Chapter Five

Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.1 Introduction

In the final part of this thesis the main conclusions are presented. This is done within a summary of the findings which answered the three-part research question of the study. The implications of the findings for teacher education for English language teachers and CLIL are then considered. This is followed by a section which discusses the limitations of the study. To end, future lines of research emanating from the issues presented in this thesis are suggested.

The major aim of this work has been to explore Content and Language Integrated Learning in secondary education and to evaluate its effectiveness by looking at the impact of Content and Language Integrated Learning on language education which took place in a classroom throughout the last semester of school year. In particular, it has been attempted to analyse the process according to the following categories: language aspects, content aspects, learning environment as well as attitudinal aspects and motivation. In order to accomplish these goals, teachers were investigated with to determine the changes concerning the above mentioned categories. Since it was the intention of the researcher to describe process variables as they naturally operate in the CLIL classroom as well as to get a comprehensive picture of the phenomena under investigation, a non-interventionist approach in the form of a descriptive study was adopted with different instruments of data collection.

5.2 Findings

After having conducted an empirical study about CLIL classrooms and connecting its results with the theoretical foundation of this approach and the four language skills established in the initial chapters, I would like to summarize and conclude the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires as well as from the observation, we can say that the concept of this approach has been examined with a special focus on the language learning aspect. It has been shown that it puts genuine communication in the vehicular language at its core because meaningful language usage is crucial for developing language competence. Moreover, six theoretical approaches to second language learning and acquisition have been introduced, of which one theory, namely Communicative Competence, is central to the concept of CLIL because its lessons are clearly characterized as communicative events. Further, a literature review on Content and Language Integrated Learning research has been provided and it can be summed up that pretty much every product-oriented study reports that learners significantly outperform their non-CLIL counterparts of mainstream education in the overall foreign language proficiency as well as in each language skill, even though some language skills profit more than others. Also the process-oriented studies, which focus on classroom interaction and discourse, report of CLIL as being beneficial to students" language competence. Finally, the compact overview of each of the four language skills has demonstrated that each skill fulfils an important role of human communication because successful participation in an interaction requires productive and receptive skills. Hence, CLIL students must gain competences in each of the four language skills for being proficient foreign or second language users.

The aim of this thesis was to investigate CLIL classrooms and to find out how much time is allocated to each language skill and how these four skills get promoted in CLIL lessons. The empirical study presented in this researcg used highly structured questionnaires observational schedules for observing eight CLIL lessons taught in three different schools.

With regard to the research questions, it can be concluded that:

The qualitative as well as quantitative presentation of the available data presented in part chapters three and four demonstrated the development of L2 and teachers practice which were taking place in a CLIL classroom throughout the mentioned school year. The analysis of language development observed during the mentioned school year allows the researcher to draw the following conclusions:

1. **Second language Development:** A considerable development was noticed in the case of speaking as well as listening skills development. Most of the CLIL learners gradually were getting rid of their language barrier and what is more, they were more willing to take part in various discussions and also express their mind. This change was also due to the lexical development. The CLIL learners were acquiring more vocabulary due to the CLIL lessons. As far as writing and reading skills are concerned, some changes were noticed, especially when analysing the CLIL learners' register and comprehension.

2. **The use of L1 (code-switching):** It was also noticed that there was a significant implementation concerning the use of L1 during the CLIL classes both on the part of the CLIL learners and the CLIL teachers. The use of L1 during the CLIL lessons was diminishing especially in the case of geography and biology which was mainly due to the fact that the CLIL learners were gaining more content and language knowledge which made them feel more confident in

a foreign language. When the CLIL teachers noticed that the CLIL learners understood more, they also tried to avoid code-switching.

3. **Content aspects:** The marks received by the CLIL learners at the end of the school year revealed that there were some possibilities concerning the development of acquiring content aspects. Even though a lot of CLIL learners did not receive very good or plus good marks, they received good or satisfactory marks which suggested having mastered the content quite well in a foreign language.

