



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

# Certifying the language competences of Italian CLIL teachers

Geraldine Ludbrook

EALTA

Ethics in Language Testing and  
Assessment

May 5th-8th 2011 - Siena



# CLIL

---

1. CLIL in Italy
2. Research project
3. Test development
4. Recent educational reform



# CLIL

---

## Content and Language Integrated Learning

Definition: Learning content through an additional language  
(foreign or second language)

Wide range of forms:

Bilingual education

Content based instruction

Immersion

English as medium of instruction

Languages Across the Curriculum

Coyle, Hood & Marsh (2010)

# European CLIL

---

Stems from EC Policy for multilingualism:

Mother tongue plus two other languages      COM (2005)

Different models of CLIL in different European contexts

Status of languages (minority, official, foreign)

Target language (English dominant)

Subjects taught (sport → science)

Exposure time (modules, mainstream)

Eurydice (2006)

# European CLIL

---

## 4Cs Framework

### Content

The subject matter that drives the learning process.

### Communication

Not only learning language but “learning to use language and using language to learn”.

### Cognition

Allowing learners to become aware of the higher order thinking skills needed for the learning process.

### Culture

The development of intercultural understanding and global citizenship.

Coyle (2007)



# CLIL teachers

---

## Different qualifications in different contexts

- Teachers have a double qualification in both the content subject and the foreign language.
- Classroom teachers use an additional language as the medium of instruction.
- Foreign language teachers teach non-language subject content.
- Exchange teachers from other countries are brought into the classroom of the host country.
- Content subject teacher and foreign language teacher work together to produce materials and/or to team-teach in the classroom.

# CLIL in Italy

---

- CLIL is mainly delivered through short modules.
- Projects launched throughout Italy, initiated by individual FL teachers within schools.
- Projects supported and funded by regional education authorities, university faculties, and regional institutions for research into education.
- Primary and middle school: sciences, art, geography, technology  
Secondary school: history, biology, ecology, science, economics
- Strong multi-language policy: French, German, Spanish, minority languages such as Slovene and Friulan
- Team-taught CLIL provision

Eurydice (2006), Langé (2007)

# Test development project

---

University of Venice CLIL training courses for FL and content teachers

## Test structure

### 1. Written paper

Knowledge of CLIL methodology - Awareness of pedagogical approaches - Ability to adapt authentic materials – Ability to reflect on experience

### 2. Practical test

➤ Performance test of FL communicative abilities.

## Pilot project

Language of CLIL provision: English

Content subject: Science

School: Upper secondary



# L2 performance testing

---

Performance tests to assess foreign or second language abilities for specific occupational purposes:

- Business English
- Occupational English Test
- Aviation English

Douglas (2000), McNamara (1996)

Performance tests to assess teachers' foreign or second language competence

International Teaching Assistants

Taped Evaluation of Assistants Classroom Handling (TEACH)

Graduate Student Instructor Oral English Test (GSI-OET)

Professional English Assessment for Teachers (PEAT)

# Developing tests for specific purpose language use

---

Construct: analysis of the target language use situation (TLU)

Tasks: authentic, real-world, to elicit TL in testing context

Interaction between language and content knowledge

Bachman (2002), Douglas (2000), McNamara (1996)

# Research questions

---

1. What activity types are used in Italian CLIL science classrooms?
2. What roles do EFL and content teachers play in Italian CLIL science classrooms?
3. What language do content teachers use in Italian CLIL science classrooms?
- 4 a. What communication strategies do Italian science teachers use in CLIL classrooms to manage their L2 production?
- 4 b. What feedback strategies do Italian science teachers use in CLIL classrooms to manage student L2 production?

# CLIL teacher's competences

---

## Step 1: Review of the literature

### Target language competences for teaching CLIL

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) (Cummins)
- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Cummins)
- Language of classroom management
- Language of teaching
- Language of learning activities

Bertaux, Coonan, Frigols-Martín & Mehisto (2010)

