language acquisition method and the communicative approach. By the end of the last millennium, both were already revealed to be only partially successful as to second language learning, especially when applied to predominantly monolingual contexts. The CLIL approach/methodology appeared on the scene with the ambition to face language learning failures or complexities by introducing innovative, student-centred pedagogies in the teaching of disciplinary content, while also tackling the issues of using a foreign/second language as a medium of instruction.

Often classified under the agenda of traditional Content-Based Instruction (CBI) and specifically Content-Based Language Teaching (CBLT), CLIL can in fact boast a much more vigorous pedagogical pedigree.<sup>5</sup> It connects to last century's active, cognitivist and constructivist pedagogies (Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Bloom) and to Halliday's language-based theory of learning and functional linguistics. As far as language teaching is concerned, CLIL obviously draws on theories such as Second Language

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. <http://clil-ren.org/>. See Williams 2017 and his bibliography, accessible at <https://www.unifg.it/didattica/corsi-di-lingua-e-ecdl/centro-linguistico-di-ateneo/clil>.

<sup>3</sup> Among others, Mary Carmel Coonan provided an insightful and critical synthesis for this same publisher in 2017. We refer to her life-long expertise for a contextualization of the approach, its advantages and its risks.

<sup>4</sup> Observing Canada's bilingual context inspired John Cummins' ground-breaking studies (1979, 2000) and the concepts of BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication System) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency), which became theoretical pillars for the cognitive integration between content and language and were often adapted to teaching practices.

<sup>5</sup> CLIL finds its way as a European variant of CBLT into the fifth edition (2015) of Jeremy Harmer's volume, which can be considered somewhat of an English Language Teaching (ELT) encyclopaedia. There it is dealt with synthetically but mainly under the language teaching viewpoint, with little focus on the cognitive investment implied by CLIL. The most recent survey of the pedagogical principles inspiring CLIL can be found in Nikula *et al.* 2016.



Acquisition (Krashen) and on the communicative approach (Widdowson). However, it can easily be enhanced through strong doses of humanistic and cooperative activities and updated within the framework of interactionism and connectivism by exploiting learning technologies and social media. In its principles and best practices, CLIL can be said to aim at a holistic and ecological development of the learner's mind (Morin, Bateson), since it contemplates an interdisciplinary and project-based approach to content, a functional and inclusive use of multiple linguistic codes—*linguaging* and *translanguaging* are keywords—and a competence-aimed integration of the two.

Bearing this scope in mind, flexibility between soft forms vs. hard forms of CLIL and focus oscillations on more content vs. more language are admitted pragmatically depending on the instructor, the school context and the individual learner's needs. Nevertheless, the two pillars of multilingualism on the one hand, i.e., the integration and development of both L1 and one or more L2s (including minority languages), and of teaching method innovation on the other remain the distinctive traits of European education policies. This was stated by the Council Resolution of 31 March 1995 *on improving and diversifying language learning and teaching within the education systems of the European Union* (95/C 207/01), reiterated in the European Commission's *Study on the Contribution of Multilingualism to Creativity. Final Report* (2009), and confirmed in *Education Begins with Language*, a Thematic Report from a Programme of Seminars with Peer Learning (2019-20) to support the implementation of the Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 *on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages* (2019/C 189/03).

Although first, second or foreign languages can still be learnt at school as independent subjects, the European policies recommend that they become the object of increasing awareness and efficient learning methods, among which CLIL is by now always explicitly mentioned.<sup>6</sup> Thus, Halliday's early formulation "learning language, learning through language, learning about language"<sup>7</sup> seems to find an echo in the most recent

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<sup>6</sup> References to the need for language awareness as a measure to be strengthened in school were already present in the Proposal (2018) for the Council Recommendation and became the general topic of a special issue of the *Journal of e-Learning and Knowledge Society*, edited by Cinganotto and Lodding Cunningham (2019) and entirely dedicated to a reappraisal of language awareness in the context of language diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>7</sup> "With this formulation I was trying to establish two unifying principles: that we should recognize not only a developmental continuity right through from birth to adult life, with language in home, neighbourhood, primary school, secondary

document issued by David Marsh, Gisella Langé and other international educational linguists in October 2020, a position paper on the value and future of language education entitled *The Bilingual Advantage: The Impact of Language Learning on Mind & Brain*, where we read the following:

There is evidence that people who have more than one language have advantages over monolinguals. This paper describes six ways in which advantage is realized through the impact of having more than one language in the mind and brain. It also describes why successful language learning depends on educational practices that combine opportunities *to learn language as a subject, and to learn content through language.* (emphasis mine)

Yet, sticking to a concept of language as limited to natural-historical verbal codes would be reductionist in comparison with the much wider idea of literacy (both as learning and communication) induced by digitalization. Moreover, if this is true from the learner viewpoint, it must also be true for the teacher engaged in *Opening up Education [...] through New Technologies and Open Educational Resources* (OER), as per the title of the European Commission Communication of 2013.<sup>8</sup> This implies favouring flexible learning environments whilst also involving more traditional active/manipulative and collaborative operations and tools, as well as the adoption of learning technologies/apps and critical internet search, and consequently creating an in-presence space of formal education open to outside/online informal education.

