

Assessment and Evaluation in CLIL

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Abstract

This paper describes the EU-financed "Evaluation and Assessment in CLIL" which implements the CLIL principle of using a second language to communicate, listen to and learn from others. Due to the diversity of current models of CLIL and the relatively young age of the integrated approach (CLIL), there are no established assessment practices for combined assessment of content and language. Therefore, questions arise from this duality along with the questions concerning traditional course teaching: are content and language to be assessed together, or separately, and which assessment tools may be used? Who assesses: the language teacher or the content teacher or the two co-operate? This leads to the issues of research and teacher education: more research is needed to inform practitioners about the possibilities of integrated assessment of both language and content. It is also important that both language and content teachers have the requisite knowledge of good assessment practices in language and content teaching.

Authentic assessment:

As far as linguistic competences in CLIL are especially concerned, all the activities developed for learning may be adopted as formative assessment. In order to assess CLIL-related competences it is more appropriate to employ integrated forms of authentic assessment. Authentic assessment occurs when we associate the assessment or checking process to types of work that real people do, rather than merely soliciting answers which only require simple, easy-to-assess responses.

The AECLIL Project

CLIL can now be considered a real teaching method. Books and publications concerning CLIL practices, processes, achievements (...) are numerous and of excellent quality. Unfortunately we cannot say the same about evaluation in CLIL. In fact papers on this fundamental topic are still rare and for this reason we decided to start the following European Project which involves nine European countries (Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Sweden, Latvia, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey):

AECLIL(Assessment and Evaluation in CLIL) : www.aeclil.eu





The cornerstone of the project is as follows:

- observing the impact of the various applications of CLIL methodology:
- the acquisition of general skills, disciplinary knowledge and competences,
- the acquisition in particular of creative and intercultural skills
- the development of plurilingualism and multilingualism

The basic idea is:

to determine whether a CLIL project confers added value on the quality of learning:

- knowledge
- disciplinary competences
- relational and socio-affective skills,
- thinking skills (how to develop and improve them)
- learning skills (do students learn better and more?)

We therefore propose to:

start short training sessions for teachers with a view to:

- compare and develop ways of implementing and sharing CLIL projects and experiences in the schools of the participant countries,
- plan CLIL pathways (by using online resources) in some disciplines to be chosen from the field of science and technology and from the arts and humanities in collaboration with the different partners involved
- design and implement monitoring and evaluation tools
- produce learning units through the methods of cooperative learning, using the available ICT tools
- test in class the material produced, using the monitoring devices
- compare and disseminate the results through the social web

This evaluation process and the outputs would be thus organized:

Monitoring and evaluating the process and the end- results of the project through:

- The collection and systematic organization of the learning units,
- The collection and systematic organization of the assessment tests,
- The comparative analysis of the test results
- The implementation of an online data base of all the materials.
- Research starting from the analysis of the needs:
- validation of a teaching-learning method (CLIL),
- ratio expected results/achievements.

With this project we mean to test whether the CLIL methodology can:

- Raise cultural and cognitive prerequisites that could lead to a learning approach open to innovation and flexibility;
- Stimulate teachers and students towards change, creativity and problem solving, which are competences favourable to innovation and useful in various professional and cultural contexts.
- Help students to acquire a good knowledge of the school subjects and to reach a good general culture;
- Develop new learning strategies that can be applied in other contexts such as: mediation skills, the ability of using different languages, the ability to switch from the language to the subject, the ability to compare L1 and L2;
- Encourage the integration of learning and new technologies
- Develop cultural competences and favour an opening to Europe;
- Contribute to the achievement of the competences stated in the Lisbon guidelines.



The programme seems to be simple and complex at the same time. It is based on the idea that in order to introduce a new, changing element in one or more educational systems and, above all, an innovation characterized by the European dimension capable of encouraging the students' development of complex and crosswise competences, it is necessary:

- To arrange experiments involving all the actors of the learning process (researchers, teachers, trainers, teaching materials, writers)
- To highlight the good practices carried out in the various countries, to compare and to spread them by linking the teachers training to the research effected in schools, according to a research and action programme.
- This requires many levels and steps and a very detailed work- plan along with a powerful instrument for the follow-up of the various phases of the project; an evaluation instrument able to explain the results and their transfer to other fields.
- The project is addressed not only to secondary schools, but also to professions and adults attending the evening courses in the various cultural fields. That is the reason why it is a crosswise project.