# Analysis of TLU domain: CLIL classroom observation

---

6 content teachers

20 hours lesson time

School

upper secondary technical school

Professional experience

10+ years

Content subjects

electronics, graphics, statistics, IT  
systems, economics, general science

English background

B1 certification – Dialang B2 –  
professional use

CLIL training

Italy and abroad

CLIL experience

6-7 years – co-teaching



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

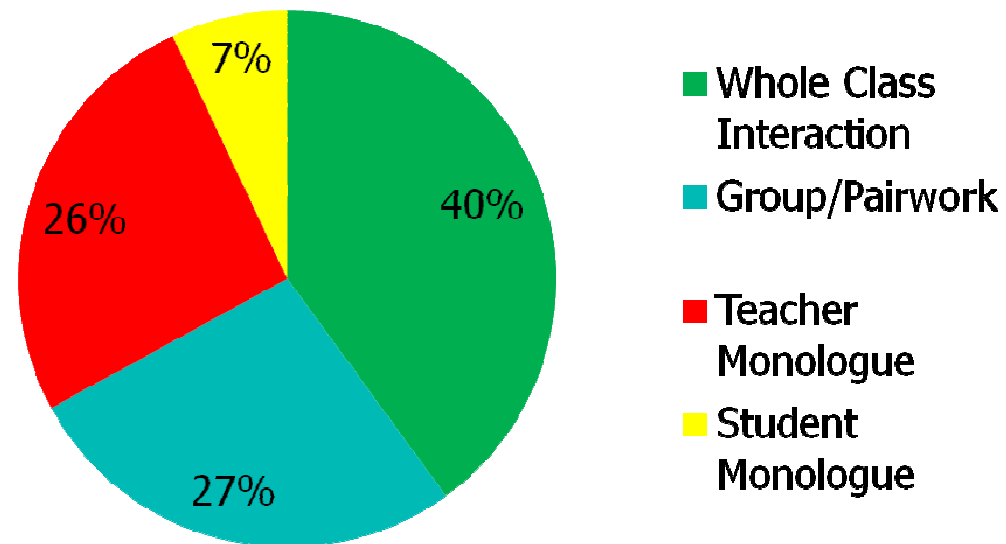
---

# Brief review of findings



# Activity types

## CLIL Classroom Activity Types Italian data



Lemke's (1990) science classroom activity types

# EFL & content teachers

---

Two main models in Italian classrooms

1. Collaborative team
2. Separate roles

Menegale (2008)

Factors that may influence the choice of model:

Teaching style: communicative vs. teacher-fronted  
Interdisciplinary skills: crossover between teachers

- Level of content teacher's general foreign language proficiency



# Content teacher language

---

CLIL classroom observation schedule

Developed from Elder (1993) by CLIL expert informants

1. General language proficiency:
  - Intelligibility
  - fluency and flexibility of expression
  - accuracy
  
2. Using subject-specific language:
  - the knowledge of subject-specific terms and their appropriate use,
  - the ability to structure scientific discourse, and
  - the use of scientific language suitable for the level of the class
  
3. Using the language of classroom interaction: negotiating for meaning
  
4. Using L1 and L2

# General language proficiency

---

B1-B2 level not much higher than students' level of proficiency.

L1 interference – typical errors of Italian learners

Tenses

Question forms

Prepositions

Lexis

Pronunciation

EFL teacher corrects content teacher's language inaccuracies.

# Using subject-specific language

---

Control of subject-specific terms and their appropriate use

Simple connectives used to structure scientific discourse: *and, but, so, then, if.*

Challenge of using scientific language suitable for the level of the class:

- Experienced content teachers, so know content needs.
- Many scientific concepts can be expressed using basic language constructions (present tense, modal verbs) and subject-specific lexis.
- Use familiar and concrete examples to help student understanding.

# Language of classroom interaction

---

Main activity type: Whole Class Interaction (40%)

CLIL pedagogy invites negotiation of meaning

but

IRF pattern dominates

- Teacher retains control of topic, which student answers, which answers are correct

CLIL pedagogy encourages student production stimulated by open, referential questions

but

Teacher questions mainly closed, display

- Common in content classrooms as opposed to language classrooms
- Linked to language proficiency



# Using L1 and L2

---

Principled use of the L1 can be a resource in fostering a cross-linguistic awareness.

- Most of the teachers attempted to use English only policy.
- Rare use of a deliberate strategy of translating key terms.

# Communication strategies

---

Strategies used to overcome difficulties and monitor production

Principal difficulties observed

- Gaps in lexis, both general and subject-specific
- Gaps in structures or morphological and syntactical errors
- Consistent non-standard pronunciation or intonation

Principal strategies observed

- Use of Italian
- Reformulation and self-correction
- Appeal for assistance to the EFL teacher

Tarone (1980)



# Feedback strategies

---

## Student error types

Unsolicited use of L1

Pronunciation

Vocabulary

Grammar

Content

Hesitation

## Teacher feedback strategies observed

Reminder, ignored, clarification request

Direct correction, some elicitation

Translation

Ignored, recast, direct correction, metalinguistic information

Direct correction

Elicitation, questioning

Lyster (2007), Panova & Lyster (2002)



# Test construct

---

General language proficiency: Can construct a reasoned argument; develop an argument; explain a problem; speculate about causes, consequences, hypothetical situations; use cohesive devices to link sentences into clear, connected discourse; express him/herself fluently; use a broad lexical repertoire; use communication strategies to overcome gaps.

