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Revisiting CLIL: Background, pedagogy, and theoretical underpinnings

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Abstract

This state-of-the-art article reviews the literature on content and language integrated learning (CLIL) – e*nseignement d'une matière par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère* (*EMILE*) – through an analytical lens. Since its inception in the 1990s, CLIL has evolved and become part of the educational literature as a dual-focused and multi-dimensional educational approach. CLIL is not only about using an additional language (AL) (e.g., foreign, autochthonous, heritage, second language) as a medium to teach subject content. The approach also aims to build and reinforce learners' knowledge of other disciplines while using the language creatively to solve problems and develop critical thinking. Some research evidence has indicated that CLIL practices vary according to context, curricular constraints, and available teaching force. This multi-dimensionality and diverse implementations of CLIL have led to misunderstandings and what CLIL is and is not have been the topic of countless debates. An accurate description of CLIL would not be possible without understanding its historicity and the reasons for its emergence. CLIL now represents an approach that integrates language and content teaching in a variety of language learning and bilingual education contexts. CLIL was not created out of thin air. Its creation was influenced by a multitude of factors such as (a) the historical, political, epistemological and societal influences of the 1980s, (b) research on second language acquisition, (c) current theories of learning and, (d) educational philosophies on languages and approaches to language teaching that drew on postmodern views that emerged in the 1980s.

Keywords

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), sociocultural theories, additional language learning, foreign language learning, bilingual education, socio-interactionist perspective.

Résumé

Cet article de synthèse passe en revue la littérature sur l'enseignement d'une matière par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère (EMILE) – *content and language integrated learning* (*CLIL*) – à travers une optique analytique. Depuis sa création dans les années 1990, l'EMILE a évolué et s'est intégré dans la littérature éducative en tant qu'approche éducative à dimensions multiples. L'approche vise également à construire et à renforcer les connaissances des apprenants dans différentes disciplines tout en utilisant la langue de manière créative pour résoudre des problèmes et développer la pensée critique. Certaines informations issues de la recherche ont indiqué que les pratiques EMILE sont variées en fonction du contexte, des contraintes du programme et du personnel enseignant disponible. Cet aspect multidimensionnel et les diverses mises en œuvre d'EMILE ont conduit à des malentendus et ce qu'est et n'est pas l'EMILE a fait l'objet d'innombrables débats. Une description précise de l'EMILE ne serait pas possible sans comprendre son historicité et les raisons qui ont motivé son avènement. L'EMILE représente désormais une approche qui intègre l'enseignement des langues et des contenus dans divers contextes d'apprentissage des langues et d'éducation bilingue. L'EMILE n'a pas été créé de toutes pièces. Sa création a été marquée par une multitude de facteurs tels que (a) les influences historiques, politiques, épistémologiques et sociétales des années 80, (b) la recherche sur l'acquisition d'une langue seconde, (c) les théories actuelles de l'apprentissage et, (d) les philosophies éducatives sur les langues et les approches de l'enseignement des langues qui se sont inspirées des philosophies postmodernes apparues dans les années 80.

Mots-clés

Théories socioculturelles, apprentissage des langues étrangères, éducation bilingue, perspective socio-interactionniste.

1. Introduction

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) – e*nseignement d'une matière par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère* (*EMILE*[1]) – is an educational approach that integrates language learning and disciplinary content learning. The term CLIL was coined by European language experts and educators within the European educational setting in the 1990s (Beacco, Bouquet, & Porquier, 2003; Béliard & Gravé-rousseau, 2009; Coyle, 2008; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Cross, 2016; Pérez-Cañado, 2012) the period when multilingualism and language education became a crucial issue in the European context (Pérez-Cañado, 2012). In the early 1990s, the CLIL approach was known to solely a small group of European language experts and language teaching practitioners, who were involved in the bi-plurilingual education provision prompted by the European Commission (Castellotti, 2006; Coyle, 2007; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Gravé-Rousseau, 2011; Moore & Gajo, 2009; Pérez-Cañado, 2012). This movement in bi-multilingual education was not unique to the European educational context. For the last three decades, the research studies that have been carried on bilingualism using content-based language instruction in the North American context and the research on CLIL practices in diverse educational contexts have indicated that integrating content and language teaching not only helps the acquisition of linguistic and academic competencies, but it also has various cognitive and motivational benefits (Coyle et al., 2010; Cummins, 1980; Cummins & Swain, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Griva & Mattheoudaki-sayegh, 2017; Lazaruk, 2007; Leaver & Stryker, 1989; Stryker & Leaver, 1997; Van de Craen, Mondt, Ceuleers, & Migom, 2010).

CLIL is not only about using an additional language[2] (AL) (e.g., foreign, autochthonous, heritage, second language) as a medium to teach subject content. The approach aims to build and reinforce learners' knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to solve problems and develop critical thinking. The approach was conceived to enable learners to improve their communicative (i.e. person-to-person and intercultural) and cognitive skills while they are building knowledge of norms and conventions specific to both the language and content they are studying (Coyle, 2007, 2008, 2013; Coyle et al., 2010; Cross, 2013, 2016; Dalton-Puffer, 2007b; Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008). Since the 1990s an increasing number of European institutions have incorporated CLIL into their curriculum. At the same time in other parts of the world, multiliteracy education has increasingly become a norm. In parallel with this increase in CLIL practices, research in this area has been growing. This increase in CLIL implementations and international exchanges through various research projects have contributed to the development of the CLIL approach.

This state-of-the-art paper reviews the literature on CLIL by providing background information on its creation, describing the approach, and highlighting some of the most commonly raised issues. The creation of CLIL was marked by a multitude of factors such as (a) the historical, political, epistemological and societal influences of the 1980s, (b) research on second language acquisition (SLA), (c) current theories of learning, and (d) educational philosophies on linguistic diversity and approaches to language teaching that drew on postmodernist views that emerged in the 1980s.

[1] Enseignement d'une matière par l'intégration d'une langue étrangère (EMILE).

[2] Throughout this document, I will use the abbreviation AL to refer to any additional language (e.g., foreign, second, heritage, autochthonous, community or regional language) other than the individual's initial language (IL). I will also use the term "additional language" (AL) to replace the term "foreign language", except in special cases where I need to distinguish between different types of ALs or when quoting the ideas of other researchers (M.-F. Narcy-Combes et al., 2019).

2. CLIL background

The European Commission and the Council of Europe were instrumental in the inception of CLIL (Beacco et al., 2003; Council of Europe, 2003; Coyle, 2007; European Commission, 1989; Findley & Nathan, 1980; Little, 2007; Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff, & Frigols, 2012). CLIL was not originally intended as a content and language teaching approach. Rather, the original aim was the development of an "innovative foreign language teaching method[3]" which could (a) respond to changing demands and needs in language learning, (b) promote plurilingualism and (c) create synergy for the economic development of a plurilingual Europe. This search for a foreign language teaching method that would increase exposure to AL instruction and diversify the linguistic landscape in the European educational context was also inspired by the success of bilingual immersion programs in Canada and the results of research on content-supported bilingualism (Cenoz, 2003; Cummins, 1980, 1981, 1998, 2001b, 2001a; Johnson & Swain, 1997; Swain & Lapkin, 1983).