4. **Interaction:** As far as interaction in concerned, a few very important the following points were noticed. Firstly, gradually there was more interaction taking place between the CLIL teachers and the CLIL learners because the CLIL learners were getting rid of the language barrier mentioned above and what is more, they were getting used to the new environment. Secondly, there was more interpersonal interaction going on between the CLIL learners and the CLIL teachers in English – the CLIL learners were trying to get friendly with the CLIL teachers. Finally, more interaction was being observed between the CLIL learners. Gradually, they started completing all the group or pair work tasks and what is even more important, they started doing it in English.

abilities. At this point, it may be said, that CLIL had a positive influence on the CLIL learners' attitude which changed from a "materialistic" one to a more "personal" one.

5. **Motivation:** Following the attitudinal aspects, it can be also said that being in a CLIL

classroom had a positive influence on the CLIL learners' motivation which was

also noticed on the basis of the answers provided in the questionnaire. The CLIL learners seemed to have shifted from the extrinsic one at the beginning of the school year to the intrinsic one at the end of the school year.

Having provided the brief conclusions above, it can be said that the observed changes in language education which took place in the CLIL classroom throughout the whole school year had a positive influence on the CLIL learners and therefore, it can be stated that teaching subjects using the "CLIL method" can be very efficient. One should ask oneself the question: "What makes the CLIL method efficient?". A few factors could have influenced its effectiveness:

- **The ability to explore content deeply** which comes from the fact that the CLIL learners had to spend more time on "digesting" all the information. According to Craik and Lockhart (1972: 671-684), the deeper the content is explored the more it is remembered. The observed CLIL learners were spending a lot of time on learning geographical, biological and mathematical concepts often in both languages.

- **Cohesion of the topics** – when the topics of particular subjects are related to each other there is a higher possibility that the CLIL learners will better remember the language forms through which particular concepts are expressed.

- **Organisation of data** – all the concepts were organised according to particular topics which facilitated learning.

- **Learner Autonomy** – the more autonomy the CLIL learners have the more motivated they would feel. It was particularly noticed when the CLIL learners were asked to work on their own projects (e.g. biology).

- **Productivity** – according to Swain and Lapkin (1995: 371-391) language productivity is very important because apart from the content that the CLIL learners have to "digest" they also have to think how to say it in a foreign language. It definitely had an influence on second language development.

- **Regularity** – being exposed to a foreign language through CLIL classes a few times a week has a huge influence on second language development. Improvement in all foreign language skills as well as decrease in the use of L1 during the CLIL lessons was a visible outcome of the CLIL classes.

The results of the analysis of issues concerning language education taking part in a CLIL classroom during the lessons observed as well as the results of the study carried out in other bilingual schools have significant implications for bilingual education and make it possible to make further recommendations. However, it is very important to keep in mind that the CLIL classroom practices and educational policy choices presented below are not necessarily generalizable to all CLIL teaching contexts and therefore, should be viewed as suggestions to be taken rather than as definitive solutions. The following recommendations will be divided into three parts: classroom practice, school practice and educational system:

5.1.2 Recommendations

1. **Classroom practice:**

- As far as the choice of the teaching method is concerned, the CLIL teacher should aim at a combination of content and language focused instruction, which would enable the CLIL learners to use language for genuine communication as well as to attain a high level of content accuracy;

- The quality of the CLIL learners' output may also be significantly improved when they have sufficient time to plan and enough tangible stimuli;

- The CLIL learners' motivation can be enhanced further by getting them more involved in the process of the lesson, e.g. providing them with some project work;

- The CLIL teachers should be careful not to take up most of the available speaking time with their explanations or instructions so the CLIL learners will have an opportunity to have more practice in their target language;

- The CLIL learners should be also encouraged to develop critical thinking as well as to reflect upon and evaluate progress in meeting outcomes (e.g. introduction of Language Portfolio);

2**Educational system:**

- The teachers as well as the learners should be provided with some preparation materials for *EFL*in English as well as with mock exams;

- Special teaching resources should be provided which could be used by all teachers in order to achieve standardization (Hamp, 1996: 240);

- The CLIL teachers should be provided with opportunities to take part in teacher training devoted to bilingual education;

It is the author's hope that the above outlined principles will make CLIL lessons more conducive to integration of content and language as well as enhance the quality of bilingual education . These guidelines appear to be particularly valuable at a time when Content and Language Integrated Learning is becoming more popular all over Sudan.

