

Esther Nieto Moreno de Diezmas /
Magdalena Custodio Espinar

Multilingual Education under Scrutiny

**A Critical Analysis on CLIL Implementation
and Research on a Global Scale**



PETER LANG

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Magdalena Custodio Espinar

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This monography provides a comprehensive insight into the overriding hot topics regarding the implementation of bilingual education type CLIL (content and language integrated learning) that have been recently spotlighted by researchers and different stakeholders, including families and students. The authors analyse the multiple faces of CLIL as a global and ecological phenomenon and examine the potential of CLIL to guarantee effective language learning, along with preservation of adequate levels of content acquisition and satisfactory development of the mother tongue. The role of pre-service and in-service teacher training in unfolding CLIL is scrutinized, among other burning issues such as egalitarianism and sustainability of the approach.

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Dedication

To our families, for their priceless support and patience during the process of writing the present monography.

We also would like to dedicate this book to researchers, teachers and families who have devoted their efforts to underpin, implement and promote multilingualism in their respective fields of endeavour.

Foreword

Pedagogical innovations require time to take root and come to fruition – as many as 20 years, according to certain experts (Hughes, 2010). This has been the case of what is considered the most important innovation in language teaching in the last 25 years: Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). From a fledgling approach to help counter Europe's deficient language levels (Pérez Cañado, 2012), it has grown exponentially, branching out in exciting new directions and spilling over into variegated realms. The ramifications of CLIL are so varied and profuse and the body of research tapping into its effects is so far-reaching and prolific that it is hugely challenging to stay abreast of its rapid evolution and to fully grasp its manifold dimensions.

This is precisely where the present monograph comes in. It provides a masterful and comprehensive overview of the past, present, and future of CLIL implementation, research, and training, creating a critical lens through which to approximate the achievements, challenges, and new directions shaping the multilingual education agenda. The authors, who are well-acknowledged voices in the field, undertake this complex task with savvy by following a three-pronged structure which touches upon all the main pillars of CLIL as a global phenomenon: its characterisation; its impact on L1, L2, and content learning; and pre- and in-service teacher education for CLIL.

The first main section crucially anchors CLIL in the European policies which led to its inception and subsequently charts its growth as an international phenomenon, which is explored from a comparative transnational perspective (Spain, Japan, and the US) and through the angle of the pluriliteracies approach. The second chief heading then proceeds to examine the complex interplay of L1, L2, and content achievement in CLIL programs by canvassing the most relevant stalwart empirical evidence on the effects of CLIL, while concomitantly identifying interesting new avenues for future research. Finally, the third thematic block taps into yet another burning issue on the CLIL scenario, namely, pre- and in-service teacher education. A systematic review of policy documents, theoretical frameworks, and practical actions is conducted, once again offering transnational research outcomes and promoting the sharing of best practices across diverse contexts.

In this sense, the distinctiveness and novelty of the present volume hinge on five main fronts. To begin with, it offers an exhaustive and well-grounded state-of-the-art of the latest specialised literature on Content and Language Integrated

Learning. This is in and of itself one of the major contributions of the monograph, given the almost infinite amount of publications which exist on the topic and which are carefully selected here for their relevance and robustness. The authors' kaleidoscopic vision and capacity to foreground the most pertinent literature are extraordinary. And this systematic review is furthermore carried out by extracting the most relevant take-aways for the reader through an insightful critical reading. What is more, the volume also maps out future pathways for progression which affect all the key issues on the current CLIL agenda, including the pluriliteracies approach, attention to diversity, translanguaging, or the integration of language and content. A fourth key asset of the monograph is its onus on the supranational perspective. This is precisely what many experts consider future research should promote (Macaro et al., 2018) and it is artfully favoured by the authors through their intercontinental perspective. Finally, and in line with the foregoing, new research outcomes are also presented via multivariate analyses and comparative studies which inform best practices from diverse contexts, which are equally showcased, crucially contributing to pushing the field forward.

For all these reasons, the far-reaching impact of the present publication ripples out through absolutely all educational levels and frontline stakeholders in the CLIL arena. It is paramount for graduates and undergraduates seeking to acquaint themselves with the basics of CLIL from a scientific and updated standpoint. It becomes crucial for teacher trainers looking to determine the content of pre- and in-service education initiatives. It is a cornerstone for researchers who want to engage in relevant investigations on truly hot topics in the field. And it is incumbent on gatekeepers and educational authorities to leverage the updated information it includes to enact research-responsive pedagogical decisions.

All in all, this is a capstone publication which provides an accomplished and realistic snapshot of where we started, where we stand, and where we need to go in the CLIL arena. The explosion of interest in CLIL implementation and research has been so outstanding that it is oftentimes difficult for those invested in the multilingual education enterprise to stay abreast of its full implications. The present publication deftly accomplishes this no meager feat. Sometimes, as they say in French, *il faut reculer pour mieux sauter*. In order to appraise the full extent of such a global and multifaceted phenomenon as CLIL, we need to stop and take a step back in order to acquire the impulse that gets us through the finish line. And this impulse is precisely what the present monograph provides by so adroitly canvassing the past, present, and future of multilingual education. A must-read tour de force for anyone interested in the development, training, and research of quality CLIL implementation.

María Luisa Pérez Cañado

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