2.1. CLIL inception

In the 1980s, at the international level, overall observations were revealing that the foreign language teaching pedagogies in practice were not answering the changing needs of learners (Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2003). These ubiquitous observations initiated an extensive review of existing foreign language teaching methods. In the European language teaching context, similar observations were also made (Coyle et al., 2010; Marsh, 2002). Starting from the mid-1980s[4], the Council of Europe and the European Commission organised a series of actions to promote the acquisition of at least two foreign or community languages from an early age. Following consultation and expert opinion, the European Parliament brought forward the issues concerning promoting community languages and plurilingualism (Castellotti, 2006; Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 2009; Coyle, 2002; European Commission, 1989; Marsh, 2002; Zarate, Gohard-Radenkovic, Lussier, & Pens, 2004). These preliminary undertakings gave rise to the formulation of the following resolutions:

1. increase opportunities for the teaching and learning of foreign languages;
2. encourage the teaching and learning of the less widely used languages of the Community;
3. promote innovation in foreign language pedagogies and training (Official Journal of the European Commission, 1989: 2).

This new European scheme required synergising intercultural communication and creating "… opportunities to use language/s in a variety of settings and contexts in order to enable them [students][5] to operate successfully in a plurilingual and pluricultural Europe." (Marsh, 2002: 52). The language experts, who collaborated in the workshops organised by the Council of Europe and the European Commission stressed the importance of (a) the development of diverse language-related competencies (e.g., academic, intercultural, communicative, cognitive), (b) the development of authentic language use, and (c) the opportunities for active

[3] I use the term 'method' to refer to the exact term used in the 1980s-1990s by some CLIL promoters. The term method is now viewed as restricting and prescriptive and not adapted to the conceptualisation of languages and language learning of the 21st century. The term approach, which is based on principles instead of prescriptions, replaced the term method (Bell, 2003; Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

[4] The issue of foreign language learning received recognition by the department of education in the Council of Europe as early as the 1960s. Yet, the actions which led to the inception of the CLIL approach started in the mid-1980s (see Marsh, 2002).

[5] The bracket and its content are added.

language use to attain sustainable learning outcomes (Castellotti, 2006; Coyle, 2002; Marsh, 2002; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2013; Zarate et al., 2004). Achieving better linguistic and communicative competences, using authentic language situations, increasing learner motivation, providing more exposure to AL learning could not be accomplished without allocating more teaching hours on the school curriculum (Cenoz, 2015; Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013; Marsh, 2002). However, allocating extra time for AL learning on the existing school curricula was not possible. Thus, integrating foreign language learning with school subject learning was considered as a possible solution (Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009b; Marsh, 2002). As a result of these reflections, an innovative approach combining content teaching with AL teaching emerged as a new educational approach.

2.2. CLIL experimentations

The CLIL approach was proposed during the workshops organised within the 'language learning for European citizenship' scheme, which was carried out between 1983 and 1996 under the supervision of multinational policymakers, researchers, and with the participation of teachers and learners (Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010; Marsh, 2002). As a result of these workshops, a large-scale exploratory project was initiated. The project took place between 1993 and 2000 (Marsh, Maljers, & Hartiala, 2001) and a group of language experts were assigned the task of profiling practices that integrated content and language teaching in European schools (Coyle, 2002; Coyle et al., 2010; Eurydice, 2006; Marsh, 2002, 2008; Marsh et al., 2001).

These classroom experiments, which began with the search for an "innovative pedagogy in the teaching of foreign languages", revealed that this new approach had a much wider scope than just innovating foreign language teaching (Eurydice, 2006). The profiles obtained during this period of experimentation pointed to the existence of various CLIL implementations (Coyle et al., 2010; Eurydice, 2006; Marsh & Hartiala, 2001; Marsh et al., 2001). This first research-driven project, which aimed to observe how teachers integrated content and language teaching (see Marsh et al., 2001), indicated that contextual variations shaped the type of focus and procedures used. Coyle et al., (2010), Marsh and Hartiala (2001), and Marsh et al. (2001) explained that contextual variations arose from factors such as the time allocated for teaching, the availability of trained teachers, content learning objectives, language input, intercultural communication and other learning objectives (see also Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, & Smit, 2010). It should be noted that at the time these profiling explorations began, the term CLIL was not yet articulated. Following the recommendations and decisions taken by the European network of language administrators, researchers and experts on the integration of subject and language teaching, this dual-focused, multi-faceted approach was formally endorsed and the term CLIL was coined in 1994 (Coyle et al., 2010; Marsh & Frigols, 2007; Marsh et al., 2001; Pérez-Cañado, 2012; Pinner, 2013a).

3. What is CLIL?

Coyle described CLIL as '… a fusion of subject didactics, leading to an innovation …' (Coyle et al., 2010: ix). Combining content teaching with AL teaching had existed for a long time. The immersion programmes in Canada have been using content-based instruction (CBI) successfully, and they had already accumulated positive research results to support the benefits of integrating content teaching with AL teaching. What was innovative with CLIL then? According to Marsh CLIL comprised '… any activity in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject …" (Marsh, 2002: 58). How can we identify CLIL from other approaches that integrate content and language teaching then? In the years

that followed CLIL's adoption, these above-mentioned and similar other definitions caused ambiguity and launched the debate of "What is CLIL?" and "What is not CLIL?" (Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2014; Cenoz & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015; Dalton-Puffer, Llinares, Lorenzo, & Nikula, 2014; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009a; Pérez-Cañado, 2011, 2013; Pérez Cañado, 2018; Somers & Surmont, 2012; Ting, 2011).

The most commonly cited definitions describe CLIL as a 'generic umbrella term' that represents a 'dual-focussed' 'flexible' 'educational approach' with 'multiple dimensions and applications', in which an 'additional language' is used for learning both 'content and language' (Coyle et al., 2010; Eurydice, 2006; Marsh, 2002, 2008, etc.). Table 1 presents the key expressions and terms which are frequently used to define CLIL.

Umbrella or generic term	"… generic umbrella …" (Marsh, 2002, 2008; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008) "… an umbrella term …" (Aguilar & Muñoz, 2014; Alcaraz-Mármol, 2018; Banegas, 2016; Cenoz et al., 2014; Coyle, 2007, 2008; Cross, 2014; Dalton-Puffer, 2017; Darn, 2009; García Mayo & Lázaro Ibarrola, 2015; Ikeda, 2013; Ioannou Georgiou, 2012; Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2015; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009a; Lorenzo, Casal, & Moore, 2010; Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018; Otto, 2019; Pladevall-Ballester, 2016; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008, 2013; Sylvén, 2013) "… a generic term …" (Agustín-Llach & Canga Alonso, 2016; Cenoz et al., 2014; Eurydice, 2006; Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013; Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018)
Dual-focused approach	"… dual-emphasis on both content and language ..." "… a dual focus on language and content …", "… having dual-focused aims…" (Cendoya & Di Bin, 2010; Cross, 2014; Dafouz & Hibler, 2013; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Lin, 2015; Lorenzo, 2007; Mehisto, 2008; Otto, 2019; Pinner, 2013b; Pladevall-Ballester, 2016; Yang & Gosling, 2013) "… refers to a dual-focused approach..." (Alcaraz-Mármol, 2018; Ioannou Georgiou, 2012; Reitbauer, Fürstenberg, Kletzenbauer, & Marko, 2018; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2013; Soler, González-Davies, & Iñesta, 2016; Sylvén, 2013; Turner & Cross, 2016) "… a dual-focused educational approach." (Coyle et al., 2010; Gierlinger, 2015; Pérez-Cañado, 2018; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008, 2013; Sasajima, 2013; Soler et al., 2016; Zhyrun, 2016) "Integrating language with non-language content, in a dual-focused learning environment, emerged as a solution …" (Coyle, 2002: 10) "This approach [CLIL] requires the use of dual-focused language-sensitive methodologies ..." (Marsh, 2008: 244) "…refers to any dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first foreign language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content …" (Coyle, 2008: 97) "… is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language." (Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2014: 244)
Flexible approach with diverse applications	"… refers to several teaching approaches …" (Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018: 19) "… CLIL is defined as a developing, flexible concept ..." (Coyle, 2013: 245) "CLIL is flexible, and there are many different models depending on a range of contextual factors ..." (Coyle, 2005: 2) " … integrates language and content along a continuum, in a flexible and dynamic way ..." (Pérez-Cañado, 2012: 318) "… inclusive and flexible. It encompasses a variety of teaching methods and curriculum models and can be adapted to the age, ability, needs and interests of the learners ..." (Coyle, Holmes, & King, 2009: 6) "CLIL-based programs can take a variety of forms …" (Cross, 2014: 24) "… underpinned by a set of flexible but theoretically robust principles that support teacher practices across a range of different contexts." (Cross, 2013: 6) "… includes a variety of approaches to bilingual education or content-based language teaching differing in their intensity and frequency of exposure and continuity." (Pladevall-Ballester, 2016: 54) "… includes many variants. Some of these may be considered as primarily for language teaching. Some can be seen as mainly content teaching." (Marsh, 2008: 244) "The real potential of CLIL lies in the flexibility it offers as an approach to produce the optimum conditions for languages learning across a wide range of teaching contexts." (Cross, 2014: 23)