Subject-specific language: Can use specialist terms; use cohesive devices to structure scientific discourse.

Language of classroom interaction: Can make effective use of an interactive style using questions, imperatives, feedback strategies.

Language of classroom management: Can give instructions.

Use of L1 and L2: Can make strategic use of code-switching.





# Test tasks

---

Task 1: Deliver a short (20 minute) lecture

Using own teaching material

Simulated class of postgraduate students

- To elicit sustained cohesive speech and subject specialist language
- To elicit language of classroom interaction
- To elicit strategic use L1/L2

Task 2: Give instructions for and organise a pair/group activity.

- To elicit language of classroom management

# Reporting results

---

Language performance evaluated by two raters:

FL expert

CLIL expert

Report on language performance

- Accuracy of grammar and pronunciation
- Fluency
- Flexibility
- Knowledge of subject-specific language
- Interaction with students
- Classroom management

Overall recommendation

- Language competence sufficient to teach alone
- Language competence insufficient to teach alone – co-teaching with FL teacher recommended

# New developments

---

Recent education reform in Italy (2010)

CLIL compulsory

from 2012-13: last three years of *licei linguistici*

from 2014-14: final year in all other secondary schools

Issues to be addressed:

Teaching materials

Examinations

Higher stakes for all agents

School principals

Students & families

➤ Teachers : need for high quality training in CLIL language and pedagogy

# Teacher training

---

Some implications for CLIL content teacher training:

- Level of general language proficiency that allows independent teaching.
- Specialist language: not only knowledge of terms but ability to structure subject-specific discourse.
- Awareness of communication strategies to manage production.
- Awareness of strategies to scaffold and provide feedback for student production in language and content.

## REFERENCES

- Bachman, L.F. (2002) "Some reflections on task-based language performance assessment", *Language Testing*, 19 (4), 453-476.
- Bertaux, P, Coonan, C.M., Frigols-Martín, M.J. & Mehisto, P. (2010). *The CLIL Teacher's Competences Grid*. CLIL Cascade Network. Retrieved from <http://ccn-clil.eu>.
- Commission of the European Communities, COM (2005). *A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism*. COM (2005) 596 final. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/com596\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lang/doc/com596_en.pdf).
- Coonan, C.M. (Ed.). (2006). *CLIL: un nuovo ambiente di apprendimento. Sviluppi e riflessioni sull'uso veicolare di una lingua seconda/straniera*. Venezia: Libreria Editrice Cafoscarina.
- Coyle, D. (2007). Content and Language Integrated Learning: Towards a Connected Research Agenda for CLIL Pedagogies. *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(5), pp. 543-562.
- Coyle, D., Hood, P. & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL. Content and Language Integrated Learning*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Douglas, D. (2000). *Language Testing for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elder, C. (1993). How do subject specialists construe classroom language proficiency?. *Language Testing*, 10 (3), 235-253.
- Eurydice (2006). *Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) at School in Europe*. Brussels: Eurydice European Unit.
- Langé, G. (2007). Italy. In Maljers, A., Marsh, D. and Wolff, D. (Eds.), *Windows on CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning in the European Spotlight* (pp. 108-115). The Hague: European Platform for Dutch Education, and Graz: European Centre for Modern Languages.
- Lemke, J.L. (1990). *Talking Science: Language, Learning, and Values*, Westport: Ablex Publishing.
- Lyster, R. (2007). *Learning and teaching languages through content: a counterbalanced approach*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- McNamara, T. (1996). *Measuring Second Language Performance*. Harlow: Longman.
- Menegale, M. (2008b). Team Teaching in CLIL: tecniche, pianificazione e gestione. In Cardona M. (Ed.) *Apprendere le lingue in ambiente CLIL. Aspetti teorici e percorsi applicativi*. Bari: Cacucci, 170-182.
- Panova, I. & Lyster, R. (2002). Patterns of corrective feedback and uptake in an adult ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 36, 573-595.
- Tarone, E. (1980). Communication strategies, foreigner talk, and repair in interlanguage. *Language Learning Journal*, 30(2), 417-431.



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

---

Thank you

[ludbrook@unive.it](mailto:ludbrook@unive.it)