

A Collective End-of-Symposium Reflection: The State of the Art of CLIL and Future Prospects

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Note from author

The following is a **collective end-of-Symposium reflection** of the AILA CLIL-Research Network (ReN): *CLIL & immersion classrooms: applied linguistic perspectives* (September 20-22, 2007). This report, probably one of the first of its kind, is an effort to gather together, into a single document, the invaluable reflections and thoughts which always come to us at such invigorating conferences but which usually get jotted down, taken home, and seldom shared. This is therefore a collectively authored production, and, although I did the weaving, this report would certainly have no content if not for the individually “authored” reflections: *Thus the capital ET AL.¹ and reference throughout to the *source*, i.e. the participant, who provided each thread of reflection.

Introduction

The AILA CLIL-ReN Symposium hosted 40 attendees representing 8 countries across Europe and one representative from Australia, who heard the same data and shared in the same information coming from a range of contexts, from primary to tertiary education, bilingual programmes to school projects such that the entire range of FL:content ratio was witnessed: from CLIL programmes undertaken in EFL classrooms which considered FL the aim and content the vehicle, to subject-lectures in a FL in which there was no attendance to the FL as content was the aim. In addition, bi-lingual curricula clearly offered more CLIL-learning than short-term projects and we saw results from CLIL implemented in multilingual social contexts such as the Basque Region in Spain and Belgium as well as monolingual contexts where FL exposure is minimal and minimized with media dubbing, such as Italy and Spain. Reports ranged from first-person teachers’ reflections on classroom processes to researchers’ classroom observations and linguistic analyses of spoken as well as written CLIL classroom discourse. As a research network, it would therefore seem a good step forward to understand how others at the Symposium “saw” the same information. Regardless of whether we agree with the interpretation of others, as a *community of practice*, this *collective reflection* may enable us to move forward *from* a common understanding of how Symposium attendees envision the current status and future prospects of/for CLIL in Europe and around the world.

Procedure

At the end of the two-day Symposium (September 20-22, 2007), all participants received a blank piece of paper and were prompted with “go through your notes and transcribe any of the reflections/insights you had while listening to presentations and wish to contribute to this Collective Symposium Reflection.” The reflections from 24 participants were transcribed, coded and analysed to identify 110 single ideas which were collocated into three main areas of concern and 10 sub-categories (figs. 1 & 2). All 110 single reflections were interwoven into this report. Where necessary, participants were contacted to clarify either handwriting or concepts which were difficult to interpret. Needless to say, this entire report should be read with the realisation that all the

¹The contributing participants in alphabetic order were: Bowering, Margaret (M); Buttaroni, Susanna (S); Ceuleers, Evy (EV); Dafouz, Emma (ED); Dalton, Christiane (C); de Graaff, Rick (R); Elfriede, Leubold (EL); Foran, Diana (DF); Gablasova, Dana (D); Gao, Ying (Y); Gierlinger, Erwin (E); Guerrini, Michele (MG); Hüttner, Julia (J); Llinares, Ana (A); Moore, Pat (P); Nikula, Tarja (T); Nunez, Begona (B); Rieder, Angelika (AR); Smit, Ute (U); Sylvén, Liss Kerstin (L); Ting, Teresa (TT); van de Craen, Piet (PV); van de Gucht, Didier (DG); and Whittaker, Rachel (RW).

reflections were analyzed through my own interpretive lens, which, I attempted to keep as objective as possible.

While the distribution of the 110 single reflections would appear to consider some concerns “main” and others “minor”, it should be noted that even those occurring with lower frequency are important as they were expressed by several participants. Likewise, there may certainly be concerns which do not appear here as they were not raised by any of the Symposium participants but which would nonetheless be vital to the “proper” implementation of CLIL. In addition it was probably impossible for the participants to voice all the thoughts/reflections that the Symposium had elicited in the 5 min we had to jot down our reflections. It is probably safe to say that most of us, if not all, are concerned about most of these issues, if not all, and much much more.

