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Mária Bakti – Klára Szabó: Exploring CLIL teaching materials in Hungary
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Exploring CLIL teaching materials in Hungary

Összefoglaló

A két tanítási nyelvű oktatás a tartalom és nyelv integrálásának (CLIL) egy altípusa. Magyarországon a két tanítási nyelvű általános iskolai programok 1989-ben kezdődtek, azóta számos kezdeményezés született az ezekben az iskolákban használt tankönyvek és tananyagok fejlesztésére.

Vizsgálatunkban kérdőíves felmérést végeztünk három dél-alföldi angol-magyar két tanítási nyelvű iskolában. Az osztályokban környezetismeretet és természetismeretet oktató tanárok felmérése mellett a diákokat is megkérdeztük az ezeken az órákon használt tananyagokról.

Eredményeink azt mutatják, hogy a tanárok számára a tananyagok kiválasztáskor, illetve a saját tananyagok fejlesztésekor a diákok nyelvi szintjének való megfelelés a prioritás, míg a diákok számára a tananyagoknál a könnyű megértés mellett az is fontos szempont, hogy minden, amire szükségük van, megtalálható legyen a kiválasztott tananyagban.

1. Introduction

Language education is the most motivating and efficient when language and its meaningful context are closely and systematically interrelated at different levels of education. (http://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice/CLIL_EN.pdf). The term used to denote this approach is most frequently called CLIL or Content Language Integrated Learning. It is a broad, umbrella term; there are other phrases used to describe similar approaches where language and its context (content) are taught in an integrated way. The terms most commonly used in this context in different parts of the world range from bilingual education through CBI (Content-Based Instruction) to LAC (Languages Across the Curriculum) (www.onestopenglish.com/clil/what-is-clil/).

Although the term was coined in 1994, CLIL can also be seen as an old-new approach to integrating language and content. It has received considerable research attention in recent years (see for example Coyle et al. 2010, or Mehisto et al. 2008), and has also been listed as one of the recommendations of the EU in language education (http://europa.eu/documents/comm/white_papers/pdf/com-95_590_en.pdf:33).

Practicing teachers often describe difficulties when using the CLIL method. From the practitioners' perspective the most sensitive issues in CLIL teaching include the diverse cultural, linguistic and professional background of teachers (and learners), the teachers' relative unpreparedness for using a very complex and integrated method, the problems of assessment in a dual-focused educational context, and, most importantly, the limited accessibility of teachers to specialized CLIL materials. An additional concern is that searching for, adapting and preparing suitable and attractive teaching materials is time-consuming and meticulous work and it may require special competences which most teachers do not have (<http://www.professorjackrichards.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-using-instructional-materials-in-teaching-esl/>).

The aim of this paper is to examine the necessity and special features of developing and using specific teaching materials for CLIL.

1.1 CLIL teaching materials

Considering the importance of special CLIL materials for teachers and their frequently voiced sense of frustration at the workload and difficulties, their unpreparedness for the new task of materials development, it is surprising that hardly any research has actually focused on this or related topics (Mäkiranta 2014).

Sharing materials, cooperation with school management, parents and other teachers, working in teams in liaison with other teachers can all encourage teachers when designing and producing attractive and quality materials for their CLIL classrooms. As a practice-oriented article puts it, "CLIL can only be successfully applied if its everyday practice is built on cooperation at all levels" (Szabó, 2012: 124)".

The term *teaching material* includes textbooks, printed and electronic materials, videos, films, as well as realia. In methodology textbooks this term is defined as follows: "In educational contexts, learning materials can be defined as information and knowledge that are represented in a variety of media and formats, that support the achievement of intended learning outcomes" (http://cefire.edu.gva.es/pluginfile.php/607632/mod_imsdp/content/3/41_materials_for_a_clil_classroom.html).

Consequently, each teacher is required to have a range of tools which they can use with the aim of assisting and supporting the learning process with each individual group of learners. These materials play a significant role in making knowledge accessible to learners and can encourage them to acquire the material they need in many different ways. The modern teacher in general "needs to be able to evaluate, adapt and produce materials so as to ensure a match between the learners and the materials they use" (Tomlinson 2003:66). This is especially true in CLIL practice, where ready-made teaching materials are scarce and thus, in theory, CLIL teachers must all become materials designers.

