



## **Integrating CLIL into Algerian Tertiary Education: A Dual-focused Approach on Enhancing Teaching Methodology and Refining Translation Practices**

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### **Abstract**

In recent years, the global university rankings have highlighted the significance of student and teacher mobility, as well as the use of technology to facilitate virtual educational exchanges. As a result, there is an increased interest in specific programs and unique features that enhance internationalization in higher education, fostering competition between various institutions and countries. With globalization on the rise, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is gaining significance at the tertiary level. This reflective work aims to examine the preconditions, facilitators and barriers to the implementation of CLIL in Algerian universities, to assess its impact on students' learning outcomes, language proficiency and academic success, to analyse the difficulties and opportunities in different academic contexts, and to explore the most effective methods for integrating CLIL in different academic settings. Ultimately, the present work puts forward a number of recommendations to support the continued advancement of internationalization efforts and the cultivation of globally competent graduates who can thrive in diverse academic and professional environments.

**Keywords:** CLIL implementation; Course Content; ESP; Translation Practices; University Students' and teachers' readiness.

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## **Introduction**

In a fast-paced world in which technological progress prevails, the pursuit for perfection and productivity has emerged as a key element for driving development. Embracing this paradigm, contemporary educational practices have placed significant emphasis on achieving learning objectives to prepare millennial generation learners to acquire more skills and competences than ever before so as to function in tomorrow's world. The onset of technology has significantly altered traditional teaching and learning methods, creating approaches that fit contemporary global requirements. The advancement of technology and increased accessibility have enriched the range of resources that are accessible to learners.

Within the scope of tertiary education, the recent emphasis on quality teaching and dynamic interdisciplinary research in global university rankings has underscored the current necessity to introduce specific programs and highlight distinctive features. The purpose of these endeavours is to stimulate the worldwide integration of higher education institutions and promote competition within different organisms and across nations. In the current globalized educational landscape, characterized by the inclusive participation of students and teachers across borders and the growing utilization of technology for virtual exchanges, CLIL has become a pivotal strategy at the tertiary level. Consequently, its integration within an instructive framework requires the establishment of a dual-educational environment, wherein the dissemination of the educational material occurs via the intermediary level of a foreign language.

The Algerian Ministry of Higher Education is currently spearheading substantial reforms aimed at establishing the appropriate preparatory stages for the successful integration of a suitable (CLIL/CBI) approach in tertiary education institutions. The regional and national meetings made it possible to develop a basis for extensive consultations in order to lead to in-depth discussions allowing the execution of the new teaching methods as well as the prolific implementation of the instructional process. The talks have yielded the relatively strong-willed decision namely incorporating university teachers and doctoral students in a national program of English language learning. This prime choice was meant to strengthen university students' ESP learning in a step forward to allow a smooth shift to an operative training. Hence, the initial step has been taken to guarantee a sufficient level of English language skills for educators and students to move on, in an intermediate stage, towards a smooth transition from ESP to CBI on the way to achieve a convergence between the imparting of course material and the development of various language skills, culminating in a comprehensive understanding and mastery of both aspects.

In order to address the aforementioned considerations, the present work is split into two main sections. The first section sets up a theoretical foundation for the main topic of discussion. It offers an extensive literature review on the concept of CLIL, covering its origins, principles, benefits, and obstacles. The ensuing section delves into the strategies for embedding CLIL into higher education in Algeria, outlining its goals and the steps involved in the process. It also investigates the potential obstacles that could emerge when implementing CLIL in universities, with a particular focus on teacher training. It pinpoints

the various obstacles that Algerian instructors and learners could confront with CLIL implementation and puts forward evidence-based pedagogical recommendations for successfully assimilating a CLIL approach into Algerian tertiary education. In all, the goal of this reflective work is to address significant concerns and provide responses to a multitude of enquiries, including the potential integration of this concept into Algerian higher education institutions. What obstacles might impede the implementation process? And what effective strategies can be employed to achieve the desired outcomes?

The CLIL approach has gained popularity in recent years as a methodology to associate language acquisition and subject content assimilation. The implementation of CLIL poses both opportunities and challenges. On the whole, the present work is intended to provide valuable insights and recommendations for the effective integration of this concept into the Algerian university system so as to prepare students to assimilate both content and language literacy and, thus, become academic experts in the field of research that is subservient to the technological development with the new concepts it carries.

## 1. Review of Literature

Within the past few decades, significant research has concentrated on the different aspects of the CLIL concept, offering valuable insights into its impact on student learning outcomes and educational practices. Eventually, a review of these studies can offer a valuable background for educators to enhance their understanding of the factors that influence the efficacy of this method and pinpoint areas that require further investigation and improvement.