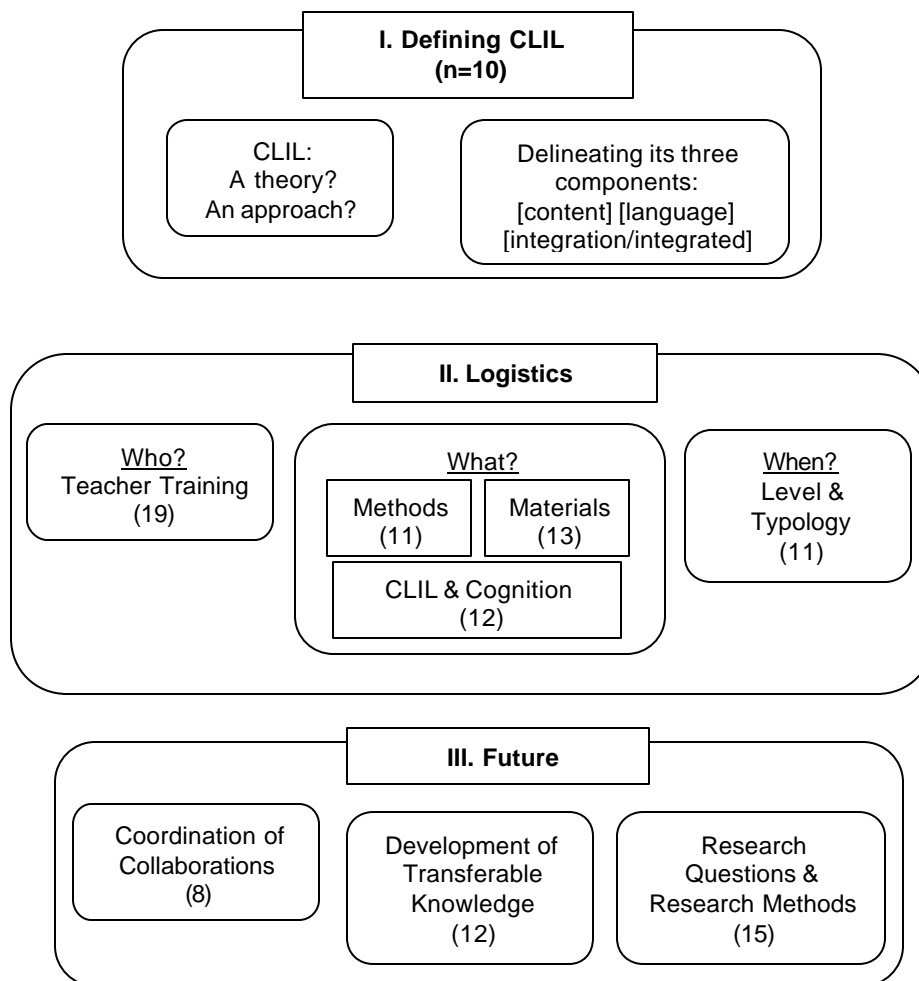


Figure 1. Three main areas of concern and 10 subcategories under which the 24 participants' 110 reflections were classified. Note that the total number is 111 as S2 was used twice.



Figure 2. Distribution of reflections by category. “Defining CLIL” contains the subcategory of reflections questioning whether CLIL is *theory* or *approach* (fig. 1) and those concerned with the definition of the components of CLIL (i.e. Content, Language and Integrated/Integration).

1. Defining “CLIL”

What is CLIL? PV states clearly that “CLIL is an approach (**not** a theory; not a ‘lesson’)...” (PV3; emphasis of PV) while RW wondered what a CLIL-theory should cover (RW2). The following may support the conceptualization of CLIL as an approach which may *also* begin to sustain its own theoretical standing.

1.1. A [possible] CLIL-theory: emergent research findings seeking a theory

“What does CLIL theory cover – i.e. how can we defend CLIL on a theoretical level” and “what is its identity?” (RW2) are questions which beg an answer. Defining *theory* as “the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another” or “plausible principle[s] offered to explain phenomena” (Webster’s 1981), we must then ask what are the *facts* or *phenomena* raised during the Symposium that such a CLIL theory would have to tie together. Emma, in fact, suggests we seek “theories/principles that support/endorse/agglutinate the different studies presented here” (ED2).

So, are there common findings that could intersect into a CLIL theory?