Since students and teachers engaged in CLIL may not be so highly proficient in the L2 to carry out a confident didactic interaction all of the time, they may need to resort to OER and 2.0 web tools. Thus, CLIL is the ideal field of application for computer-assisted learning—not only language learning.<sup>9</sup> CLIL soon becomes E-CLIL: all the frameworks elaborated in the past fifteen years with the aim of describing the CLIL teacher profile never fail to include and emphasize the acquisition of

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school, and place of work, but also a structural continuity running through all components and processes of learning” (Halliday 1993, 113).

<sup>8</sup> *Opening up Education: Innovative Teaching and Learning for All through New Technologies and Open Educational Resources.* [COM/2013/0654 final].

<sup>9</sup> This was recognised in 2014 by another European Commission document entitled *Improving the Effectiveness of CLIL and Computer Assisted Language Learning* ([https://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/resources/Articles%20and%20publications%20on%20the%20ECML/CLIL%20and%20CALL%20report\\_July.2014.pdf?ver=2017-07-11-151504-977](https://www.ecml.at/Portals/1/resources/Articles%20and%20publications%20on%20the%20ECML/CLIL%20and%20CALL%20report_July.2014.pdf?ver=2017-07-11-151504-977)).

digital competences in their professional training. A “CLIL literacy” involving both teachers and learners is configured in the context of pluriliteracies (Meyer *et al.* 2018). This not only means knowledge and mastery of disciplinary contents and relative specialised languages but also pivots on the competence to select, use and adapt different multimodal sources of information and textualities in the learning context in order to enable students to follow their own lifelong path to knowledge building and updating.<sup>10</sup>

Widely spread all over Europe and the world,<sup>11</sup> currently compulsory in Italian upper secondary schools and gradually involving the primary cycle, in addition to developing into successful teaching practices, CLIL is increasingly becoming a fruitful area for academic research in learning theories and methods, in L1 and L2 acquisition as well as in the development of multilingual and multimodal literacies, in the application of digital technologies to learning environments and in collateral effects such as the further development of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). CLIL keeps arousing interest as the ultimate frontier of linguistic and pedagogical research in language and, moreover, in content learning and in the general cognitive processes involved in learning overall, through an L2 but mainly through the L1.

This volume once again situates CLIL at the intersection of educational linguistics, learning technologies and teaching innovation, attesting to the spread of the new “CLIL literacy” both in theory and in practice, or even better, constantly deriving theoretical reflections from case studies and experiential reports. In fact, this can be considered the special methodological asset of this editorial project, where research from some of the international CLIL experts intersects with the attentive/critical look that academics not directly involved in CLIL can take at our debates, where contributions from university instructors long engaged in CLIL teacher training converse with reports from trained schoolteachers’ classroom practice on a par, and where new entries in the panorama of CLIL

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<sup>10</sup> In Italy, Letizia Cinganotto and Daniela Cuccurullo have been actively engaged in CLIL & CALL since at least 2010, when in connection with the compulsory introduction of CLIL in the last grade of Italian secondary school, a pilot project was launched by the Ministry of Education entitled “E-CLIL per una didattica innovativa” (Langé and Cinganotto 2014). Since then, they have continually disseminated the integration of CLIL & CALL in Italy and Europe both through national and international teacher training courses and through extensive publishing (Cinganotto and Cuccurullo 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019; Cuccurullo 2014, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Eurydice 2006, 2012, 2017 and, at a worldwide level, Dearden 2014.

scholarship are welcome—computational linguistics applied to the production of teaching materials and independent yet parallel experiences such as the Model United Nations simulations.