### 1.1 Origins of CLIL

CLIL originated in the early 1990s as a broad term used by the European Network of Administrators, Researchers, and Practitioners (EUROCLIC). The teaching approach has been developed in direct response to fulfill the growing need for language skills that include more than one language. The movement first emerged prominently in Europe and later disseminated globally in response to the effects of globalization.

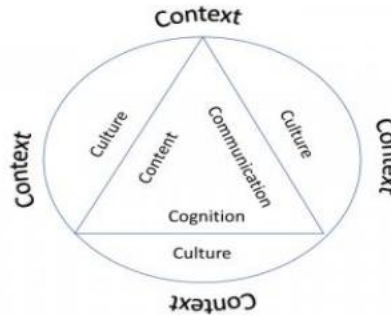
The main goal behind introducing CLIL in education was not simply to view it as a method for teaching both content and language. Instead, the initial aim was to create a fresh foreign language teaching technique that could enhance and enrich the linguistic environment within European education. According to Marsh (2008), This concept was developed based on the success of language programs in Canada and investigating the relationship between language skills and understanding of content.

### 1.2 CLIL Approach Defined

CLIL is recognized as a flexible way of teaching that incorporates a foreign language to aid students in their understanding of both the content and the language (Coyle et al., 2010). This approach is characterized by the teaching of various subjects in a language other than the students' first language. It is a contemporary teaching strategy that surpasses traditional language instruction by offering a more integrated approach to education (Eurydice, 2017). By combining subject teaching with language skills development, CLIL equips students with the tools they need to succeed in a globalized world (Coyle et al., 2010).

### **1.3 Principles of CLIL**

In CLIL, students receive instruction in both content and language at the same time. The implementation of CLIL methodology obeys to some basic principles involving the close consideration of content, communication, cognition, and culture. (See Figure 1)



**Fig 1: The 4Cs Framework (adapted from Coyle et al., 2010)**

Content includes the material implemented in the taught units. It provides for progression in understanding, skills, and knowledge. Communication entails progression in speaking, interaction, language use, listening, writing, learning, and non-verbal interaction. Cognition employs a range of thinking skills to achieve and evaluate the content, the learning and thinking processes. Culture involves the development of intercultural awareness and global citizenship among learners.

### **1.4 CLIL and ESP**

CLIL is frequently considered in conjunction with a number of alternative methodologies that address both language and content instruction. They include ESP, EMI, CBI and a multitude of other approaches. Jendrych (2013) suggests that ESP is a variant form of CLIL and that both approaches facilitate the parallel acquisition of content and language skills which is particularly beneficial in educational contexts where learners need to acquire both linguistic proficiency and subject-specific knowledge. Conversely, Coyle (2007) argues that there are notable distinctions between the two: ESP is primarily concerned with improving language skills that are directly relevant to a specific discipline; CLIL emphasizes the integrated learning of both language and content at the same time.

### **1.5 Translation in CLIL**

In the view of Campbell (2002), the inclusion of translation in the process of delivering content knowledge to students is an indispensable skill. The practice termed CLIL translation consists of transferring language elements from one language into another, ensuring that the content and meaning of the original text are accurately conveyed. This method is employed in educational CLIL environments with the aim of enhancing students' comprehension and engagement with subjects presented in a secondary language. It helps them understand texts in another language and learn more about language and culture.

Teachers can employ CLIL translation as a means to enhance students' language skills while simultaneously fostering and facilitate a more comprehensive knowledge acquisition of the subject matter..

### ***1.6 Advantages in CLIL Implementation***

The advancement of technology and the increasing global interest in language acquisition have resulted in a significant requirement for modern and effective language teaching techniques. CLIL has been identified as the most flexible and successful approach to meet this demand. Indeed, in addition to being an effective strategy for subject and language acquisition, the CLIL method has also served to promote bilingualism and enhance intercultural awareness.

Linguistically, CLIL helps improving overall target language competence. Extensive research has conclusively shown that learners achieved exceedingly in the language skills, when compared to other English programs. (E.g. Küppers & Trautmann, 2013; Paran, 2013).

From a cultural standpoint, Darn (2009) perceives CLIL as a means to foster the development of intercultural communication abilities among students. Eurydice Network member states support the implementation of CLIL as a strategic approach to promote linguistic diversity and enhance student motivation in educational settings. By integrating language learning with subject content, CLIL provides students with opportunities to use language in real-world contexts. This experience not only enriches their understanding of the subject matter but also empowers them to communicate more effectively as they become more adept at using the language in various situations, ultimately leading to a more positive attitude towards learning (Eurydice, 2017).