Table 1: Key expressions which are used to define CLIL (reviewed by the author)

The literature provides us with many definitions. However, many of these definitions are too general and could easily be confused with other definitions describing other practices that integrate content and language. For example, CLIL and immersion programs are often compared. The definitions used by CLIL experts promote CLIL as an educational approach, a generic umbrella term with a variety of practices, which can be implemented in various curriculum models (Marsh, 2002). CLIL is different from concepts such as immersion programmes, European classrooms[6], non-linguistic discipline (NLD) [Fr. *discipline non-linguistique*[7] (DNL) (Michaud, 2014)], which describe different types of educational programmes, which may or may not use the CLIL approach. CLIL is not a programme. Although some programmes that use CLIL approach are sometimes referred to as programmes, CLIL is first and foremost an educational approach. CLIL is also confused with Content Based Instruction (CBI), an approach used in immersion programs in Canada. While CLIL and CBI share some common features in terms of pedagogies and theories of language learning, they differ in their historicity and philosophical perspectives on bilingualism and plurilingualism (this issue is detailed in Section 4.4.2.).

3.1. Different CLIL models or different CLIL practices?

Observations of CLIL practices have revealed that the programme models used in CLIL practices can vary considerably depending on the context and outcome expectations. In some CLIL implementations, the subject teacher may use an AL that is either a second official language, a foreign language, an autochthonous language, a heritage language or any other community language to teach a school subject. For instance, the mathematics teacher may use an AL to teach his/her course. NLD lessons, which are used in European Classrooms to teach regional or minority languages in France, can be considered as this type of CLIL (Tardieu & Dolitsky, 2012). Some CLIL implementations may be carried out on irregular bases. They may take the form of occasional showers to diversify subject teaching or additional language teaching practices (Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013). For instance, disciplines such as physical education, science, geography, technology that combine content and language learning practices with action-oriented, task-based, experiential, and hands-on activities can be implemented in CLIL as occasional showers to diversify teaching methodologies. These practices can either be used as part of a language enriched subject classes or content-based AL instruction (Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013, 2016). The following examples, obtained from the CLIL literature, show some possible applications of CLIL practices (see also Basso, 2014; Causa, 2009, 2014; Coyle et al., 2010; Eurydice, 2006; Ruiz de Zarobe & Jiménez Catalán, 2009):

1. All or some of the school subjects can be taught using CLIL (e.g., bilingual/plurilingual education programmes such as full or partial immersion programmes).
2. One or more school subjects may be taught in an AL (e.g., International or European classes or NLD classes that use a heritage, regional, community or an autochthonous language to teach one or more school subjects).

[6] European Classrooms (*sections européennes* in French) are language and culture immersion programmes in France and the United Kingdom (Fontecha, 2009). In France they are amalgamated with the d*iscipline non-linguistique* (*DNL*) courses.

[7] The term "*discipline non-linguistique*" (DNL) is used by the French Institution to refer to a bilingual education programme. Some French speaking academics do not find the term DNL appropriate in the context of CLIL. They argue that bilingual education must be considered at the intersection of linguistic and disciplinary issues and within the framework of a didactics of plurilingualism. They assert that no disciplinary content can be devoid of linguistic content (Gajo, 2009), and they sometimes refer to it as "*disciplines dites non linguistiques*" (*DdNL*).

3. A subject can be taught in tandem by two teachers who use different languages [e.g., initial language (IL)[8] and an AL].
4. Some sequences of lessons in some school subjects can be taught in the IL and in an AL.
5. CLIL can be implemented as part of an interdisciplinary project, an international collaborative project or an extracurricular learning project using an AL (either as part of a school subject or language course).
6. CLIL can be integrated into a teaching sequence in AL classes as to diversify the pedagogical approach used, or as part of an interdisciplinary school project based on a theme.
7. CLIL can be introduced into a vocational programme in which learners develop domain-specific knowledge of both content and language through task-based activities. These programs generally require language and content teachers to work in tandem. CLIL is sometimes taught by a language teacher who focuses on content, but also by a content teacher who uses AL. The aim of this type of tandem teaching is to establish a balance between content and language through collaboration.

The examples mentioned above may take different forms and applications, but they always use the key principles inherent in the CLIL approach. Often these variations in CLIL implementations are described as different models. For example, Ball (2009) situated CLIL practices in bilingual education and presented them on a continuum to highlight the changing emphasis on content learning. He then labelled the opposing ends as 'strong version' (full immersion programs) and 'weak version' of CLIL (content-based language classes) (Ball, 2009) (see Figure 1).

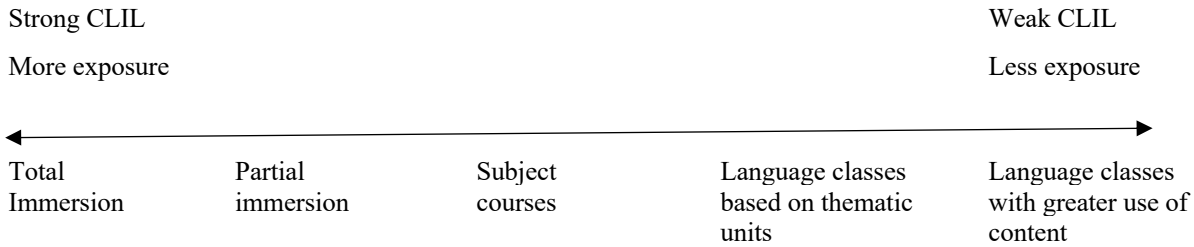

Figure 1: CLIL continuum proposed by Ball (adapted from Ball, 2009: 37)

3.2. Do contextual differences count as different CLIL models?

An extensive review of the relevant literature indicates a significant influence of immersion on CLIL design and implementation. The continuum suggested by Ball (2009: 37) is similar to the continuum proposed by Met (1998 cited in Lyster & Ballinger, 2011: 280) to illustrate variations in CBI employed in immersion programmes in Canada (see Figure 5 in Section 4.4.2).

