

CORE Norway A preliminary state-of-the-art report

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1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to give an overview of the development of CLIL in Norway, with special focus on the latest projects, research findings and teacher qualifications. There are no national guidelines for teacher education in CLIL, and courses and training are only offered to schools or teachers participating in national pilot projects. Therefore, the article will discuss the contexts and results of these projects in order to shed some light on how both pre-service and in-service teachers work with the method and how they acquire and develop their CLIL competence.

Despite government recommendations presented in White Paper 23 (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007-2008) and White Paper 16 (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005-2009) to introduce CLIL into Norwegian education, the process of implementation and dissemination has been a slow one. The article discusses some of the effects of certain framework conditions on the practice and development of CLIL, such as organisation, teacher qualifications, and the new national curriculum's emphasis on basic skills. The article will also address the issue of elitism and how CLIL has, from the beginning, been considered by many to be incompatible with the Norwegian unified school model. The view of CLIL as first and foremost a way to improve academic English and as preparation for higher education, has limited implementation to the general studies programme in upper secondary school. Recent research, however, indicates that this view is unfounded. The article will present results from pilot projects and bottom-up initiatives describing teacher involvement and training. The fact that there is currently no new national strategy for the development of CLIL projects nor for a systematic introduction of the method in teacher training programmes, may have negative consequences when it comes to the continued spread of CLIL and the funding of future projects. The lack of initiatives on the part of education authorities cannot, however, be explained by poor results in CLIL projects. Rather, it is part of a "strategic paradox" (Paulsen, 2010; Svenhard et al., 2007) that is CLIL in Norway; that it has a very limited distribution in spite of the fact that it fulfils many of the national strategies for the improvement of language education.

2. Government Policy and Official Regulations on CLIL

2.1 Guidelines

One example of this paradox is the lack of updated national guidelines for CLIL. Since the method was first introduced into Norwegian upper secondary schools in 1993, the process of establishing and spreading the method has for the most part relied on bottom-up initiatives and the efforts of individual teachers. A letter was issued from the Ministry of Church, Research and Education in 1993, which gave certain conditions for the funding of pilot projects. They required that in CLIL classes, at least 30% of the teaching had to be in the target language, “the students must be volunteers, the teaching must be in accordance with current curricula, and the course must have the same examination requirements as for other students” (Svenhard et al., 2007, p. 140). The use of the target language was not obligatory in examinations but it was encouraged. From the early introduction in the 1990s, courses were largely begun by pioneers catering to the needs of academically ambitious students predominantly from the general studies branch at the upper secondary level. Although the guidelines are still current, there has been a shift in emphasis during the last decade, both with regard to subjects taught and student groups.

As the results of the PISA survey of 2006 made it clear that Norwegian students fell under the OECD’s standard requirements for reading, math and science (Roe, 2008), increasingly, CLIL initiatives have been linked to literacy research projects at both primary and secondary level (Brevik, 2012; Brevik & Moe, 2012; Hellekjær, 2005; Hellekjær & Hopfenbeck, 2012; Moe, 2010; Svenhard, 2010; Svenhard, 2012). The method was first recommended and described as an alternative method to improve students’ reading proficiency in English in White Paper 23 (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2007-2008). Similarly, CLIL was introduced in other political documents such as White Paper 16 (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2005-2009). None of these documents, however, contained guidelines concerning important aspects such as instruction, organisation and training. Significant CLIL results and examples of “good practice” were not provided until CLIL became a priority area of the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education which was founded in 2005. As CLIL projects under the auspices of the centre started attracting more attention during this period, it also spurred a greater interest from researchers working in the fields of language education and literacy. Lately, we have seen an increase both in process research results and the number of Master theses looking into the effects of the method (i.e. Faye Schjøll, 2009).

Combined, all of these efforts to document and increase the use of the CLIL method in Norwegian schools have ensured that teachers who are new to CLIL now have “good practice” examples to guide them and research relevant to the Norwegian education situation and system. Interestingly, however, neither the resources made available nor the growing amount of research recommending the method as a means to support national strategies for literacy and language education seem to increase the number of CLIL schools or the introduction of CLIL into teacher training programmes to any significant degree.