Based on our experience in teaching CLIL and training CLIL teachers, we could say that CLIL teachers need their own teaching materials, because the commercially produced teaching materials (textbooks) have either the language learners or the learners of a specific subject in the focus, instead of the individual learners of CLIL classrooms, with their diverse interests, personalities, background knowledge and skills. We can agree with Jocelyn Howard from Christchurch College of Education, New Zealand, that the commercially produced materials are often compiled for a general, an average learner, who is hardly ever present in any classroom, especially not in a CLIL classroom. Also, the commercially produced textbooks aim at teaching either the language or one or another school subject, but they are not suitable for CLIL, which represents an integrated, dual-focus approach to teaching and learning. In addition, English textbooks published in English-speaking countries, do not focus on difficulties or special features, the speakers of other languages, representatives of other cultures face. These books do not reflect the local curriculum and local needs either. (<http://www.paaljapan.org/resources/proceedings/PAAL9/pdf/Howard.pdf>) Consequently, we can agree that tailor-made CLIL materials are needed in education, and, in addition, they should represent high quality. Among many other researchers Mehisto outlined the general features of quality teaching materials and, as a starting point, he stated that their primary aim was meant “to support students and teachers, not restrict them” (Mehisto 2012). He also broadened the notion by saying that the quality teaching materials are to affect students’ lives, the community, and the teaching of various school subjects (Mehisto, 2012). This means that, when using quality teaching materials, in addition to improved language and subject-specific skills, learners have to understand what learning is and how the acquired knowledge and skills can be applied in and outside of school. Good teaching materials are to build confidence, enhance teacher and learner motivation; they are to generate critical thinking and promote creativity. Quality teaching materials also help learners to solve problems and liaise with others. They promote the idea of lifelong learning by guiding students to find and regularly use a variety of sources and resources for learning. Good teaching materials generate exciting and meaningful discussions and they support learner autonomy (Banegas 2010).

Mehisto (2012) identified ten criteria for producing learning materials. These may serve as guidelines for CLIL teachers, too, when designing their own materials. From the group of these specific criteria, the presence of a safe and enriched learning environment, the emphasis on individualized skills development and learner autonomy, the inclusion of self, peer and other types of activities and assessment, authentic language use and the meaningfulness of learning may be underlined, as the most important ones for CLIL teaching.

According to Jocelyn Howard (<http://www.paaljapan.org/resources/proceedings/PAAL9/pdf/Howard.pdf>) the disadvantages of commercially produced coursebooks can easily become the advantages of teacher-produced teaching

materials. Teacher-produced materials may create an appropriate background to teaching, by tailoring content to the teaching context. In addition, they are capable of considering the learners' individual needs and they are responsive to the heterogeneity of the classroom. They may focus on the development of diverse skills and competences. In addition, these materials can not only bridge the gap between language learning and content learning, but they may also integrate elements of the learner's first language and culture into the body of the new teaching material. The CLIL teacher, when using his/her own teaching material, can successfully adopt the best organizing principle, and can flexibly base classroom work on a particular topic or grammar problem, or can focus on a cultural issue, as it is required by the teaching context. The teacher can work on the improvement of some specific skill or practice certain language functions as well. It is also important to note that in the process of materials development, by giving a personal touch to the teaching material, a CLIL teacher can make teaching and learning more enjoyable and spontaneous, a feature that learners highly appreciate (<http://www.whatiflearning.com/the-approach/strategies-for-reshaping-practice-the-habits-of-the-classroom/27-add-the-personal-touch>).

1.2 Primary CLIL programs in Hungary

Primary CLIL programs in Hungary started in 1989 and are most often referred to as bilingual primary schools, where the subjects Music, Art, PE, Environment, Nature, Civilization, History and Geography, or in some schools Mathematics and IT are taught (partly) through English. In addition, pupils have 5 English lessons per week. These schools were started as a result of bottom-up initiatives from parents. In order to guarantee transparency and higher quality, the Ministry of Education set up requirement criteria for bilingual primary schools in 1997, including the language level pupils are to achieve in their CLIL language at different stages of their primary education (Szabó 2012:118-119). According to Act 190 of 2011 on Education and the Ministry of Human Capacities decree 20/2011, in bilingual primary schools pupils are tested in their CLIL language in grades 6 and 8. In grade 6 they have to be at A2 level, in grade 8 they have to be at B1 level.

1.3 Aim and research questions

The aim of this paper is to examine the necessity and special features of developing and using specific teaching materials for CLIL.

