

## **Content and Language Integrated Learning in the Nordic countries and beyond**

***Petra Daryai-Hansen***

*University of Copenhagen*

***Ana Kanareva-Dimitrovska***

*Aarhus University*

***Beate Lindemann***

*The Arctic University of Norway*

***Liss Kerstin Sylvén***

*University of Gothenburg*

***Martin Carlshollt Unger***

*University of Copenhagen and University of Southern Denmark*

This NJLTL thematic issue gathers contributions from researchers and practitioners engaged in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the Nordic countries and beyond. We define CLIL, based on Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008), as ‘a dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for learning and teaching of both content and language’ (p. 9) and as an ‘umbrella term covering a dozen or more educational approaches (e.g., immersion, bilingual education, [...] and enriched language programmes’ (p. 12). The thematic issue hereby draws on a broad definition of CLIL covering both more content-oriented and more language-oriented CLIL approaches and raises the following questions:

- How is content integrated in the foreign language classroom?
- How are foreign languages included in other subjects?

In our call for papers, we emphasized that we were particularly interested in articles on CLIL in Languages Other Than English and the intersections between CLIL and plurilingual education, e.g., contributions that discuss how CLIL in practice can take into account more than one language. Furthermore, we invited the authors to cover different educational levels, and to investigate progressions and disruptions across educational levels. Regarding to English, we stressed that papers specifically targeting, for instance, issues related to implementation of CLIL in individual subjects, age of CLIL students or contextual factors are especially welcome. This is reflected in the contributions.

The articles investigate CLIL in English and in Languages Other Than English, establish a link between CLIL and plurilingual education, cover primary, secondary, and tertiary education, and several articles focus on continuities and discontinuities across educational levels. The articles have been written in Danish, English, French, and German, and shed light in contextual factors for CLIL in the Nordic countries and beyond.

### **The main section**

In the first article “Recalibrating the language classroom for deeper learning: nurturing creative, responsible global citizenship through pluriliteracies”, **Oliver Meyer and Do Coyle** suggest ways in which language teachers can reconceptualise their "subject" as one that is of central importance and value in the post-truth world in which the "language classroom" becomes an inclusive space for developing a creative, responsible and critical understanding of literacies connecting languages, cultures, and literatures. This requires an epistemological re-positioning of the language classroom which places the language teacher as a disciplinary specialist who contributes to developing learners' personal growth through enriching their (pluri)literacies repertoire in significant ways. This re-positioning permits the authors to recalibrate individual components of language-as-discipline, i.e. literatures, cultures, and linguistics, which is key to outlining a new paradigm for the language classroom: language learning as deeper learning for creative and responsible global citizenship.

In the second article *“Looking for the i in CLIL. A literature review on the implementation of dual focus in both subject and language classrooms”*, **Liesbeth Martens, Laurence Mettwie and Jan Elen** present a systematic literature study, based on 71 relevant studies in order to answer the question of what the dual focus in a CLIL context entails. The authors examine how the dual focus has been defined in the literature, how teacher collaboration can, outside the classroom, strengthen the dual focus and what does the dual focus imply, inside the classroom, for the language and content covered in CLIL subject and language courses.

**Lone Krogsgaard Svarstad and Jette von Holst Pedersen** present in the third article *“Bæredygtighed i sprogfagene: En Cyklus-Task-Chunk tilgang”* the results of an action research project in Denmark. The project investigated how teaching in language subjects can contribute to teaching major global social demands, as expressed, e.g., in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. In the project, a Cycle-Task-Chunks approach to the integration of intercultural and language learning in foreign language education, has been developed and six

teaching plans for 8th and 9th grade were constructed by the project team. The project's findings show that it is possible to work with complex topics such as sustainability issues and to communicate about these issues both in English and German foreign language education.

In the fourth article "*CLILiG als Chance für den Deutschunterricht in Norwegen. Wunschdenken oder realisierbares Konzept?*", **Karen Bauer and Beate Lindemann**, based on a questionnaire survey, investigate to what extent CLIL in German is being practiced at Norwegian schools and which framework conditions could enable the implementation of CLILiG in Norway. The data show that the teachers are willing to work with CLILiG. However, they emphasize that adequate teaching materials and necessary framework conditions at the institutional level must be in place in order to successfully implement the approach.

In the fifth article "*Cross-curricular CLIL projects in Swedish middle school*", **Eva Olsson and Liss Kerstin Sylvén** discuss findings from their case-study at Swedish middle schools focusing on CLIL projects in English and home economics classes. The main focus of their study is on scaffolding in CLIL. They show that practical subjects are well-suited for visual scaffolding, dealing with a content closely related to everyday life. Cross-curricular CLIL projects which combine such subjects with English lessons are according to the authors experienced as highly relevant by the students and their teachers.

**Helena Reierstam** emphasizes in the sixth article "*Comparing language ideology, policy and pedagogy – implications for student outcomes in CLIL and immigrant education*" that CLIL and education for newly arrived immigrant students, NAS, share many commonalities, in particular the fact that the language of instruction is not the learners' L1. In her paper, Reierstam looks at CLIL and NAS from a fairness perspective, based on the notion of consequential validity. The article scrutinizes the role of language in the two contexts, concluding that translingual ideology may counteract equal opportunities for all students, and highlighting the need to put emphasis on target language skills.