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Linguistic and cognitive research promoted by CLIL practice is showcased in Section I of this book. The first step is an attempt at better circumscribing the actual object of CLIL teaching/learning, i.e., the integration of language—in the multimodal sense just discussed—and disciplinary content, as we still share the belief that

Almost all of what we customarily call ‘knowledge’ is language, which means that the key to understanding a subject is to understand its language. [...] This means, of course, that every teacher is a language teacher: teachers, quite literally, have little else to teach, but a way of talking and therefore seeing the world. (Postman and Weingartner, 1971, 102)<sup>12</sup>

When content is conceived as language and language is not the direct content of the learning process, the question of a language education extended to all school levels, all branches of academic disciplines and all professions is central to the development of a metalinguistic awareness which otherwise would escape most non-linguists. Matteo Santipolo proposes a detailed classification of the continuum of specialised discourse, which has the advantage of precisely indicating where CLIL Language can be located, i.e., between “Mediated” and “Didactic Jargon”. Santipolo even suggests replacing CLIL with JIL (Jargon Integrated Learning), the specific microlanguage used in communication between language and discipline instructors and neophytes. Aside from the didactic implications of this shift discussed by the author, his “modest proposal” seems to agree with a long-time cherished persuasion on the part of CLIL trainers and trainees, which is primarily advocated by the University Language Centres in Italy, that in CLIL contexts the L1/L2 needed is nothing but a *professional language* demanding its own dedicated certification rather than the ones for General Language.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See also Wellington and Osborne 2001; Love 2009.

<sup>13</sup> In Italy, a lively debate on this matter developed, especially within the University Language Centres often engaged in CLIL teacher training. Specific exams, research and proposals were elaborated by Ca’ Foscari University, Venezia (see Ludbrook 2008, 2009; Serragiotto 2008). The topic is summarized by Ciambella 2018.

The next three contributions in this section very nicely cover the three vertices of Do Coyle's language triptych (Coyle *et al.* 2010, 36) as adapted with examples by Graziano (2018, 17) and applied to English as a medium of CLIL instruction (Fig. 1).

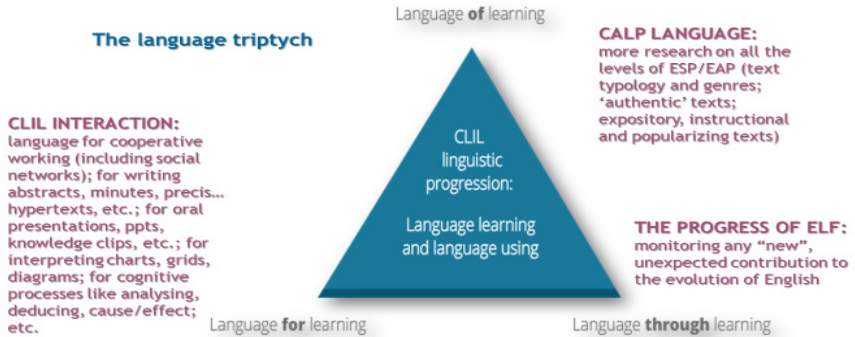


Figure 1: adapted from Coyle 2010.

Fabio Ciambella and Valentina Piunno focus on the language *of* learning/study, identifiable with Cummins' CALP language. The authors show how content and language acquisition can benefit from the use of corpora, corpus linguistics methodologies and software. Ciambella and Piunno's interpretation of the *fil rouge* of this publication, i.e., learning enhancement induced by technologies, allows them to exhibit all the potential of corpus-driven analyses not only for intensive reading comprehension but also for the creation of teaching activities/tasks exploiting the English lexicon and language patterning. For this purpose, various specialised corpora are explored through the Sketch Engine software and some case studies are presented referring to i) the corpus analysis of conventionalised patterns and productivity features, and ii) the use of concordances and n-grams. Difficult as it might seem at school level—and the authors would deny it—the application of computational linguistics should become a must at university level both in the national tongue and in the language of internationalized diplomas.

Working on data drawn from texts written by CLIL sixth-grade students of Primary Education from Spain, Ana Llinares and Andrea Navarro attempt to fill a gap in CLIL research. They aim to identify the linguistic resources that students need to develop for the expression of content. The vertex of language *for* learning is by now acknowledged as the most fruitful area of convergence between content and language pedagogies. In this article, the Systemic Functional Linguistics used to identify students' clause complexes

and Dalton-Puffer's Cognitive Discourse Functions revealed by their production of content work together to demonstrate the inseparability of language from content.

Observations and teaching implications contained in the previous chapters are applicable to any language used as a medium of CLIL instruction. However, when the language is English, as it normally is, even against the spirit and letter of European language policies, the ELF-aware perspective becomes crucial, as Lucilla Lopriore suggests in her chapter, especially in the training of non-English teachers. These should be made aware of the complex diatopic situation of English and of the linguistic changes brought about by ELF as the variety used in global communication, at times giving birth to more geographically limited varieties such as ELFE (English Lingua Franca of Europe). In multilingual school contexts worldwide, ELF is a tangible reality resulting in simplifications which in turn might be difficult to manage; on the other hand, it might become a privileged area where linguistic change and creativity can occur and be observed *through* the learning process.