Several researchers have studied CLIL practices in a variety of contexts and have compiled contextual differences such as age, programme duration, intensity, entry requirements, language level of learners, programme status, emphasis on content or language (see Table 2).

[8] I prefer to use the term initial language (IL) instead of mother tongue because the first language children learn are not necessarily related to their origins (see also M.-F. Narcy-Combes et al., 2019 for different views).

Intensity	Different amount of language exposure varying from occasional language showers to intensive bilingual programmes (e.g., varying from a foreign language project to full immersion) (Ball, 2009; Cenoz, 2015; Cenoz et al., 2014; Coyle, 2002, 2008; Eurydice, 2006; Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013; Lorenzo et al., 2010; Marsh, 2000, 2002; Marsh et al., 2001; Pladevall-Ballester & Vallbona, 2016).
Objectives (five dimensions)	Context related (e.g., to answer local needs and curricular demands). Content related (e.g., to build academic skills and conventions in a foreign language). Language related (e.g., to improve target language competences and communication skills). Learning-related (e.g., to diversify teaching methods, to provide naturalistic learning opportunities) (Coyle et al., 2010; Marsh & Hartiala, 2001). Culture related (e.g., introducing wider cultural context, developing cultural awareness and intercultural communication, and understanding).
Programme type	Different programmes varying from full or partial bilingual programmes (e.g., Immersion programmes, international classes in Europe), to less intensive language programmes such as NLD classes (teaching of one or more school subjects using an AL) and occasional language enriched instruction or interdisciplinary or AL teaching projects (Eurydice, 2006).
Language proficiency level	Different language proficiency expectations varying from maximal bilingualism (which aims to build native-like competences in learners) to functional bilingualism with plurilingual objectives (which aim to construct operational skills in two or more languages that enable learners to communicate with or without full fluency).
Age and educational	Different age groups varying from pre-primary, to primary, secondary, vocational, tertiary school contexts.
Context	Diverse contexts varying from foreign language learning in monolingual to AL (e.g., heritage, regional, autochthonous language) learning in bilingual, multilingual and plurilingual learning settings (Coyle et al., 2010).
Language of instruction	Different CLIL implementations may use different ALs with different status (e.g., foreign, second, heritage, autochthonous, or community languages).

Table 2: Contextual differences which lead to diverse CLIL implementations (reviewed by the author)

Based on these contextual differences, some researchers have reported the existence of different "types of CLIL" (Grin, 2005; Clegg, 2003, cited in Coyle, 2008: 100). From these examples (not models or not necessarily programmes), we can infer that CLIL can be implemented in different situations and programmes, for different purposes, with different expectations, with different age groups, or with learners with different needs. However, these are contextual differences that lead to curriculum variations in the implementation of CLIL, which would not influence the theoretical principles underlying the approach. Such contextual variations are common to all educational subjects and are usually defined as different practices or implementations rather than models or variations.

4. Epistemological underpinnings

In this article, through a review of the CLIL literature, I have studied the evolution and traced the epistemological origins of the CLIL approach. Often CLIL implementations have been guided by practical maxims, and its theoretical underpinnings have been left implicit. As I mentioned earlier, CLIL was not created from scratch. Its creation was influenced by current philosophical and theoretical orientations in education, research on second language acquisition and current approaches to language teaching, which are based on research and sound theoretical foundations. In many academic publications, these theoretical foundations are regarded as common knowledge and the maxims derived from these conceptual paradigms are used to guide teachers in their CLIL practices with little or no reference to their sources.

4.1. Current philosophical influence on CLIL

A closer look at CLIL highlights the influence of the postmodernist movement of the early 1980s, which influenced the way language teaching was perceived (Pennycook, 2006; Weideman, 2007). The 1980s were marked by societal changes and technological developments. Due to the increasing flow of social, economic, and technological developments, all aspects of social life were changing (Blommaert, 2013; Vertovec & Posey, 2003). These global transformations had direct effects on education. The fields of education were faced with complex situations and the then existing universal teaching methods did not meet the changing needs of learners.

The postmodernist movement was marked by an attitude of scepticism. This epistemological movement opposed positivist notions such as the "universality" and "objectivity" of knowledge that shaped and constrained cultural foundations. This new movement adopted a new epistemology, which was complexity (Larsen-Freeman, 2012; J.-P. Narcy-Combes & Narcy-Combes, 2014). Influenced by the postmodernist view, the paradigms in applied linguistics were beginning to shift from the search for a single ideal method[9] to the post-method[10] condition (e.g., Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990). This movement was marked by a break with modernism and rejected the stable universality of knowledge. This position drew attention to the complex, situated and social aspects of knowledge and plurality of thought (Larsen-Freeman, 2004; Pennycook, 2006).

The postmodernist movement in applied linguistics was mainly motivated by the realization that teachers were confronted with the complexity of language and language learning situations on a daily basis and that no single method or explanation could meet their needs (Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Larsen-Freeman, 2004). The "post-method" attitude in language teaching has challenged methods that were based on prescriptive procedures and static sets of principles, regardless of context. From the early 1980s onwards, the notion of approach, which includes language theory and language learning, became the norm in applied linguistics worldwide (Brown, 2000, 2002). An approach, in contrast to a method, is defined as having "…core sets of principles but no specific set of prescriptions and classroom techniques …" (Bell, 2003: 327).

According to Weideman, modernist (positivist) definitions of applied linguistics emphasise general and universal aspects of experience, while postmodern (relativist) views emphasize contextual elements and local specificities of knowledge (i.e. political, historical, or cultural) (Weideman, 2007) (see Table 3).

[9] A method "…is a theoretically unified classroom techniques thought to be generalizable across a variety of contexts and audiences." (Brown, 2002).

[10] Brown defines the post-method approach to foreign language teaching as "a principled approach" based on "…a carefully crafted process of diagnosis, treatment, and assessment" (Brown, 2002).

Modernist (positivist) definitions of applied linguistics	Postmodernist (relativist) definitions of applied linguistics
Focus on: - designed solutions to problems - general and universal - enlightenment - the value of scientific progress for the common good	Focus on: - discontinuity, disaggregation, specificity, and a multiplicity of perspectives - the contextual and the locally specific aspects of knowledge - pragmatism
Represents the positivist (universal) view that experience can be understood in a similar way One size fits all	Represents the relativist (situated) belief that contexts are different It is unacceptable to assume that one size fits all

Table 3: Modernist and postmodernist definitions of applied linguistics based on Weideman's and Davies and Elder's ideas (Davies & Elder, 2004, 2005; Weideman, 2007: 559)

Although CLIL has never been explicitly pronounced from the postmodernist perspective, some statements used by some CLIL experts suggest underlying postmodernist influence. Table 4 highlights the similarities between postmodern views and the opinions expressed by some CLIL advocates.