Two very interesting phenomena were mentioned by more than one participant. The first is what appears to be increased communicative interaction within CLIL-classrooms. As Dana put it, “although CLIL was developed primarily to enhance the second/foreign language education, it appears to also affect the teaching style/strategy of the teachers – the teachers tend to talk less, tend to encourage interaction with and between students.” In fact, regardless of, and despite, the “sensitivity” of subject matter in Tarja’s CLIL-classroom extract about pregnancy and nutrition, there was more student-*initiated* interaction in CLIL classrooms, with more *sustained utterances* also found in Ana and Rachel’s research. This is in contrast to the corresponding L1-subject classrooms where teacher-talk dominated as well as the regular EFL classrooms where EFL teachers’ desire for linguistic accuracy seemed to truncate students’ attempts and desire to communicate (also a finding presented by many of the posters). The second phenomena that a CLIL-theory would have to explain is the apparent “paradox” (RW5) whereby lower language proficiency of the subject teachers actually seems to increase classroom interaction and students’ language production (RW5, P1). Do we have enough “CLIL-specific-phenomena” to start constructing a CLIL-theory?

1.2. A [possible] CLIL theory: delineating its components

Interestingly, the exact identity of the individual ingredients of [content] and [language] and even [integrated/integration] in the acronym of CLIL was pondered upon by many of the participants. This may represent an important moment in the metamorphosis of CLIL into an *approach* which has clearer features; from its amorphous earlier form, CLIL may now be ready to delineate what exactly comprises each of the rather broad terms of [content], [language] and [integration]. Participants questioned “if language awareness is important in CLIL” (RW1) or if language learning is “always incidental” (R4) because, as stated by P, “CLIL [must imply] a deliberate focus on “content **and** language, otherwise it’s **just** learning” (P4; emphases by P). In fact, if CLIL is to move from incidental FL-learning to a more structured syllabus (R4), the question would then be if the content component of the syllabus covers “only content-related language such as terminology or more general [language]?” (R4). Might “concepts” (R6) and “content expertise” (T1) also be considered valid forms of *content*: content-related-general-language? Likewise, T and R both questioned if it might be more helpful to narrow down the component of *language* into “communication/social communication” (R6, T1). After all, what is language for?

2. Logistics

Therefore, whether *theory* or *approach*, the exact definition of the building blocks of CLIL still await more clear-cut definitions. In fact, there was general agreement that, due to the very heterogeneous profile of European CLIL classroom contexts, there is a lack of guidelines (e.g. D3, S1) to help those “using CLIL as an approach to implement **content** and **languages** in a European perspective” (PV3; emphases by PV); basically, who does what, when, and how?

2.1 Who? Teachers, Teacher Training & Education

As shown in figure 2, teacher training and education for CLIL was the concern most frequently voiced by the Symposium participants. Of the 19 references to “teacher training/education” it was possible to discern concerns and suggestions for developing effective CLIL teacher-education programmes which ranged from the more linguistic research-based question of what *type of language* teachers need/produce to a “*teacher knows best*” vision of how such programmes might be developed.

Diana’s statement addresses the *who* question head-on: “using a language to communicate requires internalizing content knowledge and being able to transmit that knowledge” (DF3). So, should it be “a good content teacher [who participates] in language development” (R3) or should it be an issue of “language teacher education through the development of guidelines for CLIL, such as, e.g. a CLIL-module for in-service training” (U1). Regardless of whether it is the subject teacher or language teacher who receives training for CLIL, there is the irrefutable need to transfer “our research findings to CLIL teacher training” (R5), understanding whether “coding systems (e.g. systemic-functional and others) can become instruments in teacher education” (E4). Indeed if we can “identify crucial areas of language awareness/discourse awareness for CLIL teacher education then we may be in a position to develop more effective and targeted CLIL-teacher education courses/handbooks” (C4).

Of course the issue of teachers’ language competence was noted (e.g. E6, P1, P2, S3), but hedged in favour of “a reasonably competent non-native speaker rather than native speakers” (P2) since, as mentioned earlier, “**less** linguistically competent teachers might lead to **more** productive and communicative students” (P1; emphases by P). Several participants felt that the CLIL teachers’ language competence is an issue only when discussed within the frame of level and context of the

CLIL-classroom (e.g. EV1, EV2, J2, C1) and Julia suggests that “a mid-term aim may be to develop CLIL teacher education by identifying what is realistic at what levels and in which context” (J2). Regarding the logistics of how a CLIL teacher-training programme might be formulated, Susanna suggested that CLIL teacher training must be “an interdisciplinary academic co-operation between the faculties of philology and didactics so to bring together language instruction with educationalists and pre-service and in-service subject teachers” (S11).