Section II focuses on research and reports involving the use of digital technologies which Alessandra Fazio, one of the Italian CALL experts and practitioners, tries to provisionally define and connect to the innovative teaching methods/strategies they imply. Fazio's article is a concise yet thorough introduction to the topic of Technology Enhanced Learning in general as well as an application to language learning. Out of the vast supply of "electronic tools, systems, devices, and resources that generate, store, or process data, including social media, online games, multimedia, and mobile phones", Fazio selects those learning apps she deems appropriate for the CLIL class environment. These are mainly designed to support and enhance speaking and writing skills through digital storytelling and problem solving, to be practiced both individually and cooperatively. These activities typically represent a bridge between hard and humanistic sciences in view of the more holistic learning required by 21<sup>st</sup>-century educational needs.

The three chapters that follow are ordered by school level. They share an advanced use of learning technologies and an extremely careful planning of each step of the didactic action—a unit, a module or a whole preparation course to MUN—which is the only guarantee of success. Ornella Fioravante and Alison Hayman describe a successful CLIL experience with a curricular topic of Physics ("Projectile Motion") in an Italian upper secondary school. Very interestingly, this is not a fifth year, i.e., the final one where CLIL is compulsory, but a second year, with

students only reaching level B1 of English language competence. During the experience, a variety of apps was used: Nearpod, Kahoot, PheT, Desmos and EdPuzzle, among others. The framework was that of blended learning, which mixed f2f teaching and flipped classroom, and was constantly based on a problem-solving approach. This increased the students' motivation and dramatically contributed to their superior results, even in comparison with more traditional forms of CLIL.

The Model United Nations has been adopted as a CLIL practice in its own right, since it shares all the components of a quality CLIL. This is content learning with a competence-based approach requiring research, reading and interactional skills developed through problem-solving, collaborativism and cross-disciplinary team-teaching; the simulations' multilinguistic and multicultural environments which foster respectful communication and the use of ELF for mutual comprehension and effective expression; and the promotion of life-long learning habits. The consolidated experience of Kobe University of Foreign Studies, Japan, in MUN preparation and simulation allows colleagues Lori Zenuk-Nishide, Donna Tatsuki and Michael Hollenback to make the most of technologies to increase the quality and quantity of interaction among students, instructors and content in one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many settings through the use of a systematic combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Starting with a brief description of the teaching model and learning platform adopted by Università Telematica degli Studi IUL, Italy, Letizia Cinganotto and Fausto Benedetti close this section by introducing an example of an online CLIL teaching module within a postgraduate course attended by teachers from various school levels. The online module is aimed at guiding teachers in carefully planning CLIL lessons and activities and considering multiple and multimodal inputs, which can represent the starting point for intercultural and interdisciplinary learning pathways. All the tools of a Moodle platform are fully exploited, especially the ones which favour interaction and reflection, such as wiki, the discussion forum, the chat and the blog, with the added value of professional video-lectures recorded by the instructors and then edited for enhanced didactic efficacy.

The emphasis on metacognitive learning in the IUL professional development course for CLIL teachers starts at the very beginning of their training by presenting them with one of the most recent tools launched in 2019 by the University of Jyväskylä Group, Finland, following a pilot project in Finland and Mexico. TEHE (Teaching through English in Higher Education)

has been elaborated specifically for higher education contexts to evaluate academic instructors' competences for teaching an additional language by examining both language use and pedagogical competences. David Marsh, who contributed to designing and testing this matrix, illustrates it here and highlights its usefulness as an evaluation and self-evaluation tool enhancing the teachers' capacity for self-reflection. The general movement towards "internationalization" of Italian University courses would certainly benefit from this tool. Meanwhile, the TEHE matrix was proposed by Letizia Cinganotto to schoolteachers, who were asked to rank their specific competences when teaching their subject in English.

David Marsh and Letizia Cinganotto's contribution opens Section III, which is devoted to the innovative impact the CLIL approach can still exert after almost three decades. This is testified by good practices in all educational grades. Maria Elisa Montironi and Manuel Pace, teachers in an Italian lower secondary school, present a unique classroom experience which involves quite a low school grade and age (12-13 years old) and offers an interesting interdisciplinary module on English History and Literature; the latter is usually not part of EFL and CLIL programmes for that grade. Montironi and Pace also carry out experimental research with a control group and manage to demonstrate—albeit on a small scale—the greater efficacy of CLIL team teaching over individual lessons.