Postmodernist (relativist) views in applied linguistics	CLIL and its underlying postmodernist viewpoints
Period: the 1980s	Period: the 1990s
"It is unacceptable to assume that one size fits all …" (Davies & Elder, 2005: 795).	"… one size does not fit all - there is no one model for CLIL..." (Coyle et al., 2010: 14).
Emphasises the importance of maintaining cultural and linguistic pluralism (Pennycook, 2006).	"In Europe, CLIL has emerged in response to the need to raise levels of plurilingualism…" (Marsh, 2008: 243).
Characterised by "… a sensitivity to the social and political impact of the plans that we make to solve language problems."(Weideman, 2007: 590).	"… social, economic, cultural and ecological advantages to be gained through promoting plurilingualism through language learning right across our societies." (Marsh, 2000: 10).
Emphasises (a) the influence of global dynamic changes, (b) new technologies and their subsequent consequences on everyday life, (c) mass mobility and their impact on educational and societal issues etc. (Best & Kellner, 2003).	"Since the 1990s, Europe, among other continents, has witnessed a knowledge revolution in education, resulting mainly from increasingly widespread access to the Internet and the new technologies." (Marsh, 2008: 236).
The contextual and locally specific aspects of knowledge (Baker, 2001; Pennycook, 1989; Weideman, 2007).	"… bilingual education must take account of situational and context variables so that developments are interpreted through a sociocultural lens…" (Coyle, 2007: 543).
Represents the relativist (situated) view that contexts are different (Weideman, 2007) "… favours situated knowledge… knowledge, value, and action are always specifically situated"(Pennycook, 2006 : 63).	"CLIL is flexible, and there are many different models depending on a range of contextual factors…" (Coyle, 2005: 2).
Specificity and a multiplicity of perspectives (Davies & Elder, 2008; Pennycook, 1989, 2006; Weideman, 2007). A shift from a single ideal "method" to the post-method condition (e.g., Brown, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 1994; Pennycook, 1989; Prabhu, 1990).	"Applications of CLIL are multifarious depending on educational level, environment and the specific approach adopted." (Marsh, 2008: 233). "… inclusive and flexible. It encompasses a variety of teaching and curriculum models and can be adapted to the age, ability, needs and interests of the learners..." (Coyle, Holmes, & King, 2009: 6).

Table 4: Similarities between the postmodernist viewpoints and the opinions expressed by some proponents of CLIL (reviewed by the author)

The postmodernist view highlights the situatedness of teaching contexts and welcomes various curriculum models and implementations in language teaching. The major philosophies that support the postmodernist view in language teaching are emergentist theories such as complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2004, 2011a; S. Mercer, 2013) and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1986). Postmodern relativist philosophies explain the reasons for some of the characteristics of CLIL, such as the multidimensionality and variability of its implementation. The flexible and situated nature of its practices and the avoidance of rigid and prescriptive teaching procedures can be justified from the nonlinear systems dynamics such as emergentism, connectionism (N. C. Ellis, 1998), and complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2011a, 2012). These theories emphasize the unstable, unpredictable, creative and unique nature of the learning process and its variability in relation to different contexts (Larsen-Freeman, 2004, 2011a; S. Mercer, 2013; J.-P. Narcy-Combes & M.-F. Narcy-Combes, 2019).

4.2. Theoretical foundations

An extensive review of the CLIL literature allows us to establish a clear link between cognitive and sociocultural theories of learning and the CLIL approach. Cognitivist theories (e.g., emergentist, connectionism and complexity perspectives) and sociocultural theories are complementary to each other and support the CLIL approach by providing tangible explanations.

4.2.1. Sociocultural perspective

The theory most cited by CLIL researchers is the sociocultural theory. The sociocultural perspective views communication, reflection, and learning as related processes in the construction of knowledge and the development of languages (Bruner, 1978; Lantolf, 2006; Mercer, 2004; Swain & Lapkin, 2013; Vygotsky, 1986; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Vygotsky (1978, 1986) viewed cognitive development and knowledge acquisition as a social construction that is developed with social collaboration. He claimed that optimal cognitive development depends upon the ‘zone of proximal development’ (ZPD), where individuals construct the new knowledge through socially mediated interaction. He stipulated that the skills which the individual acquires through collaboration with others exceed what the individual can attain alone. In this collaborative social context, language is used to regulate the individual's cognitive activities and to respond to the demands of social interaction. During this social interaction language has a dual function: it is used as a "tool for thought" to regulate internal cognitive processes and “a tool for learning” to acquire information and skills (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1986). In sociocultural theory, activity is described as a purposeful social interaction between actors and artefacts (the world and its objects). Participating in such cultural activities results in the restructuring of one’s mental system, including one’s self-concept. This viewpoint considers the activity as situated and relating to both the social world and the mind.

Fostering language development through scaffolding is one of the maxims of CLIL pedagogies. In sociocultural perspective ‘mediation’ (Vygotsky, 1978), ‘scaffolding’ (Wood et al., 1976), in other words ‘help’ or ‘guidance’ is considered crucial. As the child develops (moves from one stage to another), s/he acquires more control over the mediational means available (e.g., language) in his/her environment for interpersonal (social interaction) and intrapersonal (cognitive) purposes (Lantolf, 2004). Learning through mediation, social artefacts, collaboration, and real-life tasks in naturalistic learning environments, which are fundamental

features of sociocultural theories, are essential elements of CLIL. Table 5 summarises the main features of sociocultural philosophies.

Sociocultural theories	Important components
	- Zone of proximal development (ZPD) - Mediation - Scaffolding - Social interaction /dialogic learning - Activity - Artefacts - Social and cultural context
- Socio-constructivist	**Collaborative language construction** - Other-regulated learning towards self-regulated learning - Student-led learning - (Co-)construction of knowledge (and intersubjectivity)
- Socio-interactionist	**Importance of interaction** - Scaffolded learning - Help given by more experienced other (teacher, parents, peers etc.) - Learning through language - Using language to learn - Learning while interacting

Table 5: Influence of sociocultural perspective on the CLIL approach (reviewed by the author)

4.2.2. Cognitivist views and CLIL

The cognitivist theoretical orientation is inherent in the tasks proposed by CLIL. The cognitivist models that have marked the CLIL approach are the emergentist perspective (e.g. complexity theory, connectionism, dynamic systems theory) (N.C. Ellis, 1998; Larsen-Freeman, 2012), and the revised version of Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002).

The emergentist accounts view language and language acquisition as complex systems involving a number of interacting factors (Larsen-Freeman, 2012). Learning and specially language learning now is understood as "… a complex adaptive system, which emerges bottom-up from interactions of multiple agents in speech communities … than a static system composed of top-down grammatical rules or principles." (Larsen-Freeman, 2011a: 49). The emergentist approach to SLA holds that learning mechanisms are exposed to massive and complex situations (R. Ellis, 2015; Jordan, 2004), and that language representations emerge from interactions with these complex environments at all levels from brain to society (N. C. Ellis, 1998). This view emphasises that language learning emerges from "... interactions between the children's socio-cognitive capacities, their personal characteristics and specificities of their initial language (IL) ..." (M.-F. Narcy-Combes, J.-P. Narcy-Combes, McAlister, Leclère, & Miras, 2019: 29). The model combines both social and cognitive perspectives (i.e. including emergentist, constructivist, socio-constructivist, socio-interactionist views) with sound explanations. Emergentism views language as primarily exemplar based rather than rule based. This implies that fluent language use is not the result of the knowledge of grammar rules but a massive collection of knowledge database that is accumulated through frequent practice and exposure. N. C. Ellis argued that the amount of language development is proportional with previously experienced utterances (N. C. Ellis, 1998). Language learning is effective when associations are repeated (frequent) and plentiful. The cognitive involvement of learners in their own learning is fundamental to CLIL. Bloom's revised taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002) provides a framework for the necessary cognitive skills that learners need to develop in order to master their own knowledge construction. Cummins's basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), which describes the development of conversational fluency in the additional language,

and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which describes the specific use of language in academic situations are also relevant to CLIL. Table 6 provides an overview of cognitivist theories which have influenced the CLIL approach.