In this paper we aim to answer the following research questions:

1. What kind of teaching materials do CLIL teachers in primary Environment and Nature classes?
2. Do CLIL teachers use teacher-produced teaching materials in primary Environment and Nature classes in Hungary?
3. Do they co-operate in the preparation of these teaching materials with fellow teachers?

4. Which CLIL materials do pupils prefer in primary Environment and Nature classes? Why?

2. Material, method and subjects

In order to answer these questions we chose the subjects Environment and Nature as they are taught (partly) through English in bilingual primary schools in Hungary, from grade 3 through grade 8. In grades 3 and 4 pupils learn Environment classes through English. Topics include for example the human body, water, the weather and seasons, and animal life. In grades 5 and 6, Environment is replaced by Nature, this subject includes topics from Geography and Biology and serves as an introduction to these subjects. In contrast to subjects like PE, Music or Arts, which are also taught via English in bilingual primary schools Hungary, the subjects Environment and Nature require some sort of printed or online teaching material.

In order to answer our research questions we conducted a questionnaire survey for CLIL teachers and pupils in three bilingual primary schools; two in Szeged and one in Békéscsaba. We surveyed 9 teachers and 188 pupils. The questionnaires for CLIL teachers included 10 questions, 8 out of which were open-ended, and there were two multiple choice questions on CLIL teaching materials.

We asked CLIL teachers about the materials they use and the problems they face during the selection and use of CLIL teaching materials. In addition, we asked about co-operation with their colleagues and the advantages and disadvantages of teacher-produced CLIL materials.

The questionnaires for pupils included three multiple-choice questions on CLIL teaching materials, including their preferred teaching materials, the reason for their preference, and information on extra sources they use to prepare for classes. There were altogether 112 4th graders and 76 6th graders participating in the survey, out of which there were 101 girls and 87 boys. Table 1. summarizes the data about the pupils who participated in the survey.

Table 1. Pupils participating in the survey.

School	4 th grade (Boys / Girls)	6 th grade (Boys / Girls)	Total (Boys /Girls)
Jankay (J)	49 (23/26)	25 (12/13)	74(35/39)
Madach (M)	47 (27/20)	36 (11/25)	83(38/45)
Tarjan 3 (T3)	16 (5/11)	15 (9/6)	31 (14/17)
Total	112 (55/57)	76 (32/44)	118 (87/101)

3. Results

3.1 Teacher questionnaires, Environment

There were 5 teachers who teach Environment via English in the three schools. Their average teaching experience is 4.75 years. Teachers in two schools (J, T3) use teacher produced materials, in the third school (M) they use an English-language textbook produced in Hungary together with materials from the Internet.

The problem most often cited in connection with the selection and use of CLIL materials was that the language level of the pupils is often not at the level of the teaching material. All respondents mentioned that there was a co-operation between language and content teachers in the preparation and use of CLIL materials. Two schools also have a teaching material bank.

Out of the five teachers, three use teacher-produced CLIL materials, stating that the advantages of teacher-produced CLIL materials are first and foremost that they are in line with the language level of the pupils, and also that they can be amended based on past experience with the material. In other words, these materials can contribute to the creation of a safe environment for the pupils and contribute to learner autonomy.

Disadvantages mentioned include that preparing these materials takes a lot of time, and that these materials need to be photocopied, which can be time-consuming and costly.

3.2 Teacher questionnaires, Nature

There were 4 teachers who teach Nature via English in the three schools. Their average teaching experience is 3 years. They teach the subject Nature through English to 6th graders, whose English is at A2 level. In contrast to teachers teaching in the 4th grade, CLIL teachers in the 6th grade reported that they used a greater variety of materials, including textbooks published in Hungary, English translations of a Hungarian textbook, English language textbooks published in Hungary, the internet, teacher-produced CLIL materials and materials developed by colleagues.

The problems in connection with the selection of CLIL materials included the language level of the material and finding English language visuals. A problem related to the use of materials is the language level of the pupils. All four teachers co-operate with language teachers, two with content teachers, and one with a native speaker.

CLIL teachers teaching in the 6th grade mentioned similar advantages and disadvantages in connection with teacher-produced CLIL materials to those of teachers teaching in the 4th grade. The most important advantage being that teacher-produced materials are appropriate for the language level and age of pupils, are in line with their background knowledge, and they are fun to use. The

only disadvantage mentioned was that preparing and copying these materials takes up too much time.

3.3 Pupils' questionnaires

The first question on the pupils' questionnaire was what type of study material the pupils liked best. The questionnaire included six options:

- a) using the English and Hungarian textbooks together
- b) using the English textbook
- c) using photocopied worksheets
- d) using the internet
- e) using the Hungarian textbook
- f) using the workbook

Table 2 summarizes the results.