While we await for such collaborations, guides and handbooks, we may return to Diana’s indisputable statement that we can only communicate confidently about what we *do* know and thus “how can we as teachers/instructors/leaders/guides do this? Aid learners along the road of learning?” (DF4). The answer may well be that, lacking the proper training and any guidelines, all who attempt to CLIL should operate in their *comfort zone*: would a native speaker who is not a subject specialist feel more comfortable CLIL-ing primary school or high-school science? Likewise, would a university professor operating at CEF-B2 feel more comfortable giving a seminar or two about his own research results (e.g. bi-channel laser devices) in a FL or teaching an entire general subject course (e.g. Physics 101) in the FL? (whether such tertiary-level CLIL can be called CLIL is addressed below). However, knowing *who feels best/worst doing what* will only come from those who actually do the CLIL-ing. Margaret reminds us that “as teacher qualities and training is important, we should be learning more from actual teachers” (M1), suggesting that “good CLIL in various contexts in schools should be videoed and episodes used for training” (M2). CLIL teachers’ voices (e.g. many of the posters) may be an invaluable source of insights for the construction of a “shared EU framework for CLIL teacher education” (J2) and “the development of quality-enhanced teacher training and study materials” (S12).

2.2. *What & How? Good Teaching, Effective Materials, CLIL & Cognition*

That I have chosen to conglomerate the quality of CLIL teaching and materials with the effect of CLIL on cognition reflects the belief all good teaching and effective materials, CLIL or otherwise, must engage learners cognitively. In suggesting we “reconceptualise what we mean by “language skills”” (T1; quotes by T), T suggests we consider “communication, social participation and content expertise” (T1) as such ‘skills’ and goes on to question “what we mean when we say that language and content are intertwined” since the relationship between these two components of CLIL would “relate to what we mean by knowledge construction” (T3). What then is the knowledge, or skill, that we want constructed and how can we go about constructing them?

2.2.1. *Good CLIL teaching*

As mentioned earlier, that CLIL supports language learning was evident from the increased quantity of classroom interaction within CLIL classrooms, with “teachers talking less and encouraging more interaction with and between students” (D2). Does such increased interaction reflect “differences between CLIL, immersion and EFL teachers’ and learners’ profiles” (EV2) or does this increased communication reflect “something specific to CLIL; a difference in teachers’ behaviour in a CLIL vs. an EFL context?” (B2; also AR2, U4). The answer might come through a comparison of “the genre acquisition, language and final linguistic competence of CLIL students vs. students with ‘standard’ instruction” (AR5). In addition, might increased CLIL-classroom interaction reflect a lowering of the FL affective-barrier?: “Is CLIL [*passively*] positive for language and content learning because it’s done in another language or is there an [*active*] positive effect because CLIL classes/teachers are more motivated/enthusiastic than “ordinary” content and language classes?” (A1; quotes by A, italics added). “Teachers’ beliefs about language learning and CLIL are undoubtedly relevant, but, in which ways are these context-specific?” (U4) and can we draw up a “common CLIL teaching quality-assessment tool?” (S1). As R put it, “in what respect is it important to distinguish CLIL from “just good teaching” in an international/multilingual setting” (R1; quotes used by R).

2.2.2 Effective materials

CLIL or not, effective materials support “quality-enhanced teaching” (S12), “increases learner autonomy” (S5) and cultivates “collaborative learning” (S4, DF6), which empowers learners with the knowledge of *how to learn*. During the Symposium, the two materials-related issues which were addressed pertained to authenticity (e.g. Liss and Pat) and those which evoke higher-level thinking (e.g. as Margaret had so convincingly invited us to consider in her presentation). Should CLIL be using “simplified or authentic material; when, where and how much authenticity do the learners/teachers need?” (E5; TT1) And what is authentic? Would a UK textbook be considered authentic material, as provocatively suggested during the discussions, or should we “move beyond textbooks” (S6). Maybe the degree of “authenticity should be that which is applicable in the students’ real world contexts and professional futures” (DF5). This type of authentic would motivate learning (e.g. Liss’ presentation about the Simpson’s), be relevant to students’ scholastic and professional success, provide linguistically challenging material (e.g. Pat) and thus respect our learners’ intelligence *and life* (e.g. Margaret). Effective CLIL materials would therefore be that which not only “raises the level of thinking in our students” (DF2) using “high-level tasks” (TT4; Margaret) but present learners with content knowledge and language which have real-world relevance. All good learning involves “maximized cognitive engagement” (DF1) and good CLIL materials and methods would cognitively engage students in a FL.