### ***1.7 Challenges in CLIL Implementation***

Despite the evidence supporting the efficacy and benefits of the CLIL approach, certain factors need consideration prior to implementing it in actual teaching settings. These issues primarily pertain to administrators, educators, students, and instructional resources. Pavon (2013) considers that teacher insufficient English language abilities and interpersonal communication skills may mislead them into assuming that they can execute the program only by translating the subject content terminology into the target language. Additionally, there are growing concerns about the need of educators to be trained in bilingual teaching approaches. It is difficult for students participating in CLIL programs to assimilate content material when taught in a different language. Actually, it is problematic for students to adjust to English effortlessly in a setting where they seldom utilize the target language beyond the classroom. Some scholars believe that the absence of CLIL materials tailored to specific contexts is a difficulty hindering the successful adoption of the CLIL method in educational settings (E.g. Maley, 2011; Smit, 2007). The argument put forth by Smit (2007) suggests that the content and context of materials serve as a source of contention for CLIL teachers and learners, with a significant portion of examples being American or British-centric, thus, potentially lacking relevance to the students' academic curriculum.

## **2. CLIL Integration into Algerian Tertiary Education**

The present section deals with the reflective part of this work. It proposes to ponder on the main challenges and perspectives relating to the integrating of the CLIL approach into the Algerian tertiary education. It is in particular very important to note the methods of integration as well as the various challenges which can obstruct the process. It is also a question to consider a variety of strategies for recording a successful implementation.

### ***2.1 CLIL Implementation Issues into the Algerian Higher Education***

The advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> century engendered radical changes within all areas. In the field of education, more and more learning content has been going online and becoming available anytime and anywhere. One of the needs of the education requirements for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the growing demand for language learning on a worldwide scale, notably in the English language. In the Algerian context, the Ministry of higher education has undertaken several reforms in order to achieve an effective policy that encourages quality teaching and innovative scientific research while respecting international standards of learning and teaching.

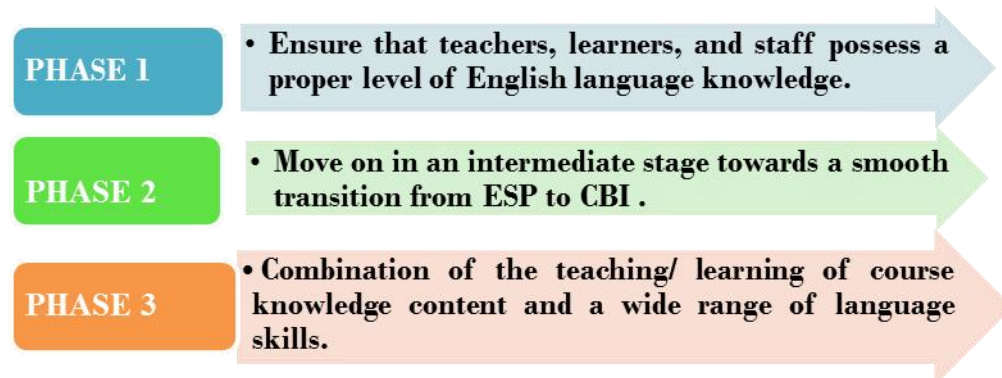
The digital era and globalization entail that any reform must comply to the requirements of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The first step has been to accelerate the process of digitization within the university in order to allow students, teachers, and administrators to engage slickly into the digital age. A second step has been to engage university teachers and doctoral students in an active process of English language learning. This choice was among the major priorities of the Ministry. Undeniably, a national program was launched in order to initiate and even improve teachers' and learners' levels in this global language. This program has been specifically directed to the fields of science, technology as well as the humanities. Part of the program integrated PhD students into the curriculum to guarantee they attain satisfactory levels of proficiency in foreign languages and in the execution of global scientific research. The objective of The Ministry of Higher Education, as explicitly stated, was not to transform teachers into fluent English speakers. Instead, the aim was to enable university instructors to teach content courses in a comprehensible and accurate manner.