Magdalena Jiménez focuses on the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) developed by Nunan in the '90s and drawing on Dewey's active pedagogy. Jiménez provides a detailed analysis of its features and advantages when it is adopted as one of the pivotal didactic methods in CLIL. Her theoretical-practical descriptive study revisits the specialized literature and published materials in TBLT and CLIL and analyses the tasks assigned to 10<sup>th</sup>-grade History students and their impact within the framework of a Spanish state-funded project (Regional Government of Andalusia) aiming to promote textual competence, specifically in academic writing. Incidentally, many of this book's contributors appear to consider History as one of the favourite subjects for CLIL experiences at various school levels and in different national contexts, too.

The other trend emerging from this survey is the increasing extension of CLIL to Higher Education.<sup>14</sup> This level is possibly the least affected by

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Graziano 2018 for a survey of the debates surrounding the different forms of internationalization adopted at the tertiary level and a discussion of the advantages of CLIL over EMI (English-Medium Instruction). The latest publications dealing with the same topic worldwide (i.e., Macaro 2018; Bowles and Murphy 2020) also question how EMI has been introduced and developed, and whether values of global citizenship, equality and inclusivity can really be attained by it.



a systemic movement of teaching innovation and training—and not only in Italy—and it is here that CLIL might in fact achieve its full potential. Marina Morbiducci and Donna Tatsuki report on a unique experiment which extended the principles of cooperative approach and connectivism to a university context. Based on the Japanese experience of CLIL-MUN, Morbiducci and Tatsuki organized a “mini-MUN” event at Sapienza University of Rome with a group of students responding to the characteristics of a Community of Practice as defined by Wenger or even more specifically as a Transient International Group (TIG) sharing ELF as a means of communication and learning as theorized by Pitzl. The interaction of the dimensions represented by the four acronyms—CLIL, MUN, ELF and TIG—is shown to be a winning formula to realize internationalization processes at the tertiary level more successfully than by simply turning the usual academic f2f lecture from delivery in a mother tongue into English.

By building on the vertical line connecting all educational grades and by addressing the requirements of the European Education Area 2025<sup>15</sup> from both didactic and bureaucratic perspectives, as has been done to date by many member states, tertiary education could contribute to the development of 21<sup>st</sup>-century hard and soft skills converting to CLIL, its pedagogies and its intrinsic respect for multilingualism and multiculturalism. Since the revision of the eight key-competences in 2018, when the second key competence—“Communication in foreign languages”—was changed to “Multilingual competence”, i.e., the ability to use different languages appropriately and effectively for communication, all the latest documents from the European institutions insist on recommending comprehensive language education policies, as well as innovative and inclusive language teaching methods. Among these, CLIL plays a prominent role. In the final chapter of this volume, Gisella Langé highlights the normative history of CLIL till 2020 and announces the outcomes of very recent research projects in the field of language education. Langé is a genuine precursor in the sector of CLIL and she concludes this volume with her incredibly extensive knowledge, enthusiasm, and unshakeable confidence in the future of CLIL.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Achieving the European Education Area by 2025* [COM(2020) 625 final].

The context of the present volume is the study day devoted to “CLIL, Learning Technologies, Innovation” hosted by Università degli Studi della Tuscia (Viterbo, Italy) on 20 November 2019 to relaunch Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) among schoolteachers of languages and non-linguistic subjects, school principals and academic instructors involved in the process of internationalization at the university level. The event was co-organized by LabForm (the teacher training department at Tuscia University), Università Telematica degli Studi IUL, INDIRE (Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa) and the AILA Research Network for CLIL. The plenary speeches in the morning were by national and international experts of educational linguistics, language education and policies, and CLIL specifically. The conference programme also included the annual symposium of the AILA CLIL-ReN in the afternoon. After a selection from a very rich call for papers, the symposium generated two parallel panels of contributions from the field involving CLIL best practices, teacher methodological and language training experiences, task-based learning, corpus-based teaching, simulation and creativity applied to CLIL environments, technology enhanced learning in CLIL, CLIL MOOCs and other digital resources. The initiative was welcomed as an opportunity for scientific exchange and qualified interaction among the many components of the CLIL “enterprise”: political decision makers, academic researchers, teacher training coordinators, trainers and trainees, learning technologists—even the publishing industry, which has been so active and reactive to CLIL in recent years.

And then came the great pandemic of 2020...