Emergentist theories	
- Connectionism, (N.C. Ellis, 1998),	Language learning is exemplar based rather than rule based Language learning is effective when: - associations are repeated and plentiful - associations are connected with other associations and form larger and more connections - there is regular processing (frequency of use) to strengthen these associations
- Complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 2011a),	Language learning is unpredictable, complex and creative and it varies in relation to different contexts
Cognition and learning	**Learning should promote cognitive involvement of learners**
- Revised version of Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002)	- *Cognitive process dimension*: lower-order processing (i.e., remembering, understanding, applying) and higher-order processing (i.e., analysing, evaluating, creating) - *The knowledge dimension*: factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, metacognitive knowledge
- BICS & CALP (Cummins, 1981)	- Importance of context-embedded cognitively demanding language tasks - Critical language awareness

Table 6: Current cognitivist theories that have influenced the CLIL approach (reviewed by the author)

The literature provides us with some CLIL publications that have made some reference to sociocultural and cognitive perspectives in relation to CLIL (see Table 7):

Sociocultural theories	(Banegas, 2012, 2016; Cenoz, 2015; Cenoz & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015; Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010; Cross, 2012, 2016; Dalton-Puffer, 2007a; Dalton-Puffer & Nikula, 2014; Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013, 2015, 2016; Gabillon, Vernaudon, Marchal, Ailincai, & Paia, 2016; Ioannou Georgiou, 2012; Llinares, 2015; Moate, 2010; Nikula, 2015; Pinner, 2013b)
- (Socio)-interactionist theories	(Azkarai & Imaz Agirre, 2016; Coyle, 2008; Dafouz & Hibler, 2013; Evnitskaya & Morton, 2011; Gabillon & Ailincai, 2013, 2016; García Mayo & Lázaro Ibarrola, 2015)
- Socio-constructivist	(Cross, 2012; Moate, 2010; Pistorio, 2010)
Cognitivist perspective	
- Emergentism	(Coyle et al., 2010; Pinner, 2013a)
- Connectionism	
- Bloom's taxonomy	(Coyle et al., 2010; Leal, 2016; Várkuti, 2010)
- BICS & CALP	(Coyle et al., 2010)

Table 7: Publications that have referred to the underlying theories of CLIL (reviewed by the author)

4.2.3. CLIL frameworks and their underlying theoretical stance

However, although there were some references to the theoretical orientations mentioned above, the literature has rarely reported a direct link to the theory and conceptualization of CLIL as an approach. The ideas expressed by the most commonly used maxims such as "language of learning, language for learning, and language through learning", "content, communication, cognition, and culture", which provide guidance to CLIL teachers, evoke epistemological constructs based on sociocultural and cognitivist theories. These ideas are expressed through

the concept of Coyle's language triptych and the 4Cs curriculum (Coyle et al., 2010). Both models are well designed and have been widely accepted by CLIL practitioners.

a) 4Cs framework

Coyle's (2005) '4Cs Framework' contains four guiding principles that teachers can use as a basis for developing their CLIL curriculum. The 4Cs framework integrates content, communication, cognition, culture, and context in CLIL. The framework emphasizes the importance of the development of cognitive skills, creative learning, and collaborative social interaction (see Figure 2).

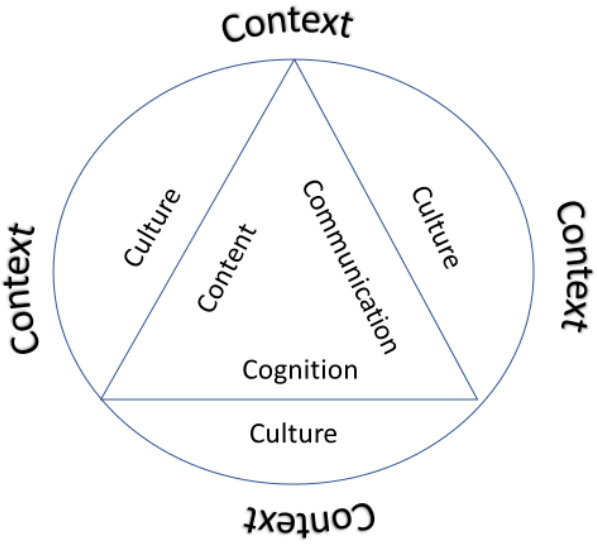

Figure 2: The 4Cs Framework (adapted from Coyle et al., 2010: 41)

Content: Content provides a means of reflection and interpretation which enables the development of cognitive skills. From this point of view, disciplinary content knowledge does not imply the accumulation of knowledge but rather the creative construction of knowledge through generation, planning and production of ideas. The study of the subject content fosters the use and development of lower-order (i.e., remembering, understanding, applying) and higher-order skills (i.e., analysing, evaluating, creating) proposed by a revised version of Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002). The acquisition of content knowledge also emphasizes the development of metacognitive skills and personalized learning. Linguistic content is integrated with content knowledge, and linguistic forms and meanings are also reflected upon and analysed by plurilingual means (e.g., through translanguaging).

Communication: Language use is understood as social (i.e., interpersonal interaction that uses scaffolding, mediation, and negotiation of meaning and form), cultural, and personal (i.e., intrapersonal interaction that mobilizes cognitive processing skills).

Cognition: Learning (both language and content learning) is conceptualized as the development of lower-order processing skills (i.e., remembering, understanding, applying) and higher-order processing skills (i.e., analysing, evaluating, creating) through the use of tasks that could enable learners to reflect, analyse, and create.

Culture: The integration of content and language is seen as inseparable from cultural elements. CLIL aims to develop cultural understanding and awareness of the conventions that are embedded in the language of the subject content.

Context: Context is conceptualized as encompassing the other three components (i.e. content, communication, and cognition). The framework recognizes that there is a complex relationship among these four components, each of which has a role to play in learning.

b) Language Triptych

In CLIL *language* and its *functions* play a critical role. CLIL approach holds that knowledge and culture are embedded in language and accessing knowledge is not possible without using the language (Coyle et al., 2010). The role of language in CLIL was materialised in Coyle's 'language triptych' concept (see Figure 3).