The innovative character of this project is to be considered on two different levels:

1. First of all on the fundamental focus of the project itself: the observation of the spin-off of the several applications of the CLIL methodology on different levels: in the acquisition of general competence, knowledge and subject skills; in the acquisition of creative and intercultural competence in particular; in the development of multilingual abilities; in the spin-off on the professional field in terms of competence strengthening.

2. Furthermore, this innovative character can be found in the articulation of the project, which is meant to provide a link between the initial training of the teachers involved, the positive pre-existing experiences in classroom work, the creation of new materials and, above all, the validation of a CLIL teaching model with a view to improving the quality of foreign language teaching. Local results, coming from experienced practices, will be spread and disseminated as widely as possible. A data bank will be activated and published on the project site, to the benefit of all schools. The project team will provide active counselling for all the colleagues showing interest in the project itself.

The core of the project will have a very important impact through the carrying out, experimenting, monitoring, redefining, and spreading of learning units. Besides, the team is very complex as regards its composition and its competences. Each body/agency (University or Training) can rely on a number of schools and their support. All this constitutes transversality, which has to be considered an added value to the project. Finally, the project positiveness proves itself through the useful dissemination of products at all school levels thanks to a Data Base, a web site, blogs, forums and mailing lists.

These are the 4 steps or workpackages:

1. Coordination and Management of the Project

Coordination will be done through the "Organizing Committee", composed of one representative from each of the promoters and partners and it will be the Board charged with planning and organizing activities and to ensure consistency and efficiency of the project at national and European level. In correspondence to the main stages of development, meetings are planned by the proposing partner and co-ordinating partner with all the partners to plan and share the route done and the developments thereafter.

2. Promotion and dissemination of project activities and results

Project dissemination will be executed in each country; partners will adapt the Joint Dissemination Plan to their country. The main activities to disseminate the project can be summarized as follows:• Organization of national seminars /meeting to make know the final results of the project• Press articles publications or news in mass media.• Web site of the project.• Project e-mail account.• Participation in clusters, seminars, meetings, lectures and other events related to project developments and issues addressed.• Distribution of



the dissemination materials created (leaflets, posters...)• Dissemination mailing with Project News and Reports, access to project-developed products/services and information on project activities. The recipients will be the end-users, institutions, target group representatives and stakeholder groups.

3. Mainstreaming actions

The Consortium will establish strategies for the project results exploitation, both for the partnership and for each partner individually. An experienced product/service promoter will lead this Work Package (WP), establishing the guidelines for the valorization and exploitation activities.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

"According to the Recommendation of a quality assurance and improvement cycle (planning, implementation, evaluation/assessment, revision) the Partners have to agree on indicators that can be summarized as follows:- Participation rate in the CLIL programme proposed- Formative success rate- Applicability rate of whatever acquired with regard to the school, university and vocational programmes with a view to a follow-up of the project making use of the steps on set out in the dissemination and exploitation strategies.- Participation in the programme/project of disadvantaged subjects- Presence of mechanism of identification of the needs of the labour market- Initiatives for the promotion of a wider access to professional education and training. The above list contains both qualitative and quantitative indicators , referred to context, processes and deliverables of the training activity.

The assessment questions

The integrated learning of language and subject raises some questions for the teacher regarding the assessment of competences (Barbero, Clegg 2005):

1. *Why* evaluate? What special impact will it have within an innovative approach?
2. *Who* evaluates in CLIL? The teacher of the discipline or of the language? Together? Separately? Peer group?
3. What is evaluated?
4. How to evaluate? With what tools? Which format for the tests?

Each of these questions needs answers consistent with the educational pathway followed.