5.1.3Suggestions for further research

The most important issue that seems to warrant further investigation is to discover **whether** there are any differences between the learners who study subjects in Arabic and the CLIL learners. If there are any, it would be interesting to study these differences paying special attention to content aspects.

The empirical part of this study could not provide answers to this question due to the fact that the researcher did not have a possibility to observe a group of learners who were not in a bilingual class and therefore could not compare the two groups. The main aim of this study was to provide a description of the process of language education and its development in EFL classes that taking place in a CLIL classroom throughout the school year.

A similar analysis must be carried out over a larger number of schools in which CLIL is being implemented and include more representative sample of teacher's attitudes towards teaching English through different subject matters. Also, studies must be carried out to examine the impact of CLIL on CLIL students with their non-CLIL peers. It would be interesting to compare CLIL students' results to their EFL peers in secondary education.

The question relating to differences between the learners who study subjects in Arabic and the CLIL learners is likely to be best answered through observing this issue during the chosen subjects as well as comparing them with those who enroll class where Arabic is the medium of instructions. Additionally, interviews and questionnaires could be conducted among the two groups of learners.

Another option is to conduct the lesson observation with a limited number of categories to be paid attention to (e.g. concentration on code-switching or interaction only). This modified approach would allow the

researcher to concentrate more thoroughly on particular aspects and also make appropriate comparisons between the two groups observed. The present study allowed the researcher only to note general tendencies according to many categories concentrating on one observed group only.

For the study above, it would be also advisable to conduct observations followed by an interview with a CLIL teacher. Lesson observation followed by an interview would allow the researcher to obtain two perspectives: one from the researcher and the other from the teacher, which would make presentation of the results obtained more appropriate and interesting.

Teacher's and Learner's perception is also suggested as a rich area of inquiry so as to examine teachers and learner's attitudes towards CLIL implementation in EFL classes. Also aspects of interaction and types of interaction in CLIL approach are encouraging factors of research investigation.

Finally the data of this study and its findings suggest that there is considerable potential for further research on classroom discourse and driving both content and language in EFL classroom. As a result, alternative ways of viewing such data can take place.

Most beneficial to our understanding of the differences between the learners who do not learn subjects through a foreign language and the CLIL learners would be to conduct the above suggested study as a longitudinal study lasting three years (the whole period of secondary education). The research tools would consist of regular video-taping, observations and interviews with the learners and the teachers. Longitudinal and qualitative studies have found their own place in second language education in recent years and seem to provide a source of valid information.

Appendices

Appendix (1)

A questionnaire – ATTITUDE TOWARDS BILINGUAL EDUCATION

A QUESTIONNAIRE ADDRESSED TO THE LEARNER

This questionnaire forms part of the research study for my PhD. I would appreciate it very much if you would be kind enough to help me by filling in the answers to the questions. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers – I am interested in obtaining your opinions. Replies to the questionnaire are anonymous.

If you are interested in the results of the study, please feel free to contact me at: kasiapapaja@interia.pl

Thank you for your cooperation!

What do you think about learning subjects in a foreign language? Please, express your opinion in three to five sentences paying attention to the advantages and disadvantages of learning subjects in a foreign language.

What do you think about learning subjects in a foreign language? Please, express your opinion in three to five sentences paying attention to the advantages and disadvantages of learning subjects in a foreign language.

PART 3 – THE USE OF L1

1. Should Arabic be used in the class where subjects are taught in English?

Yes No

2. Do you like your teacher to use Arabic in the class where subjects are taught in English?

Not at all a little sometimes a lot

3. When do you think it is necessary to use Arabic in the class where subjects are taught in English? (more than one answer possible)

a). to help define some new vocabulary items (e.g. some abstract words);

b). to practise the use of some phrases and expressions (e.g. doing translation

exercises);

c). to explain complex grammar points;

d). to explain difficult concepts or ideas;

e). to give instructions;

f). to give suggestions on how to learn more effectively;

g). other, please specify;

4. Why do you think the use of Arabic is necessary in the class where subjects are taught in English? (more answers are possible)

a). it helps me to understand difficult concepts better;

b). it helps me to understand new vocabulary items better;

c). it makes me feel at ease, comfortable and less stressed;

d). I don't feel lost;

e). other, please, specify;

5. Do you think the use of Arabic in the bilingual class helps you learn the subject?

No a little a lot

6. How often do you think Arabic should be used in a class where subjects are taught in English?

Never very rarely sometimes fairly frequently

7. What percentage of the time do you think Arabic should be used in a class where subjects are taught in English? Choose ONE answer ONLY.