The Viterbo conference was most probably the last international CLIL-related in-person meeting before the COVID-19 crisis arose. It could have been a kind of *compte rendu* of the third decade of CLIL in Europe, ten years after CLIL was made compulsory in Italian secondary schools. Instead, the proceedings resulting from that event published in this volume—and fine-tuned with some effort during the COVID year—will be one of the earliest contributions to CLIL awareness in the post-pandemic era. As we write this Introduction, we are beginning to see a light at the end of the tunnel, with the rollout of vaccination programmes taking place worldwide. The COVID tragedy is hardly mentioned in this book—but this ought not to be interpreted as the authors wishing to exorcise or deny it. Nor do any of us dream of going back to “normality”, to what we were and did before, as if nothing had happened.... This is probably because many of the CLIL fans in this miscellany share the

belief that, somehow, we had anticipated this year's lessons, at least from a learning/teaching perspective. After having been sequestered at home and yet never before so easily connected with the rest of the world; after having added a whole new set of words to our everyday vocabulary—among them ZOOM, MEET, and TEAMS—the existence and potential of which we had overlooked; after having experienced the tribulations of distance learning in a time of emergency, we are now even more persuaded than ever that the road is clear for CLIL to enter the post-pandemic age at school and university.

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**SECTION I:**  
**CLIL LANGUAGE**

# CHAPTER ONE

## THE CONTENT OF CLIL AND BEYOND: CLASSIFYING TYPOLOGIES OF MICROLANGUAGES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING PURPOSES

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### Introduction

*The propagation of CLIL responds to the growing need for efficient linguistic skills, bearing in mind that the major concern is about education, not about being bilingual or multilingual.*  
(García 2009, 211)

Very few methodologies in recent years have received as much attention, for better or worse, as CLIL, and even fewer, at least in Italy (cf. Coonan 2002; Langé 2002; Ricci Garotti 2006; Serragiotto 2003), have probably been so successful, not in terms of actual results achieved (which still remain controversial), but definitely for their dissemination at all levels of education (primary, secondary and, perhaps mainly tertiary; cf. Balboni and Coonan 2014; Graziano *et al.* 2018; Sisti 2009). This, for obvious reasons, applies in particular to English, but other languages too (especially French and German) have benefitted from such an unprecedented diffusion of a teaching methodology. This is widely recognised not only by educational linguists, but also by language planners and language policy makers:

During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, CLIL became an established phenomenon in the field of education [...]. Although the principles of being educated through an alternative language have been established for centuries [...] CLIL focuses on the *integration* of content learning and language learning. Since its early European pioneering phase in the 1990s, when CLIL was perceived as an important contributor to the European



Commission’s Language Policy [...], the concept of integrating language learning and subject learning has been the attention of two ‘curiously divided’ groups [...]—that is, policy makers and practitioners on a European and, more recently, a global stage. (Coyle 2015)

The term “practitioners” in this quotation clearly refers to language teachers, but the very nature of the methodology demands a further extension of its domain to include teachers of non-linguistic disciplines. With this perspective in mind and without prejudice to the intrinsic and unavoidable epistemological and linguistic differences that exist from one subject matter to another, an overall discussion of the content of CLIL seems extremely appropriate if we wish to develop “a deeper understanding between teachers and their learners of the types of discourse needed to access the knowledge cultural base of subject disciplines” (Coyle 2015).

Therefore, in this paper, my purpose is not to examine the pros and cons of CLIL, or to investigate whether CLIL should be considered the panacea for all language-teaching ills, or, on the contrary, if it has become part of the problem itself—aspects which will, however, be partially illustrated below. My primary aim, rather, is to propose some reflections on the content of CLIL, in a very general sense, dare I say from a philosophical perspective, which may hopefully also help solve some of CLIL’s drawbacks.

To do so, I will first analyse the meaning of such terms as *cant*, *slang*, *microlanguage/language for specific purposes/language for special purposes*, which are all too often used inappropriately and in a misleading and overlapping manner. I will then focus on the differences and analogies between *cant* and *jargon*, the latter being the topic of the discussion immediately following. Several typologies of jargon are then singled out and illustrated in some detail, and I eventually reach the conclusion that two of them in particular (*mediated* and *didactic jargon*) are relevant to CLIL. Consequently, a suggestion is put forward to change CLIL to JIL, with the “j” standing for *jargon*. In concluding, I note the importance in language education of not disregarding the ethical and aesthetic aspects of *jargon*, which are closely related to its efficiency and effectiveness once in real use.