2.2 Organisation

Although more empirical evidence is needed, it appears in some of the qualitative data found in surveys and process research (Svenhard et al., 2007; Paulsen, 2010), that one reason for the slow spread of CLIL may not be a case of teachers or teacher educators questioning the positive effects of CLIL on reading and language skills, but rather a political and an organisational issue. Firstly, the lack of national competence requirements for teachers using CLIL, has led to a situation where it is up to the teacher to decide whether he or she is qualified. As reported in Svenhard et al. (2007), many of the teachers at upper secondary level holds double - degrees in a foreign language (predominantly English) and a non-linguistic subject, and are thus formally qualified for teaching a CLIL subject. However, CLIL is also taught without this combination, as the usual minimum requirement in Norway is education in the subject matter. This has led to a variety of solutions, where skills and proficiency in the target language are assessed by the teachers themselves, deciding whether it is sufficient enough for teaching through the CLIL method:

Whereas the survey shows that there are teachers with subject-matter degrees only who teach through a foreign language, there are no examples of teachers with language degrees only who provide CLIL. Some schools seem to accept as the only language qualification the fact that the teachers are native speakers of the target language. Non-native speakers may also be considered qualified to teach in the target language on the basis of having lived in an English-speaking country for more than six months (Svenhard et al. 2007, p. 143).

Secondly, teachers report on limited opportunities for inter-school collaboration and teamwork. In both Svenhard et al. (2007) and Paulsen's report (2010), teachers emphasise their sense of being without support from colleagues, leaders and the school's administration, with time table conditions and student grouping routines emerging as potential barriers for CLIL implementation. The degree of autonomy granted upper secondary teachers is also mentioned as a type of organisation that makes teamwork and cross-curricular activities more difficult. This prevents colleagues from sharing good practice and materials, something which would have made the task of implementing CLIL less daunting to many teachers. Hence, instead of counting on their own organisations and employers to improve framework conditions, teachers seek support and opportunities to exchange material and methods through networks and seminars abroad or through those offered in national projects coordinated by the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education or the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (Paulsen, 2010).

National curricula have traditionally had little focus on cross-curricular teaching, but the new National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2006), encourages the integration and transfer of skills and knowledge between different subjects and programme areas. It does not state methods, but supplies teachers with competence objectives for each of the subjects. For instance, the competence aims in the area of Communication after the first year of upper secondary level in English require that the students:

- understand and use a wide general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to his/her own education programme
- understand oral and written presentations about general and specialised themes related to his/her own education programme

Here, the focus on basic skills in all subjects and competence aims such as these that accommodate cross-curricular methods, opens up for a wider use of CLIL. However, schedules at some schools continue to be organised in a way that supports and sustains the traditional autonomous but lonely teacher.

2.3 The Notion of CLIL as Elitist

Thirdly, both the above mentioned surveys also found that schools which continue to offer CLIL more often than not have an internationally oriented school culture that work as a positive drive for implementation. For many of the schools, implementation of CLIL is part of a process of becoming fully-fledged IB schools (International Baccalaureate) and to ensure a competitive advantage in student recruitment in areas where students may choose between schools (Svenhard et al., 2007; Svenhard, 2012). Consequently, they attract many of the most academically ambitious groups of students and students of a certain socio-cultural and economic background, something which also gives rise to a general notion of CLIL as “elitist”. These considerations are also confirmed by teachers saying they generally expect more motivated and ambitious students to apply for CLIL courses (Svenhard et al., 2007). Arguably, this is yet another condition that may explain the slow spread of CLIL in Norwegian schools. The concept of elite schools seems at odds with Norwegian education policy in general and the political ideas that inform our national curriculum and our teaching practices and traditions.