### ***2.2 Why CLIL implementation in Algerian Universities?***

Universities are the fundamental units of higher education institutions. They play an important role as influential leaders in education and research. The unprecedented growth of technology over the past decades has challenged the current working practices and affected all areas of society. The fact that led policy makers to think of practical remedies to face these global defies. The decision of the Algerian ministry of higher education, to integrate CLIL progressively at the level of universities, did not emanate from void. Various factors have acted in favour of this innovative method. Firstly, CLIL can help to improve students' language proficiency in a second language, such as English, which is increasingly important in the globalized world. Secondly, CLIL can help to bridge the gap between language learning and subject learning, and can make the content more accessible to students who may struggle with language barriers. Additionally, implementing CLIL in Algerian universities can help to internationalize the curriculum and prepare students for participation in the global academic and professional community. By offering courses and programs in the English language, universities can attract international students and faculty, and can provide their own students with opportunities for international exchange and collaboration. Furthermore, CLIL can help to prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce, where proficiency in a second language, particularly in English, and the ability to work across linguistic and cultural boundaries are increasingly valued. Overall, implementing CLIL in Algerian universities can help to enhance the quality of education, improve students' language proficiency, and prepare them for success in the globalized world.

### 2.3 Stages of Implementation

As per the Ministry of Higher Education, the process of incorporating the approach into Algerian universities will occur in gradual stages, allowing all institutions enough time to prepare for the effective implementation of simultaneous content and language instruction. In fact, the main focus is on Science and Technology because these are the key areas for producing effective English language education. Figure 1 illustrates the three important steps:



**Fig 2: Phases of Implementation of CLIL into the Algerian universities**

The first phase of the program focuses on building a strong foundation in the English language for University students. This phase includes a variety of transversal and discovery unit subjects to expose learners to different aspects of the language and help them develop their skills. The goal is to ensure that students are proficient in English before moving on to more advanced academic subjects. In the second phase of the program, students will transition from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses to a content-based approach. This approach integrates language learning with the study of academic subjects, allowing students to improve their language skills while also gaining knowledge in their chosen specialty. This phase aims to help students develop the ability to learn and understand complex academic materials in English. The final phase of the program focuses on supporting students in mastering the subject content and language skills necessary for success in their chosen academic field of study. This phase will provide students with the tools and resources they need to excel in their studies, including targeted instruction on specific components of the curriculum. By the end of the program, it is expected that students will have acquired a solid background of the English language and be well-prepared to attain in their academic pursuits.

### 2.4 Potential Challenges Facing the Implementation of CLIL into the Algerian Universities

The implementation of any new approach in any organization cannot take place without obstacles that would challenge the smooth progression of integration. Within the Algerian higher education context, the execution of the CLIL approach may encounter certain complexities at different levels of teaching and learning. A primary hindrance to the implementation of the process is the scarcity of educators who have the required proficiency in both the target language and the subject matter. This may impede the efficacy of the CLIL approach, necessitating supplementary training and assistance for educators to effectively implement it in their classrooms. Another challenge is the resistance to change from both teachers and students who may be accustomed to traditional teaching/learning methods. This reluctance emanates from their proper beliefs and attitudes towards the implemented method. The third barrier lies in adhering to the

requirements of implementing this approach in higher education, as it is a concluding stage in the educational process. The levels of integration would cause complications at the level of educational materials and the readiness of the institution to adopt the instructional approach and reach attainable outcomes. A further impediment would consider the potential risk of demotivating learners from pursuing their goals. This can happen when students face repeated failures, leading them to doubt their abilities and lose motivation.

### ***2.5 Who should teach CLIL?***

The theory behind the implementation of CLIL is grounded in providing a meaningful way in which students can learn content and language simultaneously. The key issue at hand is deciding who will take charge of the overall teaching process: Should it be a teacher with expertise in a specific subject, a teacher with a language specialization, or perhaps a teacher who falls somewhere in between? Content teachers carry on the teaching of a particular subject. Adopting CLIL as an approach requires them to go beyond switching to English to teach their subject contents but rather to gain, also, a certain knowledge in language teaching pedagogy to reinforce their subject teaching. Language teachers, on the other hand, bear the primary responsibility of instructing students in language acquisition. Nonetheless, in CLIL methodology, it is furthermore needed of them to include necessary terminology and pragmatic language that is in accordance with the subject matter at hand. Therefore, the efforts of both of the content and subject teachers would be ineffective unless there is a synergy of efforts and cooperation between them to achieve the desired outcomes.

### ***2.6 What difficulties do Algerian Teachers and Learners have to Face with CLIL Implementation?***

The practical application of the CLIL approach would raise significant concerns among Algerian university teachers and learners. Subject teachers may feel that they are not sufficiently prepared to teach in English because they fear the idea of making mistakes while explaining the content of their subjects. An important question that may be raised is the manner in which content can be taught alongside language. The encouragement of students to actively participate in a Clil classroom is essential for promoting language acquisition, content knowledge, and critical thinking skills. It is essential to identify relevant resources that can foster their engagement. Additionally, evaluating both teaching techniques and student learning outcomes is crucial in order to address these concerns effectively. Regarding learners, once set into the CLIL situation, they find themselves engaged in the process of learning a non-linguistic topic that stimulates the active acquisition of a foreign language as well as a content understanding. The main obstacle revolves around comprehending and responding to a subject matter in a language that surpasses their level of comprehension and inhibits their capacity to engage in meaningful discourse.