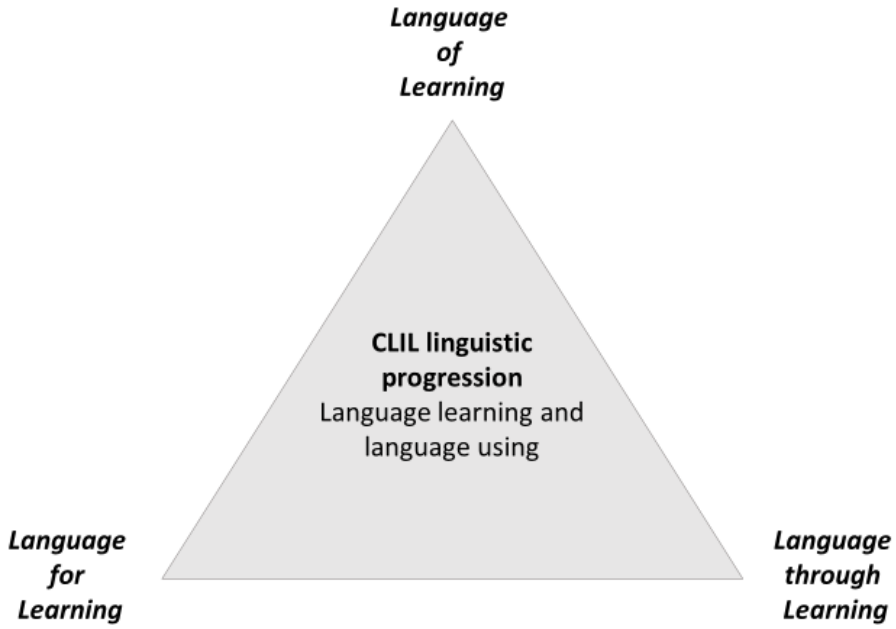

Figure 3: Coyle's language triptych (Coyle et al., 2010: 36)

CLIL requires learners to use language for different purposes, (a) to learn the language itself, (b) to learn the content, (c) to operate effectively in tasks and other classroom activities, (d) to connect thinking skills with the language, content and language learning (Coyle, 2007). This multifunctional aspect of language (as a social artefact and as the product of social activity), parallels with sociocultural and interactionist theories of learning. The idea that language is 'a tool for learning' and 'an object of learning' originates from Vygotsky's ideas. The 'language triptych' concept was explained by Coyle as follows:

- *Language of learning*: learners need to reflect on and analyse the language specific to the subject and thematic content they are learning [i.e. building awareness of different genres and variations in language use – language as an object of learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986)];
- *Language for learning*: learners need the language to operate in the classroom setting effectively and they need to understand and do classroom tasks using the language [e.g., peer-scaffolding, asking questions, giving explanations – language as a tool for learning (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986)];

- *Language through learning*: Learners learn the language and content through active involvement and simultaneous use and reflection (Coyle et al., 2010) [i.e., the synergistic use of language (as an object of learning and a tool for learning) and content to build new knowledge through reflection (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986)]. "Language through learning is predicated on the sociocultural tenet that learning cannot take place without the active involvement of language and thinking…" (Coyle, 2007: 553).

The integrated nature of cognition, social interaction and language use is the core idea in CLIL. Research in bilingualism has obtained highly supportive results backing language implementations combining content, cognition and language integration (Cummins, 1981; Lazaruk, 2007). Coyle's language triptych concept and 4Cs model synthesise the key theoretical concepts concerning the role of language, content, cognition, communication, and culture and integrate them into the CLIL approach successfully.

4.4. Influence of language learning approaches on CLIL

From the 1980s onwards, due to the influence of the post-method condition in applied linguistics, language didactics has been guided by approaches that based their principles on research and the corresponding theories of second language learning. Today, language teaching methods/models with prescriptive characteristics are no longer recommended. Thus, it is difficult to provide a clear-cut distinction between pedagogical principles employed by many current language teaching approaches such as task-based language teaching (TBLT), the action-oriented approach (AOA), the content-based instruction (CBI) and CLIL because almost the same underlying principles are used to define these approaches. "So one could say, paradoxically, that indefinability has become one of the defining characteristics of all approaches to language teaching..." (Littlewood, 2011: 542).

4.4.1. Is CLIL a language teaching approach?

CLIL is often referred to as a language teaching approach (Celce-Murcia, 2014; Doughty & Long, 2005; Larsen-Freeman, 2011b; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Although, initially CLIL was intended to be an innovative 'foreign language method', with the influence of diverse sources and implementations it has evolved into an educational approach that integrates both language teaching and content teaching. In some contexts, CLIL is used by teachers who are specialised in subject teaching other than language teaching and in some other contexts CLIL is used as part of AL teaching classes. Nevertheless, the approach draws highly on current language teaching pedagogies that view language conventions, language development, cognitive engagement, and content learning as inseparable and influencing one another. It should also be noted that CLIL was conceived to promote AL learning. Indeed, the practices and pedagogies used in CLIL draw heavily on current approaches to language teaching. Influenced by similar epistemological sources, the key pedagogical principles used in current language teaching approaches, namely TBLT, CBI, AOA and CLIL, overlap significantly. These four approaches can be considered as the descendants of the communicative approach, which have taken different paths (see Figure 4).

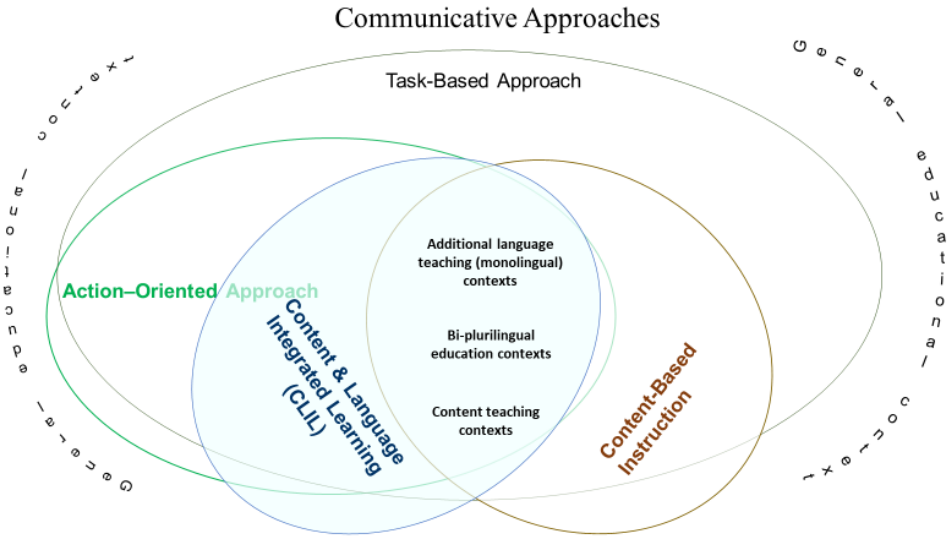

Figure 4: Communicative language teaching approaches and CLIL (proposed by the author)

CLIL's inception coincides with the period, during which TBLT[11] was burgeoning out from the communicative approach as an innovative approach. TBLT is highly compatible with CLIL and it can provide CLIL implementations with the required pedagogical framework. The influence of TBLT is easily traceable in CBI and AOA, as well. These approaches consider language learning as compiling skills (language, life, academic and cognitive skills) through integrating sets of behaviours that are learned through repeated practise[12]. They are task or performance-oriented approaches and put the emphasis on what learners can do using the language to achieve the objectives of the task in question rather than how well they produce discrete linguistic features. These approaches share the same set of assumptions and theoretical underpinnings [i.e. sociocultural, interactionist, and emergentist theories of learning--complexity theory and connectionism], which are applied differently and adjusted according to the social and political context of teaching. All of these approaches emphasise the importance of incidental learning and view linguistic skills development as a by-product while engaging in tasks (see Auerbach, 1986). Table 8 summarises some commonly cited features of CLIL, which are shared by these four approaches.

Competency-based language teaching - CLIL - CBI - TBLT (strong version of CLT) - AOA	- Development of transferable life skills - Focus on meaning (and form) - Language, thinking and learning are inseparable - Language is a tool for communication - Language is a tool for learning - The goal is learning, as well as language using - Languages are learned through interpersonal (social) and intrapersonal (cognitive) interaction - Learning through the use of real-life tasks - Based on functional theory of language - Incidental learning opportunities - Learner-centred - Competency-based

Table 8: Pedagogical principles of some language teaching approaches which are associated with CLIL implementations (reviewed by the author)

[11] Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is considered as the reformed version of the communicative approach of the 1980s.