One example of the political principles behind the Norwegian education system is to be found in the mandate of the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education:

The centre shall help implement and execute national education policy concerning foreign languages in order to enable all children, young people and adults to receive *equal and appropriate* education of a high quality in an *inclusive* environment. (Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education, 2013 [my italics])

The italicised words are recurring concepts in many White Papers on education, and they reflect the ideal and model of a unified school – what we know as the Norwegian unified school model. One of the model’s most important aims is to reduce social differences:

Its goals are to diminish class distinctions, reduce economic inequity and combat poverty and other forms of marginalisation. (...) Failure to acquire basic skills in primary and lower secondary school increases, for example, the probability of dropping out of upper secondary school. The differences are closely linked with family background, that is to say with the parents’ level of education and income, or whether the pupil or student comes from a majority or minority background.

(White paper: Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning, Summary of Report No. 16 (2006-2007))

This is a proactive approach to ensure that the education system does not reproduce or reinforce social differences. Arguably, this political goal has led to a less instrumental perspective on education, focusing on adjusting teaching and activities to the development of each individual through adapted education and differentiation. And this is where we find the paradox of CLIL as reflected in surveys and process research (Paulsen, 2010; Svenhard et al., 2007; Svenhard, 2012). Despite the positive results of CLIL pilot projects, showing how the method can be a way to differentiate for both weak and strong students (Brevik, 2012; Brevik & Moe, 2012; Moe, 2010; Svenhard, 2010; Svenhard, 2012) and help education authorities reach national goals, CLIL is still not recognized as a general pedagogical methodology with a wide range of applications (Paulsen, 2010). The lack of national guidelines and strategies for the implementation and piloting of CLIL on *all* levels and including *all* students in the education system, combined with the number of schools promoting CLIL as part of their internationalisation programmes, targeting high achievers, may have rendered CLIL a less relevant method in the eyes of many teachers and teacher educators.

A wider analysis of the pros and cons of the Norwegian education system and its ability to incorporate CLIL, is beyond the scope of this article, but the circumstances and framework conditions described in this chapter hopefully provide some insight into the reasons for the slow spread of CLIL in Norway.

3 Training and Support in CLIL for Teachers and Other Educationalists

There are currently no courses in ordinary Norwegian teacher training education offering a comprehensive introduction to the method or opportunities for practicing CLIL in schools. Instead, Norwegian teachers and teacher trainees usually acquire different types of formal qualifications in CLIL either by participating in summer courses, workshops or seminars available abroad or in Norway through projects coordinated by the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education or the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. As the courses are usually designed and reserved for teachers in certain projects, descriptions of the training also include background and information on the projects.

3.1 Training Programs at European, National and Local Level

– duration, characteristics and sustainability, objectives, difficulties and outputs

Since it was founded in 2005, the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education, which is a national resource centre, has had the main responsibility for initiating CLIL-projects and for coordinating and disseminating the results of those projects. The centre was also responsible for mapping out the extent of CLIL activity in Norway and for supervising schools and CLIL teachers. Data presented in this article pertain to completed projects as there are no available estimates concerning the number of schools which are likely to pilot or implement the method in the future, or documentation of the number of teachers teaching with or without formal qualifications.

3.1.1 European

Norwegian teachers interested in learning more about CLIL usually apply for the various ECML seminars offered in Graz, Austria, or for longer open-enrolment courses like the CLIL courses at the Norwich Institute for Language Education in the UK (NILE). The first alternative is usually chosen in connection with school projects initiated by the national education authorities. These courses are of relatively short duration, ranging from seminars of 2-3 days to 2-week courses and usually involves school visits and obligatory dissemination reports to be distributed on the teacher's return to employers, networks and colleagues. To other CLIL teachers without government funding or the support of employers, it is usually a private initiative which has them opting for courses like the NILE summer courses. Currently (2011-2014), the municipality of Karmøy is involved as coordinating partner in a Comenius project on CLIL (CORE – CLIL Objectives and Resourcekit in Education), and one of the deliverables in this project is a series of IST-courses for teachers. These courses are published on the Comenius course website (CORE Project, 2013) and are eligible for funding by the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SiU).