Michele, who is a materials developer interested in CLIL rightly notes that effective CLIL materials which can support good CLIL teaching will probably be generated only by “integrating information regarding CLIL-classroom language features and needs that linguists identify with insights from content teachers/experts” (MG1): “CLIL is still very new and as a result, there seems to be little input yet from the content teacher. Research that involves these professionals seems to be most desirable” (MG2).

2.2.3 CLIL & Cognition

Participants conceptualised the relationship between CLIL and cognition from the point of view of 1. [*language of input + cognition*] and 2. [*language of cognitive processing ≠ output language*]. EL found that the most “convincing arguments to persuade subject/content teachers to teach their subjects in a FL is that **speaking reflects thinking**” and that “dealing with content in a FL will lift teachers’ and students’ level of thinking” (EL1; emphasis by EL). While the latter remains to be demonstrated at a neurobiological level, speech is undoubtedly the product of cognitive processes. So, when students in a CLIL classroom speak more in the FL, are they also *thinking* more in the FL? And, “if language does reflect thinking, does CLIL help or hinder?” (E1). Likewise, “is the co-construction of knowledge in L2 different from L1? What does this imply for CLIL?” (R7). Would “certain subjects be more suitable for maximizing CLIL-cognition, such as maths or science for primary-level CLIL” (EV5)? While there may be subjects more or less suitable for optimizing the CLIL-cognition link (note Dana’s poster demonstrating L1-dominance in maths), Ute rightly reminds us that as for “CLIL-cognitive development and the actual language and content learning, we all see and attest a positive influence. However, what factors are decisive, and in which ways” (U3; S7) and what “are the advantages of CLIL compared with immersion teaching?” (S2). To understand the “relation between cognition and CLIL, we would need to relate CLIL to insights about the brain and learning theory” (EV6), and maybe access the “language-thinking process by examining the relationship between questions-responses at the language and cognitive level” (C3).

In addition, how deep would/could CLIL affect cognition? Would/Could CLIL do something to learners’ (and teachers’) FL-ID? In fact, might “CLIL lead to the creation of [FL-associated] local identities and subsequently sociocultural identities? And if so, what are the implications for a **cultural identity** and the creation of a pluralistic society” (EV3)? If “identity is indeed related to

language competence, does CLIL help or hinder [the cultivation of this FL-ID]?” (E2). Christiane offered a schematic representation to remind us that teachers’ and students’ FL-IDs are very much interrelated (C2; fig. 3).

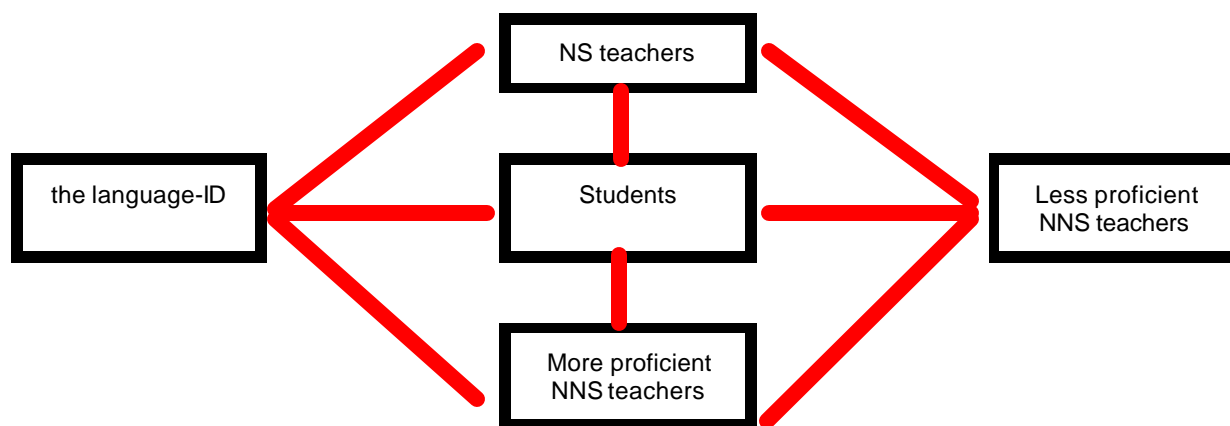


Figure 3. Interrelation between language proficiency and teachers’ and learners’ FL-ID (C2).

