



The LSP-CLIL Interface in the University Context

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Abstract

The present paper purports to explore the relationship between LSP and CLIL in the context of tertiary level education. The distinction between the two seems sufficiently clear in theory, which postulates that LSP be single-focused on language as delineated by an analysis of student linguistic and communicative needs, while CLIL should simultaneously teach language and subject content through partial or total immersion, enhancing various learning mechanisms. However, in a university context this distinction is considerably obscured by the fact that learners, who are relatively proficient in the target language are also pre-service and lacking in subject knowledge. Also, as the author's survey into the motivation of her legal English students clearly indicates, university learners have a strong and fully understandable expectation for a highly contextualized and cognitively demanding language instruction, which, would contain a considerable subject content component related to English and American legal systems. This poses a number of questions, ranging from the practitioner's dilemma of how best to teach contextualized and professionally relevant language - or how much real life simulation to include without neglecting the academic aspect of the language - to a theoretical issue of a factual distinction between LSP and CLIL in the light of student expectations. It appears that the real difficulty related to the latter lies in finding the correct balance between legal English and the two content elements present in all LSP instruction: the target language culture and professional subject matter. Unlike law practitioners, concerned exclusively with the pragmatics of English as the lingua franca of the international legal community, law students need likewise to gain some actual knowledge of the English and American legal culture, which necessitates the inclusion of a CLIL-like content element in the LSP instruction offered to them.