

*Integrating Language and Content
at the Instructional Level*

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Outline

1. Language model at UNIBZ
2. (Re)defining my understanding of CLIL
3. The importance of input in language learning and the need for input-processing with adult learners
4. Classroom experiment to demonstrate value of input processing for CLIL

The UNIBZ: A Trilingual University

- Trilingual Model: English, German, Italian (Ladin)
- In School of E/M: half of courses taught in English, one-fourth in German, and one-fourth in Italian
- Students must demonstrate B2 proficiency in two languages for entry, and C1, B2+, and B2 in all three languages to graduate

Specialized English Courses in School of Economics and Management

- Language Center in charge of university language requirements (general English)
- School of Economics and Management requires additional “Specialized” Language Courses
- Must pass 2 of 3 specialized language exams (German, Italian, English)
- Methods and syllabus depend on instructor, but typically focus on the language and language skills of the field (ESP and/or EAP): “English for Economists”
- Is this a CLIL university?
- Am I a CLIL teacher?

What is CLIL (for adult learners)?

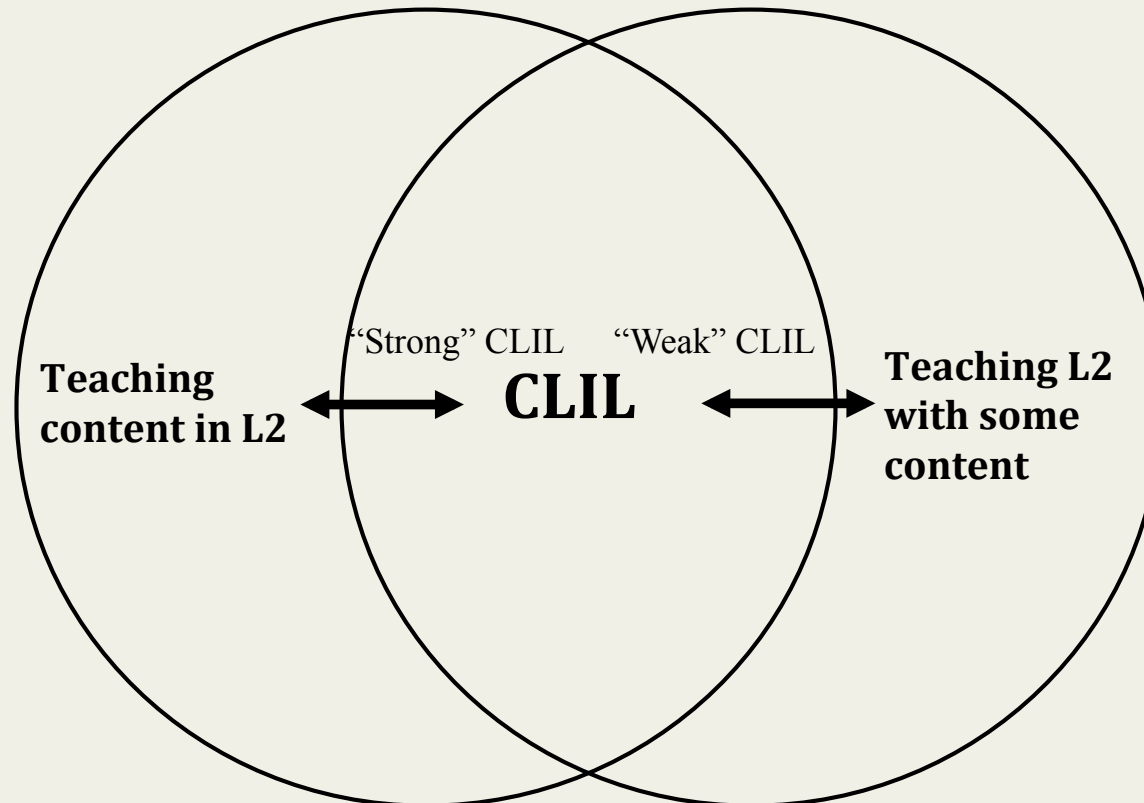
- An “umbrella term”? Do CBI, EMI and ES(A)P fall under the umbrella?
- CBI = using content to teach L2 (e.g. Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 1989)
- EMI = using L2 to teach content → Natural Approach (Krashen, 1982)
- ESP/ESAP = special needs, content often important (e.g. Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Jordan, 2005)
- CLIL = Formal Language Learning + Content Learning (e.g. Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010; Coonan, 2012)
- Four C’s: **COGNITION**, content, communication, culture, context, (e.g. Marsh and Maljers, 1994; Coonan, 2012)
- Emphasizes content over language (“strong” CLIL)
- Emphasizes language over content (“weak” CLIL)
- → CBI is the umbrella term and CLIL is a special form of CBI

Is UNIBZ a CLIL University?

- Depends on who you ask!
- Subject courses = EMI / language courses = ES(A)P / no collaboration
- Scaffolding + Recasting + Feedback → Acquisition (e.g. Lyster and Ranta, 1997)
- **Intermediate Adult learners:** fossilization and plateau phenomenon (see: Ellis, 1997 and 2002; Lightbown and Spada, 2006; Coonan, 2008 and 2012), exacerbated here by lingua franca context and little interaction and no corrective feedback outside language classes (Cf. Prior, 2009)
- Need to differentiate in tertiary education:
 - Theoretical Level: integrating language and content learning
 - Institutional Level: commitment to both language and content learning → ***compete for funding***
 - Curricular Level: offering content in L2 and also LSP/LAP courses=>compete for curricular resources → ***compete for credit/instructional hours***
 - Instructional Level: integration of content and language in syllabi and lesson plans → ***compete for cognitive resources***