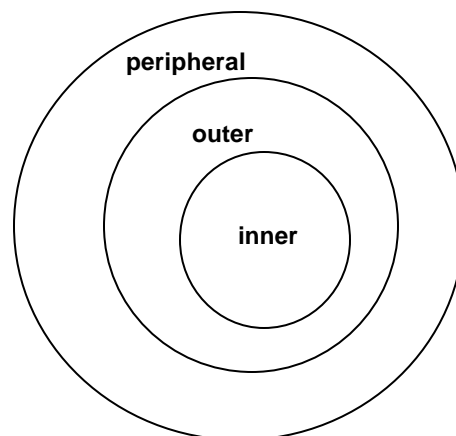
Therefore, we might ask how proficient a NNS teacher must be to sustain the pro-communication atmosphere of CLIL classrooms and/or should NS EFL teachers be re-trained to sacrifice accuracy for communication? In fact, the increase in CLIL-classroom interaction reported at the Symposium may reflect a process whereby the CLIL-classroom participants’ FL-IDs work together to form an *in situ*, micro-CLIL-classroom FL-identity which allows both students and teachers to feel more comfortable with the FL: does CLIL empower users’ FL-ID and thus increase CLIL-classroom interaction?

2.3. When? CLIL at the 1^o, 2^o and 3^o level - a matter of Typology?

“Does/might/should CLIL differ in primary/secondary/tertiary education?” (R2) and if so, would “the profile of CLIL teacher depend on whether they are operating at the primary, secondary or tertiary level”? (EV1). In addition, “can we actually talk about CLIL at the tertiary level as an approach that “deliberately focuses on both language **and** content” (P4)? “Examples provided at this Symposium have shown that “teachers” are considered mainly as “content experts” at the primary and secondary levels while most university students enrolled in the [“CLIL”] courses are already [linguistically] proficient enough to follow these courses” (B1; see also P4, DF8). Thus the question of whether it is actually possible or even necessary to “talk about a CLIL situation at the **tertiary** level” (ED1; emphasis by ED) where FL is used to lecture *in* but is not attended to. DF suggests that “maybe another terminology is needed for university-level CLIL” (DF7) as CLIL implemented at the primary level attends to the FL through content (DF8) “but at university the FL is “known” so to **speak**, so students are working on **content**, learning their field (major) while practicing/keeping up their LS – is this really CLIL?” (DF8; emphasis by DF). As is, maybe not, but if language experts become part of the process, providing attention to the FL, then why no?

Margaret suggested we borrow David Crystal’s schematic representation of world Englishes to accommodate the different typologies of CLIL (fig. 4) suggesting that “some forms of CLIL are more pure in their orientation while others are further away” (M3).

Figure 4. It may be possible to adopt David Crystal's model of World Englishes to accommodate the different typologies of CLIL across different contexts and which implement CLIL with different degrees of attendance to content and language.



“In the centre, we have the transmission of content, which we cannot move away from. However, what percentage of content and what of language goes in the outer and peripheral circles is up for grabs” (M3). Of course some (CLIL-purists?) may argue that the centre should represent the situation where content and language (or concepts and communication) are attended to equally, while merely lecturing *in* a FL stretches this 50:50 interpretation of CLIL, and is thus peripheral. No matter the typology of CLIL which is undertaken, “we can learn from each other as there is a cross-fertilization of research and materials” (M3). In addition, and finally, we should keep in mind a key point that Christiana brought up regarding what type of CLIL is done when and how: “a *critical mass* of CLIL is probably necessary before any positive effects of CLIL can be seen” (TT6).