### **An attempt at terminological clarification beyond implicit ambiguity**

*Cant, slang, jargon, microlanguage/language for specific purposes/language for special purposes*: these terms are in everyday life often misleadingly

used as “umbrella” quasi-synonyms to refer to a wide range of varied linguistic phenomena. Although clear-cut borderlines are never easy (or even possible) to draw in defining each of these phenomena, a preliminary distinction can be made grouping *cant* and *slang* on the one hand, and *jargon*, *microlanguage/language for specific purposes/language for special purposes* on the other (cf. Santipolo 2008).

- *Cant* and *slang* generally refer to the same phenomenon or to slightly different ones, that is, some type of “secret language”, the main purpose of which is to be used by members of a certain peer group to be recognised as such and to exclude non-members from understanding what is being said. Here is a list of 15 reasons for using *slang* (Crystal 1987, 53):
  - for the fun of it
  - as an exercise in wit or ingenuity
  - to be different
  - to be picturesque
  - to be arresting
  - to escape from clichés
  - to enrich the language
  - to add concreteness to speech
  - to reduce seriousness
  - to be colloquial
  - for ease of social interaction
  - to induce intimacy
  - to show that one belongs
  - to exclude others
  - to be secret.

The *fil rouge* that runs through all of these reasons is definitely the wish to mark social or linguistic identity. We may perhaps say that the main difference between *cant* and *slang* lies in the fact that the latter may be absorbed into the standard variety of a language from one generation to the next, whereas this is only rarely the case with the former. A typical example is London’s *cockney rhyming slang* (Santipolo 2003).

*Jargon*, *microlanguage/language for specific purposes/language for special purposes*, although with different shades of meaning and with different focuses, all refer to the varieties of language specific to a certain profession or scientific context (medicine, law, biology, literature, linguistics, philosophy, etc.), and the main objective of their use is to optimise communication among peer specialists.

To sum up:

*Cant* is used

- to be recognised as members of a peer group
- not to be understood by non-members of the peer group
- to increase ambiguity
- to exclude non-members from conversation
- to increase sense of belonging among members.

*Jargon* is used

- to be recognised as members of a specific (mainly professional) peer group
- to cut down to a minimum or totally get rid of ambiguity among peer group members
- to reduce redundancy
- to increase a sense of belonging among members.

The lexical unit of *cant* (as much as it is of standard language) is “word”, which may be polysemic; whereas the lexical unit of *jargon* is “term”, which is always monoreferential. A typical example of this distinction is the adjective “romantic”: in standard language, this may be used to describe a candlelight dinner, a sunset, a stroll along a riverbank, etc., all of which are of course subjective and personal. But in literature, “romantic” can only refer to a particular literary and cultural movement which developed in Europe in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and lasted roughly until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, with very specific features in style and topics.

### **From *cant* to *jargon*: a proposal for classification**

As I have pointed out, the line between the two phenomena described above is not always easy to draw and the relation between them is perhaps better illustrated by a continuum rather than by compartmentalized slots (Figure 1).

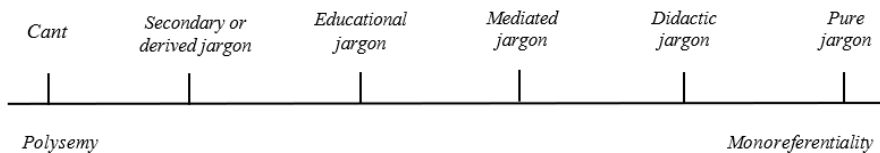


Fig. 1. The cant/jargon continuum

As we move from left to right, the language tends to become more specific and the vocabulary increasingly monoreferential and less ambiguous. Each of the phenomena on the continuum can be described as follows:

- *Secondary or derived jargon*  
This is the case of communication between experts and non-experts: only seemingly similar to *educational jargon* (see below), this does not aim at simplifying and conveying complex contents, making them accessible to the general public. It only aims at excluding someone from what's being discussed, and in this respect its use makes it coincide with *cant*. For this reason, it may even be called a type of *deviated jargon* and it is the result of an intentional and mostly, at least psychologically, subjugating misuse of an otherwise neutral *jargon*. A literary example of this is the famous character Pettifogger's use of Latin and law expressions and idioms in the Italian novel *The Betrothed* by Alessandro Manzoni.
- *Educational jargon*  
This is the case of communication between experts and non-experts: it is the kind of "explained" *jargon* used in making science accessible to the general public. It differs from *didactic jargon* (see below) because it is not used to train new aspiring or still-information experts, but only to make the general public understand difficult contents without trivialising them. The underlying risk related to this kind of *jargon* is to oversimplify things, thus losing much scientific rigour and precision.
- *Mediated jargon*  
This is the case of communication between (non-discipline expert, mainly language) teachers and pupils who are studying to become (semi-)experts.
- *Didactic jargon*  
This is the case of communication between discipline-expert teachers and pupils/students who are studying to become (semi-)experts.  
Two sub-typologies:
  - University professors
  - School teachers.
- *Pure jargon*  
This is the case of communication among peers: it is the *jargon* used among experts. It may be
  - synchronous (vis-à-vis conversations, conferences, seminars, etc.)
  - asynchronous (essays, articles, publications, etc.).