3.1.2 National

National projects coordinated by the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education or the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in most cases entail some form of training for the teachers involved. CLIL one-day seminars have been offered to increase teacher awareness of the basic skill of reading and of reading strategies. Similarly, during the two largest CLIL projects initiated by the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education (Svenhard, 2010; Svenhard, 2012), the participants regularly attended seminars and workshops. CLIL was also introduced in the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research's major project FYR, which aim is to reduce the number of students dropping out of vocational studies (Ruud, 2012). Here, cross-curricular activities and the CLIL approach were recommended used in the core subject of English in vocational programmes, and teachers were required to create resources and lesson plans integrating English into the workplaces of vocational studies at upper secondary school.

3.1.3 Local

In some cases, the CLIL initiatives of schools may also benefit local businesses and industry and teachers may find that they need to develop their CLIL competence to meet demands outside the classroom. In both the business sector and the public sector, there is a well-documented need for improved English proficiency skills among Norwegian employees (Hellekjær, 2007; Hellekjær, 2010). Also, the poor foreign language communication skills of many of the migrant workers in the tourist industry create problems, and one example of schools that are using CLIL to meet the demands of local employers, is Godalen upper secondary in the Southwestern part of Norway. The school joined a Leonardo Da Vinci project called "Marina" in 2009 to form networks with other schools in countries like Greece, Austria, Sweden, Spain, and the Czech Republic, which all use CLIL. The aim was to develop teaching material suitable for vocational students who need added instruction in English. After having completed a successful project, the school is now in the process of establishing

more CLIL courses aimed at developing the skills of adults who are already working in the coastal tourism industry (Godalen, 2009). Similarly, Breivika upper secondary school in Tromsø has for several years used a CLIL approach in their Food and Beverages programme and as a way of preparing their students for exchanges to Germany (Andreassen, 2010). The school was also part of the CLILiG-Scan-Project (Content and Language Integrated Learning in German in Scandinavia, 2008-2011), where the teachers received supervision from the University of Tromsø.

4 CLIL Implementation in Initial Teacher Training

In an international programme at the University of Trondheim (1999-2004), Norwegian teacher students were exchanged with students from the US and the Netherlands to do their practice abroad. The programme introduced these students to the CLIL method and how to teach subjects like maths, natural science, social science, and history bilingually at the primary level (Hestnes, 2006). In 2011, another international project involving English, Russian and Finnish were begun, providing both teacher students and in-service teachers with training in the CLIL method through a 15 credit web-based course. This was a joint project called Nordområdesatsingen (2009 – 2011) between county municipalities in the northern part of Norway, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and Østfold University College (Fylkesmannen i Finnmark, 2012).

5 CLIL Implementation in In-Service Training

There are currently no in-service training courses in CLIL available at Norwegian universities or university colleges. However, all teachers may apply for the extension course offered by Østfold University College. In the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education's first major project in 2005, the aim was to see whether CLIL could be used to prepare pupils for the transition from lower to upper secondary school. In order to document the effects of CLIL teaching, teachers and testers cooperated in developing two parallel language tests for the 7th grade and one test for the 10th grade (Moe, 2010). All individual reports with teachers' comments are to be found in Svenhard (2010).

6 Conclusion

Some teachers comment that their motivation for applying for programmes like Leonardo Da Vinci, Comenius or pilot projects like those coordinated by the Norwegian National Centre for Foreign Languages in Education, is very often that participation in such projects is their only opportunity to learn about the CLIL method and exchange teaching material and experiences (Andreassen, 2010; Streitlien, 2010; Paulsen, 2010). This is yet another example of the paradox of CLIL in Norway, where research and experience show that it is fulfilling

many of the aims and goals of the education authorities but where it is yet to be introduced into teacher education programmes and in-service courses.

Brevik (2012), Brevik & Moe (2012) and Moe (2010) show that CLIL in many cases is better suited than ordinary methods to differentiate inside a unified classroom and that it leads to a greater degree of social equalisation. However, without strategic plans for further research into these results and without higher education cultivating the teacher competence needed to bring about such results, the mainstreaming of CLIL remains an unlikely prospect.

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