Teaching on the *CLIL Fault Line*

- My course: ESAP + communicative, task-based approach
- Learning language through a “simulation” of content learning, to teach language, language skills and learning skills needed to access more advanced language and content → “weak” CLIL (Ennis, forthcoming)



Reflection: The Role of Input

- Input-Interaction-Output (Block, 2003)
- input → apperceived/noticed → comprehended (connect form and meaning) → intake → integration → output → acquired (Gass, 1988, 1997)
- *comprehensible input* (Krashen, 1982), *input flooding* (Trahey & White, 1993), *input enhancement* (Sharwood-Smith, 1981), *interaction* (Long, 1983), and *output with corrective feedback* (Swain, 1985)
- ***input processing*** (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten, 1996; VanPatten, 2002; Lee & Van Patten, 2003)

Input Processing

- Why do errors fossilize?
- Learners have **limited cognitive resources**, and cannot process form and meaning simultaneously
- Perception and cognition must be selective!
- Adult learners know the purpose of language (communication!) and tend to focus on meaning
- ...have developed complex language processing strategies to negotiate for meaning
- ...apperceive/notice features that bear meaning and are necessary for comprehension → connect form to meaning
- ...**do not apperceive/notice** features that are less meaningful or redundant and not necessary for comprehension
- → need to undermine processing strategies to force students to make a connection between meaning and form

Classroom Experiment

- Are the input processing activities I use more effective than formal grammar instruction and meaning focused instruction at helping students learn language and content concurrently?
- Hypothesis: due to limited cognitive resources, form-focused instruction might lead to greater intake of target grammar features, and meaning-focused instruction might lead to greater intake of content, but input processing will lead to the greatest net gain.

Participants

- 82 students present on first day of B2-level English for Tourism Studies course
- First language: 36 German, 35 Italian, 7 Other, 4 German/Italian
- Proficiency: 12 = B1, 53 = B2, 7 = C1/C2, 10 = unknown
- 81 first-year students
- 79 18-21 years old

Experiment Design

- **Target input:** different functions of *present perfect* and *past simple*
- All students read same two texts about past and recent history of tourism containing several examples of past simple and present perfect in context
- All given the same pre-test and the same post-test to test improvements in knowledge about content (5 questions) and understanding of the different functions of the two tenses (5 questions)
- Test variable was the type of instruction
 - The “control” group (21 total) just read texts
 - The “meaning” group (21 total) read texts + series of T/F reading comprehension activities
 - The “form” group (19 total) read texts + series of deductive grammar activities
 - The “CLIL” group (21 total) read texts + series of input processing activities (inductive grammar + connect form and meaning)
- All activities involved same sentences sampled from the texts, containing grammar in context, and the same sentences were used for pre and posttest (solutions provided)
- Same input, but processed in different ways

Results

	Δ % Meaning	Δ % Grammar	Δ % Total
Overall (n=82)	31.0% (T= 11.70, 99.9%)	-13.9% (T= 4.41, 99.9%)	8.5% (T= 2.02, 99.9%)
Control (n=21)	30.5% (T= 6.48, 99.9%)	-12.4% (T= 1.78, 95%)	9.0% (T= 2.03, 95%)
Meaning (n=21)	29.5% (T= 5.80, 99.9%)	-21.9% (T= 3.75, 99.9%)	3.8% (T= 0.95, 80%)
Form (n=19)	31.6% (T= 5.28, 99.9%)	-11.6% (T= 1.87, 95%)	10.0% (T= 2.35, 99.9%)
CLIL(n=21)	32.4% (T= 5.61, 99.9%)	-9.5% (T= 1.52, 95%)	11.4% (T= 2.55, 99.9%)

Results: only B2, no Bilinguals

	Δ % Meaning	Δ % Grammar	Δ % Total
B2 (n=52)	32.5% (T= 10.01, 99.9%)	-17.4% (T= 4.60, 99.9%)	7.5% (T= 3.13, 99.75%)
Control (n=17)	29.41% (T= 5.68, 99.9%)	-12.94% (T= 1.83, 95%)	8.24% (T= 1.95, 95%)
Meaning (n=10)	32.0% (T= 4.71, 99.9%)	-26.0% (T= 4.33, 99.9%)	3.0% (T= 0.67, FAIL)
Form (n=12)	35.0% (T= 5.74, 99.9%)	-18.3% (T= 2.93, 99.9%)	8.3% (T= 2.80, 99.9%)
CLIL (n=13)	35.38% (T= 4.01, 99.9%)	-12.31% (T= 1.30, 85%)	11.54% (T= 1.73, 90%)

Discussion

- All groups showed comparable gains in knowledge (i.e. content learning)
- Drawing attention to language features had no adverse effect on comprehension of content
 - might have enhanced comprehension (don't know yet)!
 - thinking about language = thinking about content?
- All students demonstrated losses in understanding of grammar
 - Possibly due to limited cognitive resources:
 - language and content compete for cognitive resources
 - new input challenges understanding of how the language works
 - challenging content + authentic academic language
- Focus on meaning → grammar loss canceled out → no net gain
- Focus on form → grammar loss less → net gain
- Dual focus → grammar loss lowest/ meaning gain highest → greatest net gain
- CLIL needs dual focus (meaning and form), and input processing might be useful in both weak and strong CLIL courses

Limitations

- Have not yet analyzed significance of variance difference scores across groups
- Only looking at input to intake
 - Interaction/Output/Feedback not considered
 - but none of the above occur in subject lectures
 - and already occur in language courses
- One outlier remains in the B2 CLIL group
- Classroom experiment → representative of my teaching context, but not a random sample of general population

Thank you for your attention!

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