[12] Repeated practice (repeated skills or skill components) should not be confounded with the audiolingual approach which was based on earlier forms of the behaviouristic theory and behaviour conditioning.

Some scholars group all these approaches under competency-based language teaching (CBLT) (Auerbach, 1986; Celce-Murcia, 2014; Findley & Nathan, 1980; Pérez-Cañado, 2013; Richards, 2006). CBLT is an outcome-based approach and focuses primarily on learning outcomes rather than emphasising specific methodologies or classroom processes (Richards, 2006). From the CBLT perspective, successful language performance, and skill acquisition depend upon repeated opportunities of practice through the use of real-life tasks (Nunan, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Some well-known frameworks such as the common European framework of reference for languages (CEFRL) (Council of Europe, 2003), Coyle's 4Cs framework (Coyle, 2005), and the 5Cs model (communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, communities) proposed by the American Council on the teaching of foreign languages standards (ACTFLS) (Kubota, 2004; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005) are designed on the basis of these competency-based standards. All these frameworks focus on the development of plurilingualism and intercultural competences, as well as linguistic and cognitive skills that are often referred to as 21st-century skills.

4.4.2. Is CLIL same as CBI?

Because of the above-mentioned common epistemological origins CLIL is often compared with CBI. CBI approach is a prototypical model that originated with the inauguration of the Canadian immersion programmes in the 1960s (Stryker & Leaver, 1997). Originally, CBI was developed for the Canadian bilingual context to teach French to English speaking minority in Quebec. The approach was fully developed in the 1980s to answer the changing societal demands (Leaver & Stryker, 1989; Stryker & Leaver, 1997). The recent forms of CBI, like CLIL, have various applications depending on the contextual demands and curriculum constraints. The approach is now adapted to teach not only French and English but also other additional languages such as heritage, and autochthonous languages (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011).

In the relevant literature some descriptions of CBI share significant similitude with CLIL (see Costabile-Heming et al., 1997). Some scholars consider CLIL and CBI related (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Richards & Rodgers, 2014) and some experts in applied linguistics consider them as the same approach with different names (Cenoz, 2015; Larsen-Freeman, 2011b; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2016). Met's description of different CBI models to present the range of CBI settings (see Figure 5 below) shares great similarities with the model proposed by Ball for CLIL (see also Figure 1 in Section 3.1).

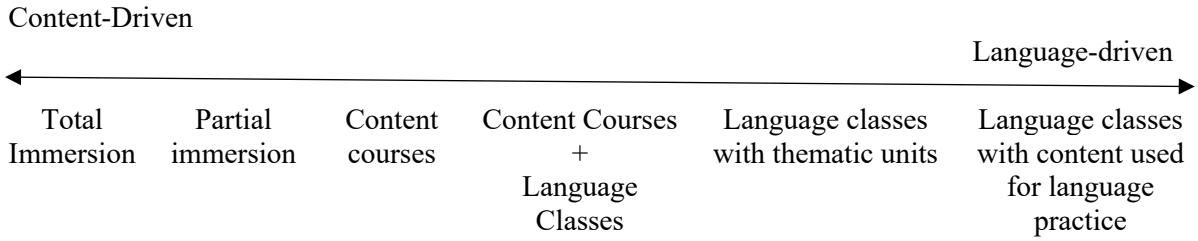

Figure 5: Range of CBI settings (Met, 1998:4 cited in Lyster & Ballinger, 2011: 280)

Although CLIL and CBI are both educational approaches that integrate content and language, and share similar theoretical and pedagogical foundations, they do not share the same historicity, political, contextual and ideological background. CBI, as used in immersion programs, aims to develop a high level of AL competence and language skills proportional with expectations regarding the learner's age and abilities (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). CLIL, on the other hand aims to promote plurilingualism and intercultural understanding as a response to

globalisations. In CLIL outcome expectations regarding language skills vary from maximal bilingualism with high AL competence to functional bilingualism with plurilingual objectives, which aim to construct operational skills in two or more languages that enable learners to communicate with or without full fluency. In CLIL learners' active participation, cognitive skills development (i.e. critical thinking and problem solving), content acquisition, inter- and transcultural[13] competences and language skills development are all considered equally important (Coyle et al., 2010). In CLIL's conceptualisation intercultural awareness is fundamental and culture, language, context, and content are viewed as inseparable and influencing one another.

5. Discussion and conclusion

CLIL has come a long way since its inception in the 1990s. It has been strongly influenced by global social and linguistic transformations, which began in the 1980s and have accelerated since the 1990s (Blommaert, 2013; Vertovec, 2009; Vertovec & Posey, 2003). It has grown out of ideologies that support plurilingualism and cultural awareness and has developed from research findings and the success of other content-based bilingual practices. The development of CLIL has also been influenced by recent research (e.g. in sociology, anthropology and sociolinguistics), which has explored the role of language and language use in the changing global social ecology caused by transnationalism[14] and superdiversity[15] (Blommaert, 2013; Duff, 2015; Vertovec, 2009). Current research in sociolinguistics, sociology and anthropology has enabled CLIL to develop a new understanding of language, its use and its role in the classroom and in society. From this new perspective, language is no longer seen as a standardised entity with well-defined national borders, but as a multimodal tool, a resource for social practice (see Atkinson et al., 2016 for new conceptualisations of language, language use and language learning). CLIL aims to combine language cognition, content and learning with a plurilingual mindset (see Castellotti, 2006; Coste et al., 2009; Moore, 2019 for plurilingualism). The difference with CLIL is that it considers bilingual education as part of the wider context of plurilingual education. It does not see the development of bilingualism as a parallel to monolingual education.

CLIL has drawn on a variety of theoretical sources and adapted its methodologies to meet the needs of 21st century learners. CLIL is an ecological approach that integrates cultural, political, and societal factors and the changing needs of learners, as well as language and content teaching, into its framework. Although it shares some common features with other bilingual programmes, language teaching approaches and content-based language instruction, there are identifiable features that characterise CLIL as a distinct approach.

As the literature makes clear, CLIL is an educational approach, a generic umbrella that covers a variety of applications in different educational contexts with different objectives and learners with different needs and age groups. This variety and flexibility in its application is inherent in CLIL as an approach that rejects the prescriptive methods of the previous century. Nevertheless, it is important to note that CLIL is an approach whose well-defined key principles distinguish it from other practices. CLIL aims to (a) respect plurilingual teaching philosophies, (b) consider

[13] Developing transcultural competences involves merging/blending different cultural concepts. For the concept of transculturing see Monceri, (2003) and J.-P. Narcy-Combes, (2019b, 2019a).

[14] Transnationalism is the spread and diffusion of social, political and economic movements between and across the borders of individual nation-states (Vertovec, 2009).

[15] Superdiversity is a complex social, cultural, economic diversity in societies'… diversity within diversity, a tremendous increase in the texture of diversity in societies …' (Blommaert, 2013: 4).

language, content, communication, context and cognition as an inseparable unified entity, (c) create naturalistic learning environments, (d) provide tasks that promote cognitive engagement and creativity, (e) allow collaborative knowledge building, (f) promote dialogical interaction, and, (g) develop awareness of self and others. However, it should be noted that the CLIL approach is an evolving educational approach and its practice is not without problems and controversies (Bruton, 2011, 2015; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2013).

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