5% 10% 20% 30% 40%

50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

Thank you for your cooperation

A questionnaire - MOTIVATION

(learner)

(ENGLISH VERSION)

1. Who decided about your bilingual education?

  o My parents

  o My friends

  o I decided

  o Other…

2. Why did you decide to start your education in a bilingual classroom?

o I wanted to learn English and get to know the Anglo-Saxon culture

o I was sure that I would have more possibilities in the future

o Other reasons…

3. Are you satisfied with learning subjects in English?

YES NO

Why? Justify your answer.

_____

_____

_____

4. What do you like about the lessons in English?

 _____

 _____

 _____

2. Do you think you have made progress in writing in the recent school year?

YES NO

If YES, in which areas have you made progress?

_____

_____

_____

If NO, in which areas haven't you made progress?

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you think you have made progress in listening comprehension in the recent school year?

YES NO

If YES, in which areas have you made progress?

_____

_____

_____

_____

If NO, in which areas haven't you made progress?

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you think you have made progress in reading comprehension in the recent school year?

YES NO

If YES, in which areas have you made progress?

_____

_____

_____

If NO, in which areas haven't you made progress?

5. Do you think that learning subjects in a foreign language is:

o easier

o more difficult

o the same as in Arabic

Why? Justify your answer:

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Which subject when learnt in a foreign language do you consider difficult?

o Geography

   o Biology

   o Mathematics

   o All of them

   o None

Why? Justify your answer:

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix (2)

A questionnaire – ATTITUDE TOWARDS BILINGUAL EDUCATION

A QUESTIONNAIRE ADDRESSED TO THE TEACHER

This questionnaire forms part of the research study for my PhD. I would appreciate it very much if you would be kind enough to help me by filling in the answers to the questions. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers – I am interested in obtaining your opinions. Replies to the questionnaire are anonymous.

Thank you for your cooperation!

What do you think about teaching subjects in a foreign language? Please, express your opinion in three to five sentences paying attention to the advantages and disadvantages of teaching subjects in a foreign language.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

PART 2

A questionnaire – THE USE OF L1

8. Should Arabic be used in the class where subjects are taught in English?

Yes No

9. **When do you think it is necessary to use Arabic in the class where subjects are taught in English? (more answers are possible)**

a). to help define some new vocabulary items (e.g. some abstract words);

b). to practise the use of some phrases and expressions (e.g. doing some translation

exercises);

c). to explain complex grammar points;

d). to explain difficult concepts or ideas;

e). to give instructions;

f). to give suggestions on how to learn more effectively;

g). other, please specify;

10. If you think the use of Arabic is necessary in the class where subjects are taught in English, why?(more answers are possible)

a). it facilitates comprehension;

b). it is more effective;

c). it is less time-consuming;

d). other, please specify;

What are the motivating factors as far as teaching in a bilingual classroom is concerned?

What are the de-motivating factors as far as teaching in a bilingual classroom is concerned?

Please, express your opinion.

Appendix (3)

PART 1
OBSERVATION SHEET
(learner)
Subject:…………… Date:…………………. Teacher:………………
The number of learners…………………… Classroom setting:………………………

THE STAGE OF THE LESSON	THE DEVELOPMENT OF TARGET LANGUAGE ABILITIES	THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRAMMAR, VOCABULARYAND PRONUNCIATION	THE USE OF L1	CONTENT MANAGEMENT	LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES	PROBLEMS AND MY OWN COMMENTS

Appendix (4)

OBSERVATION SHEET
(learner)
Subject:…………… Date:…………………. Teacher:………………
The number of learners…………………… Classroom setting:………………………

THE STAGE OF THE LESSON	THE DEVELOPMENT OF TARGET LANGUAGE ABILITIES	THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRAMMAR, VOCABULARY AND PRONUNCIATION	THE USE OF L1	CONTENT MANAGEMENT	LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES	PROBLEMS AND MY OWN COMMENTS

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