The seventh article "*Exploring teaching practices to stimulate meaningful language use in the Frisian trilingual primary school*" by **Eabele Tjepkema and Joana Duarte** discusses how CLIL is implemented in the Frisian trilingual primary schools and how these practices are related to the development in the three languages. The article describes meaning-focused teaching practices in order to stimulate target language use in the three target language lessons (Dutch, Frisian and English) at the end of the Frisian trilingual primary school, and how these are related to student language development in these languages.

Tjepkema and Duarte argue that implications of their results for CLIL and bilingual education are related to the importance of developing teacher competences to stimulate meaningful language in content-based minority language education.

The eight article “Me Siento Pequeña’ – A Visual Approach Towards Students’ Experiences with the Transition from Elementary to Secondary School in Spanish-German bilingual Education” by **Yvonne Lingard de la Vega, Silvia Melo-Pfeifer and Joana Duarte** investigates the causes and effects of language and content learning disruptions on students’ learning. They follow 37 learners in Spanish-German bilingual classes and their transitions from elementary (4<sup>th</sup> grade) to secondary school (5<sup>th</sup> grade). Visual narratives and open-ended questionnaires are used for examining the students’ perspectives on this transition. Their findings seem to have important implications for both educational transitions, for bilingual education and for CLIL LOTE.

While many CLIL studies have focused on L2 learning outcomes, fewer have addressed subject content learning, states **Marina Mattheoudakis** in the ninth article “*Students’ content learning in Science in CLIL vs non-CLIL classes in Greece*”. In this study, Mattheoudakis successfully shows the benefits of CLIL in primary school from a science learning perspective. Albeit a small-scale study, findings indicate a clear advantage for the CLIL students as compared to their non-CLIL peers as the CLIL group not only scored significantly higher on post-tests, but was also able to provide test answers in Greek on a topic having been taught entirely in English.

The tenth article “*Developing democracy and citizenship with literary texts about the First World War*” by **Torunn Synnøve Skjaerstad** underlines that interdisciplinarity between content and language is at the core of CLIL. In her text, Skjaerstad focuses on the use of literary texts about the First World War in English class. Using texts that speak to the learners themselves allows engaging and in-depth discussions, not least about democratic values which constantly require re-visiting in order not to simply be taken for granted. Results show that learners develop both historical awareness and critical historical thinking skills, eventually facilitating the fostering of democratic citizenship.

### Forum section

**Pierre Escudé's** forum piece "*Apprendre les langues, apprendre en langues. Retour d'observation de classes finlandaises d'établissements franco-finnois*" presents and describes observations of Franco-Finnish bilingual classes in three large Finnish sites, from nursery to high school. This allows the author to identify a series of elements in the interaction between the behaviour of the students and that of the teachers, but also the range of immersive teaching modalities. The accent is particularly on four methods, and how teachers benefit from using these methods according to precise objectives and as a response to well-identified needs.

The article "*From words to text – academic writing in EFL classrooms*" by **Søren Hattesen Balle and Merete Olsen** presents findings deriving from the NCCF project *Building More Vocabulary – Building More Communicative Competence*. The authors investigate two main questions: Why work with academic writing and CLIL in EFL classrooms? How to support the development of EFL students' academic writing skills through a focus on a CLIL approach, subject-specific vocabulary, meaningful text production and authentic audiences?

**Inga Smolén and Aneta Borkowska** illustrate in their article "*Challenges in education – a study based in Poland*" many of the challenges faced by CLIL teachers at primary level in Poland caused, at least in part, by the lack of formal regulations. Some of the challenges include learners' low language skills and, as a result of that, lack of motivation for learning. Smolén and Borkowska underscore the necessity of creating a bilingual curriculum in order for CLIL to work and be successful at primary school level.

In the forum piece "*Meer Deutsch: Et hav af muligheder med CLIL*", **Carl Christian Kinze** emphasizes that the German language is highly transparent for Danes and opens many doors, but that Danes have a lot of misconceptions about German. He presents a CLILiG project in upper secondary education stating that CLIL is an important tool to develop German language skills and to change language attitudes among students. In 2023, this CLILiG project was – along with other CLIL-based examples of sample lesson plans – described in a project supported by the Danish National Centre for Foreign Languages (NCCF): *CLIL-based lessons across languages and levels*. In 2024, these examples of lesson plans will be made available on the website <https://ncff.dk>.

**Minjeong Son** stresses in the article “*ConBaT+: Possibilities and challenges in preparing student teachers in English for plurilingual education*” some of the possibilities and challenges she has experienced as a teacher educator for English in employing ConBaT+, which is an approach that combines content-based teaching and plurilingual pedagogy.

In the last forum piece “*Nachhaltigkeit als Lernziel – fächerübergreifendes Lernen in einem deutsch-dänischen Begegnungsprojekt*“, **Petra Klimaszyk** describes a CLIL project involving students from neighbour regions in Northern Germany and Southern Denmark. Working with different sub-projects under the topic sustainability the students also gained experience within intercultural communication. The Danish students improved their proficiency in German while the German students learned some basic Danish and experienced what it is like to communicate about a scientific content with persons who don't have German as their L1.

## **References**

Mehisto P., Marsh D. & Frigols M. J. (2008). *Uncovering CLIL*. Macmillan Education, Oxford.