In principle, CLIL evaluation has the same objectives as traditional assessment:

- verify whether the objectives have been achieved,
- determine the level of competence achieved by students
- measure the final results (summative assessment)
- monitor the learning process (formative assessment)
- improve education through the analysis of processes and results,
- the objective of guiding learning is particularly important in CLIL. We tend substantially to learn what we are assessed on, and if the teacher is oriented towards the evaluation of a particular item, students will eventually focus their attention on precisely that item. Hence the need to identify the evaluation criteria that cover the components of integration.
- create a positive "returning wave ", enhancing students' self-confidence about what they can do through the foreign language rather than focus on the negative aspects, the "mistakes".

The choice of what to assess must be coherent with how to teach and learn. In what way is a CLIL approach innovative compared to a traditional subject course and to a traditional language course? It is different due to the attention paid to language in the first case; due to a different concept of language as discourse and its learning in the second case. In a "traditional" language course students study the language; the focus is on forms and language skills. In CLIL, students use the language to learn content. The focus is on meaning, so language is not regarded as a set of rules and the ability to separate and study on their own, but as a resource for creating meaning in a communicative context. In other words, evaluation in CLIL must take into

account the integration of content and language. The following questions naturally arise in the discussion of teacher assessment (Mohan & Huang, 2002):

- a) At what level of complexity does knowledge lie (classification / concepts, principles / sequences, evaluation / selection)?
- b) What linguistic resources are used for each level?
- c) To what extent are students able to use strategies to create more or less elaborate forms of expression? With what degree of autonomy?

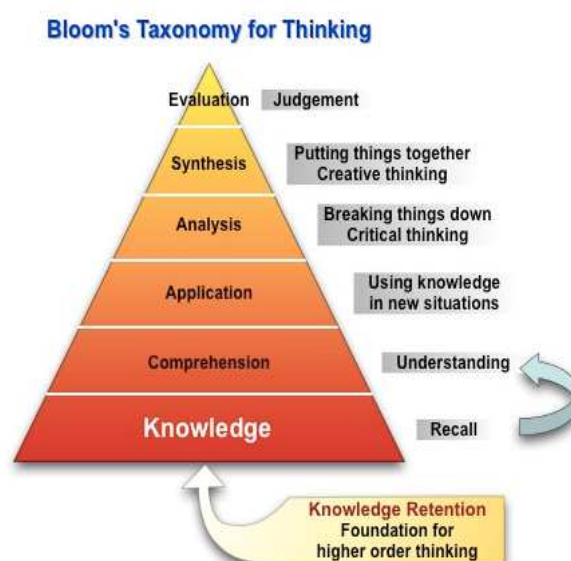
To respond adequately to these questions it is necessary to have a reference point, such as a framework that allows you to respond according to specific criteria. This scheme will:

- establish the level of complexity of the content (the knowledge structure)
- identify the language resources necessary to express them
- highlight the cognitive operations that enable the teacher to plan on the basis of this integration
- to provide routes that go from simple to complex
- prepare support activities (scaffolding)
- ensure consistency between the objectives of teaching / learning and assessment.

What are the steps to follow in a path of authentic assessment? Essentially they are:

- a. to develop authentic tasks (such as integrated skills tests)
- b. to develop a set of standards (what should students know or be able to do?)
- c. to identify the criteria (what performance characteristics should be expected?)
- d. to calculate a score (what was the level of competence achieved? The score can be expressed succinctly - excellent, good, poor, etc. - or, better yet, by describing in detail the level of competence achieved and the potential gaps)
- e. to find descriptors of competence (how can skills be described for each score and in relation to each criterion?)
- f. to create a scored rubric to be drawn on and adapted to each performance (what kind of feedback is provided to the learner?)

We propose a framework integrating: content, language and cognitive operations. An adaptation of Mohan's grid (Mohan 1986) and Bloom's taxonomy of thinking.



http://courseware.monash.edu.au/DELTA/blooms_pyramid.html

A glance at Bloom's pyramid begins to explain where scaffolding fits into the picture. And this is exactly what we want also to explore throughout this project.



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