The concepts of readiness and willingness hold significant importance when considering the adoption of the CLIL approach. These perceptions are of utmost importance, especially when they are a direct response to the requirements of globalization and the educational demands of the 21st century. The adoption of a novel trend within the Algerian University signifies a positive shift towards promoting successful and effective teaching and learning methodologies



### **3. Pedagogical Recommendations for a Successful CLIL Approach Integration into the Algerian Tertiary Education**

The CLIL mission is a solution designed to offer the methodology for bilingual education. It is not a timely decision but rather a long-term project that necessitates an active emphasis upon an educational continuum that builds its programs beginning with basic and secondary education, with a strong emphasis on language skills and knowledge acquisition. In fact, Tertiary Education is the culmination of the educational process since it equips graduates with the practical skills necessary to integrate and operate in society. Next, the consideration of teachers' attitudes and students' readiness are two important factors of a productive CLIL method implementation for no success is possible without the active connivance of the two most active agents in the learning situation: the teacher and the learner. This claim induces the enactment of active measures to ensure a resourceful CLIL integration. One of these acts is the establishment of a safe learning atmosphere, employing a variety of strategies to instil trust in the students about the actual application of language and subject practices. Further, students are supposed to get challenged to move forward into a novel stage in their learning processes, thus, teachers' roles for scaffolding would apply to support students' outcomes and improve their skill level in terms of inventiveness and critical thinking capacities.

One possible approach to propel the effective incorporation of the CLIL method in tertiary education is to utilize translation within CLIL classes. In this context, translation serves to support language acquisition in the target language, and is not only seen as a teaching tool. but, as a goal in itself, to achieve knowledge content learning.

Furthermore, curricula and educational materials are necessary for the active success of the method. The contextualization of authentic materials based on learners' real-world needs and experiences stimulates students and reduces boredom during the instructional process. It is imperative that the syllabuses updated to accommodate the diverse local and contextual needs of the Algerian University and the unique characteristics of the Algerian student. The major incorporation of cross-disciplinary themes would encourage the mutual cooperation between teachers of different subjects. The dynamic collaboration between content and language specialists in planning and designing adequate instructional material can vividly help in increasing language awareness in content instruction. Furthermore, the continuous and active learning paths would bring new pedagogical profiles of content support systems both for students and teachers.

### **Conclusion**

The CLIL approach has been the new innovative trend in Europe since the 1990s. It underwent transformations and reforms that led to it being an ideal concept of modern instruction especially as it respects the 21<sup>st</sup> century education requirements. It presents both benefits and challenges. The incorporation of the CLIL teaching approach into the Algerian higher education system is not impossible but, rather, it is a mission that requires the establishment of very precise rules before any application exertion. Nevertheless, it is useful to mention, here, that the integration is not going to be accomplished by a magic wand. Any decision requiring a comprehensive reform of the educational system must be subject to the imprint of time. In fact, it requires flexibility, gradualness, serious consultations, and genuine engagement from all actors operating within the sphere of higher education and scientific research.

Any innovative process is predestined to bear the consequences of resistance and reluctance of those who have to implement it in practice. The successful integration of

CLIL as an innovative concept in Algerian higher education is essential. It is imperative that administrators, curriculum developers, and instructors engage in extensive discussions about the possibility of its implementation. The primary focus in the decision-making process should be to address teacher development given their direct involvement in implementing the new approach to teaching language and content concurrently. It is important to highlight that the CLIL approach is an emergent educational method that is continuously being refined to cultivate a new cohort of students equipped with the essential skills to tackle the demands of globalization and digitalization. It is, therefore, the responsibility of educators to provide students with the necessary support and encouragement to enable them to overcome the challenges they may face and to maintain their focus on achieving their goals. The cultivation of a constructive and encouraging learning environment enables students to develop resilience and the confidence to persevere in their academic pursuits.

Despite the potential challenges facing the implementation of CLIL in Algerian universities, there are opportunities for growth and development in this field. By investing in teacher training programs, curriculum development, and research initiatives, Algeria can build a strong foundation for CLIL implementation that benefits students and prepares them for success in a globalized world. Collaboration with international partners and participation in CLIL networks can also provide valuable support and resources for advancing CLIL in Algerian universities.

By addressing these challenges and implementing effective strategies, Algerian universities can successfully integrate CLIL into their curricula and provide students with a valuable and enriching learning experience.

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