3. Ways forward

Of course every reflection suggested a future direction for research – thus the value of collecting them – however, 35 made explicit reference to the need to establish collaborations and define more common research objectives, a positive position for a research network. I have sub-categorised these into 1) reference to collaboration 2) the need for transferable knowledge – a “common” guide 3) revisiting current research methods.

3.1. Collaborating

The list of ongoing and upcoming research activities/interests/conferences that was discussed on a per country level, noted by Julia and then given to us by Christiane and Ute is as an invaluable map to how and with whom we might establish fruitful collaborations. As Liss noted, “many of us share the same research interests. Therefore, to work thematically would be an idea. For example, I would be interested in working together with others on authentic material and genre awareness” (L1). Very thematically, and already on the threshold of establishing a collaboration, Julia had noted that she and “one of Yolanda's graduate students is working on CLIL using the same prompt, i.e. the Frog Story; and the “Brussels Team” seem to be interested also in narratives. Therefore, despite diverse settings, there are some common links” (J1). In fact, “the emergence of similar observations re empirical data from different CLIL settings has been very interesting!!! So, can we join forces and come up with a repertoire of features characterising *good* CLIL instruction?” (T2: emphases by T). Likewise, ED suggested we “**collaborate internationally** to exchange data, compare studies and approaches etc.” (ED3; emphasis by ED) and M suggests we can video-tape good CLIL teaching and “share these at conferences and for teacher-training” (M2). This could give us all a better idea of “CLIL settings in different institutions/countries so we can establish which elements are compatible, exchange ideas and share our experiences” (AR4). Indeed, if we

work “thematically and together, we will enable a fuller and more complete picture of the complex CLIL context, and also avoid repetitions in papers dealing with similar topics” (L2) because, to date, “CLIL-research (e.g. areas, topics, subjects of research, i.e. students, teachers, schools) has been very fragmented [with] a lack of continuum and coordination so it is 1) hard to build any theory and 2) use the prior studies to build a hypothesis etc.” (D3).

3.2. *Transferability of knowledge.*

Thus the importance of defining transferable knowledge. Given the diversity of CLIL contexts “across Europe which itself is so idiosyncratic, would it be possible to draw up a guideline for those in China, Argentina etc.?” (TT8). That “good CLIL” increases FL exposure through more meaningful FL communication/learning will probably not go unnoticed outside of Europe. Gao Ying confirms that CLIL, given the right teacher-support/training, may be of potential interest to FL learning programmes in China: “I am impressed by the spread and development of CLIL in Europe. In China, at present, CLIL does not seem to be practical as the biggest problem confronting Chinese bilingual education is the lack of qualified bilingual teachers. But I do hope we can get some experience from European CLIL practice for bilingual education in China. Therefore, I am especially interested in CLIL teacher training programmes in Europe” (Y1). In fact, if we are to aim for “guidelines for CLIL for language teacher education” (U1), we must consider whether there are any common elements of good CLIL that can be embodied within a “guide to support different models of CLIL-implementation across different linguistic contexts in which language learning is not merely incidental” (S2). A CLIL-guide would assume that, despite the idiosyncraticity of learning, there are transferable CLIL-practices and knowledge can help others in *comparable* contexts/situations. Not only would this be useful for teacher training (see above) but would also provide “documentation on/for language policy” (S14) for educational establishments around the world. At the Symposium, another key term overheard was “CLIL toolkit” (TT2): what would be in such a toolkit for enthusiastic and conscientious CLIL-teachers/school directors?

Interestingly, through collaboration, the *diversity* of our respective contexts may actually be an advantage if we wish to define which elements are *common* to good CLIL. A useful toolkit would, in part, deal with some valid concerns of several participants: “CLIL is **not** about English only” (PV2; emphasis by PV) which was focussed on excessively (DG1) for those interested in less dominant languages (RW3) which are the *lingua franca* in multilingual contexts such as Belgium (EV4). In addition, some participants were interested in “launching CLIL at the primary level” (D1; DG2) while others were “interested in promoting CLIL at secondary level” (EL1). If CLIL is to be a valid approach in monolingual/bilingual/multilingual contexts (S2), an insightful CLIL-toolkit, CLIL-guide or CLIL-handbook would need to provide non-context specific insights which can guide the implementation of any CLIL programme, anywhere in the world, no matter the FL of interest.