In this continuum the types of *jargon* that merge into CLIL are *Mediated jargon* and *Didactic jargon*.

### **Teaching implications: from CLIL to JIL**

The relation between CLIL and teaching a language for a special/specific purpose is self-evident: they may be seen as two sides of the same coin, i.e., content-based instruction:

This term describes a range of approaches to the integration of language and content. These approaches lie on a continuum, ranging from those which emphasise content learning through the medium of a second/foreign language, to those in which content is used as vehicle for promoting language learning. *Content-driven* approaches give primary emphasis to the learning of content. Language learning is important, but it is often viewed as an incidental by-product of content instruction. Similarly, subject matter courses taught through the medium of a second/foreign language are content-driven, in that learning content is a primary course outcome. [...] At the center of the continuum lie approaches with equal emphasis on both content and language. In these approaches students frequently learn the foreign language as a subject, often in a specific class or course. In addition, content is taught through the medium of the second/foreign language. Students are expected to demonstrate achievements of course outcomes in both language and content and may be instructed by both content and language specialists. At the other end of the continuum are language-driven approaches. (Met 2004)

In other words, the main distinction between the two extremes of this continuum, here in relation to English but applicable to any language, is that “in general English lessons, teachers decide on what language they want to teach and then find content and activities which will help their students learn it” (Harmer 2015, 7), whereas

in content teaching, the content is the most important thing. When content is taught in an L2 (the *target language*) the idea is that the language will be learnt as well. It’s as if with content as the focus, the language comes along to join the party, and the students will learn it as it occurs. (Harmer 2015, 7)

The outcomes of the approaches at the extremes are obviously also relevant:

Does Content-based Language Teaching (CBLT) work? Various results suggest a high rate of achievement. For example, the immersion programmes that started in Canada in the 1960s and still go on today (where young English-speaking learners are taught for a large part of the time in French) suggest that ‘students achieve success in subject-matter learning [...] they achieve high levels of comprehension in French and can express themselves both orally and in writing on topics related to academic subjects’ [...]. But there are doubts about their levels of grammatical accuracy and their pragmatic competence in French, even after many years of study. This suggests that whilst the results are very encouraging, CBLT does not seem to be a panacea for all ills. [...] This choice (and teaching) of language to express content is a defining characteristic of CLIL. If, for example, the students need to say things like ‘water evaporates’, then we will help them to say this. But this does not mean that we have to spend days teaching the present simple (as we might do in a general English course); instead, we may help the students with just enough of the present simple to talk about evaporation, but nothing more. [...] language in CLIL (like *evaporate*) is *content-obligatory language*: you have to learn it if you want to talk about the content. CLIL is not just concerned with content and language, however. CLIL experts also identify three other Cs, namely *communication* (students have to be able to communicate content, and to be able to communicate with each other), *cognition* (students need to develop their thinking skills) and *culture* (students need to be able to relate content to the culture in which it is embedded and to be able to understand their own culture through comparison with other behavioural norms). In the area of cognition, CLIL practitioners refer to HOTS (higher order thinking skills) and LOTS (lower order thinking skills). In simple terms, a lower order type of question might be *What is this?* or *How many of these are there?* whereas a higher order kind of question might be *Why is this like it is?*, *What causes there to be so many of these?*, etc. Higher order skills are a form of critical thinking [...] CLIL enthusiasts claim high levels of success, suggesting that students with average abilities achieve higher levels of skill than they have typically achieved in traditional classes. (Harmer 2015, 7-8)

What emerges from this detailed description is that the use of CLIL focuses on the communicative side of language teaching and learning, leaving accuracy mainly aside, especially as far as morphology, and above all syntax, are concerned (whereas vocabulary is clearly central in the learning process of whatever specific microlanguage).

Another reported advantage of the intensive use of CLIL is that “the enriched content gives language learning a purpose, it is challenging and discursive, and encourages thinking skills, opinion giving and justification” (Hunt *et al.* 2009). A functional use of the language also has other positive outcomes relating to the cognitive sphere: