



MOBIDIC: ACADEMIC RESEARCH INTO CLIL TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Bilingual learning and teaching is an important research area – something that is borne out by the large number of publications and research reports¹ in circulation.

However, it is clear that only in recent years has bilingual learning and teaching been the subject of empirical research and evaluation (see B. Fehling, 2004; Finkbeiner & Fehling, 2002; Fehling & Finkbeiner, 2002; Helbig, 2001).

An examination of CLIL teaching methodology has been a central part of this research. However, despite years of classroom practice, there is still no recognised single CLIL methodology.

According to Hallet (1997, p. 6) the main reason for this is the fact that “the vast majority of research contributions or projects on CLIL are embedded in or at least stem from foreign language teaching methodology.”

Since then, research has focussed more on content subjects and it is generally agreed that “a CLIL teaching methodology should involve a balance between subject teaching methodology and language methodology, as it is a question of integrating the interests and needs of both .” (See Bach, 2000, p. 18)

Nevertheless, rather than enjoying its own dedicated methodology, CLIL teaching continues to involve a certain tension between language and content subject. (See Vollmer, 2000; Wode, 2002).

In the European context (Finkbeiner, 1995) this question is particularly important as, with the exception of Germany teachers in most EU countries normally only teach one subject.

They are either fully qualified language teachers or fully qualified content subject teachers. So the language/content subject balance mentioned above is very difficult to achieve through one person, except by providing appropriate in-service training and extra qualifications.

Despite the fact that German teachers train to teach two subjects, the situation in Germany is often not much different because many teachers teach two languages and only a few teach a content subject and a language. (See Finkbeiner & Fehling, 2002, p. 17).

Aims of MOBIDIC

MOBIDIC aims to take the issues relating to CLIL teaching methodology mentioned here and develop them further. Above all the project is concerned with developing content subject modules to promote bilingual teaching and improve initial and in-service training of students and teachers. This comprises the acquisition of partner languages, an approach that includes multiple perspectives and a deepening sense of European citizenship.

In addition, MOBIDIC intends to use Hallet’s approach (1997), who developed the Bilingual Triangle as a didactical instrument for curricular and lesson planning, as a basis for embedding CLIL teaching in the curriculum. The Bilingual Triangle points to the following three factors that should be part of CLIL teaching (see p. 10):

¹ Comprehensive overviews of CLIL teaching are to be found in the journal „Fremdsprachen als Arbeitssprachen im Unterricht: Eine Bibliographie zum bilingualen Lernen und Lehren“ (vgl. Landesinstitut für Schule und Weiterbildung, 1996) and also in the article „Die Forschungslandschaft im Bereich ‚Bilingualer Sachfachunterricht‘: Eine Bibliographie 1996-1999“ (vgl. Breidbach, 2000).



- 1.) Phenomena and facts of one's own culture and society (*L1 country and culture*)
- 2.) Phenomena and facts of the culture and society of the target language (*L2 countries and cultures*)
- 3.) Culturally dependent, intercultural, global phenomena and facts. (*intercommunity*)

This means that the pupils should get to know their own culture and country in order to understand and communicate with other cultures.

This is as much the case on the level of everyday communication as on an academic level, involving skills relating to the content subject and language.

Apart from this, the pupils should engage with the target culture and society. Getting to know different aspects of the foreign culture is especially important with regard to the other perspectives offered by the target countries and the way they construct their world.

Finally, this model offers a third dimension: globalisation. This world networking of all means of communication and the internationalisation of politics, the economy and science means that we cannot ignore culturally independent, cross-cultural and universal aspects.

Apart from the content subject and intercultural aspects, which are identified in the Bilingual Triangle, Hallet (2003) also highlights linguistic aspects and learning strategies that should be considered in CLIL teaching methodology.

I.e. given the importance of terminology and concepts in bilingual learning, the processes of constructing these concepts are very significant. These are "conceptual construction processes" (cf., p. 61) in which pupils understand not only the terminology but also the concepts and schemas behind it. (see Finkbeiner & Fehling, 2002, p. 19 ff.; Finkbeiner & Koplín, 2000, 2001, 2002).

In relation to MOBIDIC, Hallet's model was adapted in the following way:

Taking the topic area of "Migration" as an example, colleagues undertook an investigation of the written feedback and schemas with regard to the concept of "Migration" (*L1 country and culture*, Hallet, 1997) developed by German, Polish and French sixth form pupils aged between 16 and 18. (n=193) Subsequently, these "scripts" and schemas were compared (*L1 country and culture/L2 countries and cultures/L3 countries and cultures*). This involved focussing on cross-cultural, global and universal phenomena (*intercommunity*). ([Evaluation of CLIL teaching](#))

The knowledge gained by MOBIDIC with regard to multiple perspectives and language and cultural awareness makes an important contribution to the development of CLIL teaching and particularly that of a CLIL teaching methodology. It should also help to improve initial and in-service teacher training.

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