3.3 *Revisiting current research methods*

Fifteen participants suggested we re-consider what *aspect(s)* of CLIL classroom language we should be investigating if the FL in CLIL is not the subject but the *tool* for communication. Many wondered whether the more traditional linguistic coding systems such as “systemic-functional and others is relevant for the chalkface context” (E3) and suggest that we may need to “go beyond “looking at errors since looking at classroom interaction from a discourse/ethnographic perspective at the macro-level is probably more interesting” (A2). In fact, in the case of English, “is that third person ‘s’ really so important if English is an international language?” (P3). “Interpreting CLIL research results through classical linguistic [analytical tools may be inappropriate and uninformative] as real insights in the CLIL learning process [may be more effectively delineated by] looking at the pragmatic aspects in a broad sense” (PV6). We may need to “redefine the analytical tools of traditional linguistics as the implementation of CLIL presupposes that we reconsider the

mother-tongue model as learning-objective” (TT5). Some suggest an “analysis of classroom discourse in CLIL settings” (AR3; also S13) would be more fruitful, “comparing this with discourse in non-CLIL classrooms” (EV7). “Undertaking classroom discourse analysis of different sets of data from the same theoretical/methodological point of view [may allow us to establish] how comparable or diverse [the language is as a function of] different CLIL settings” (U2). Therefore, “we should look at how teacher-student interaction affects language learning. Looking at teacher talk is very important but learners’ uptake of content and language is what we should be ultimately focusing on” (A3). Indeed, “while the teacher remains the most important variable, **let’s not forget about the learners**” (PV4; emphasis by PV). It would thus be useful to “[compare the genre management and linguistic competence] of CLIL students vs. students receiving ‘standard’ instruction (AR5). In fact, “[a comparative evaluation of how CLIL-language competence differs from standard teaching would be relevant for institutions to develop language policies]” (S8-10).

Conclusions, “Dangers & Comments”

Should CLIL come with a warning label? Although CLIL seems to empower that FL-ID, we still don’t know why. I believe it was PV who had once written that “CLIL is like acupuncture, it works, but we don’t know why it works” (PV?). Here, PV gave his Symposium reflections the label of “Dangers and Comments” (PV1) which reminds us that if we are to have “an honest discussion on the limits of CLIL so to communicate the advantages and limits of CLIL to parents and stakeholders” (J3), we must scrutinize where CLIL may be ineffective, as acupuncture would be for a heart attack. For example, might CLIL “lead to the creation of context-specific lexical misuse – as shown by Ute’s example of ‘testimony?’” (TT7). Rachel’s more philosophical query of “how long will it take for English as a *lingua franca* to disintegrate into a number of recognizable dialects/languages” (RW4) might be focused onto the concern of how deformed lexis acquired within a restricted learning context may affect learners’ pragmatic efficacy outside that context? We must thus return to the question of the linguistic competence of the instructors, without forgetting, however, that high linguistic competence without sufficient content competence certainly ain’t no solution to ‘tis ‘ere problem.

The note however, remains positive as we have all seen that above a certain threshold of linguistic competence, and beyond a certain critical mass of CLIL, CLIL induces more *spontaneous student-talk about content*. That is very positive. “CLIL is **not** a language teaching experiment. It **affects** the whole learning process and is, at the school level, an innovative approach” (PV5; emphasis by PV). “CLIL offers a moment to reform/change/ameliorate language **and** content learning through a brain-based constructivistic approach to understanding content and learning language” (TT3). Traditional linguistic tools of analyses may have to be remodelled for analysing CLIL-classroom discourse in which pragmatic efficacy, rather than linguistic accuracy, is the objective. CLIL will also require a highly interdisciplinary approach across all processes, from the development of teacher-training programmes to that of materials development so that content and language learning can be attended to equally: in contexts where subject teachers implemented CLIL, there was little attention to language and where EFL teachers were implementing CLIL, there may have been so much that communication was stunted. Subject expertise and the active research involvement of content teachers and other stakeholders is currently underrepresented (ED4): “Linguists are leading the research in CLIL, but the content teacher must be drawn into it as soon as possible to provide a more comprehensive view of the needs, issues and possible solutions” (MG3). Together, we may begin to understand what it is about CLIL that makes it work and together, we can define the contents of the CLIL-toolkit so that it can work even better.