Table 2. Answers to question 1, pupils' questionnaire

Type	%
English and Hungarian textbook together	38
Internet	18.6
English textbook	18
Hungarian textbook	12.7
Photocopied worksheets	8
Workbook	4.7
Total	100

38% of the pupils answered that they liked using the English and Hungarian textbooks together. In the second multiple choice question we asked the pupils about the reasons for their choice. They had the following options:

- a) it is easier to study from it
- b) it covers everything we need to know
- c) it is interesting
- d) I understand it better.

The reasons pupils who chose the option 'using the English and Hungarian textbooks together' gave for their choice are summarized in Appendix 1. The results indicate a somewhat practical or pragmatic attitude from the part of the pupils; 46.5 % chose this option because this study material covers everything they need, and 25.5% chose this option because they understood it better.

18.6 % of the pupils chose the internet as their preferred study material. It comes as no surprise that the reason is that using the internet is probably the most interesting option. Appendix 2 illustrates the distribution of the reasons

pupils gave for their choice. 48.6% of the pupils chose the internet because they found it interesting, and 42.8% chose this option because it covers everything they need.

18% of the pupils chose using English textbooks as their preferred option. The reasons again sound pragmatic, as 47% of the pupils choosing this option stated that this type of material covers everything they need to know. 23.5% of the pupils stated that they chose the English textbooks because it is easier to study from it. See Appendix 3 for details.

12.7 % of the pupils prefer using the Hungarian textbook. In their case, understanding was the key priority in choosing this option. (See Appendix 4) 46% of pupils favouring this option stated that they understood the Hungarian textbook better, 20.75% of the pupils stated that it was easier to study from the Hungarian textbook, and 20.75% chose the option that the Hungarian textbook covered everything they needed to know.

Photocopied worksheets proved to be the least popular, they were the choice of only 8% of the pupils. Teacher-produced CLIL materials are usually handed out to pupils in the form of photocopied worksheets. Their relative unpopularity is a somewhat unexpected result, as teachers devote time and energy to tailor CLIL materials to the needs of the pupils. However, the reasons why pupils like it are exactly why teachers develop these materials: to help pupils to understand content, thus contribute to learner autonomy and a safe learning environment. 40% of the pupils choosing this option stated that they like these worksheets because they understand them better, and 26.7% stated that it was easier to study from these worksheets. See Appendix 5 for details.

4. Summary

In this paper we reported results of a questionnaire survey on primary CLIL teaching materials used in teaching the subjects Nature and Environment through English in Hungarian bilingual primary schools. The results indicate that, as CLIL teachers develop their own materials, the focus of their endeavours is helping to tailor the materials to the language level of the pupils, thus improving learner autonomy and creating a safe learning environment.

Considering pupils' questionnaires, the results indicate that pupils have a pragmatic approach to CLIL materials and they prefer to have some Hungarian material in addition to the English textbook. Even though teachers produce materials, pupils don't seem to appreciate that.

Our results can be considered as a starting point for future investigations into the theory and practice of CLIL teaching materials development in teacher training and in-service training courses.

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- <http://www.paaljapan.org/resources/proceedings/PAAL9/pdf/Howard.pdf>

Appendix 1. Pupils' questionnaires.

Reasons for choosing option a) Using the English and Hungarian textbooks together

Reason	%
it covers everything we need to know	46.5
I understand it better	25.5
it is easier to study from it	14
it is interesting	14
total	100

Appendix 2. Pupils' questionnaires.

Reasons for choosing option d) Using the internet

Reason	%
it is interesting	48.6
it covers everything we need to know	42.8
I understand it better	8.6
total	100

Appendix 3. Pupils' questionnaires.

Reasons for choosing option b) Using the English textbook

Reason	%
it covers everything we need to know	47
it is easier to study from it	23.5
it is interesting	20.5
I understand it better	9
total	100

Appendix 4. Pupils' questionnaires.

Reasons for choosing option e) Using the Hungarian textbook

Reason	%
I understand it better	46
it is easier to study from it	20.75
it covers everything we need to know	20.75
it is interesting	12.5
total	100

Appendix 5. Pupils' questionnaires.

Reasons for choosing option c) Using photocopied worksheets

Reason	%
I understand it better	40
it is easier to study from it	26.7
it is interesting	20
it covers everything we need to know	13.3
total	100