

From ESP to CLIL and back again: on linguistic aspects in vocational training

Od ESP do CLIL: w poszukiwaniu językowych aspektów kształcenia zawodowego

Słowa kluczowe: zintegrowane nauczanie przedmiotowo-językowe, kształcenie zawodowe, język angielski dla celów specjalistycznych, badanie potrzeb.

Streszczenie: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest krytyczne przedstawienie dwóch podejść do nauczania języka angielskiego – nauczanie typu CLIL (czyli zintegrowane nauczanie przedmiotowo-językowe) oraz nauczanie typu ESP (czyli nauczanie języka angielskiego dla celów specjalistycznych). Część teoretyczna podzielona jest na dwie podczęści, z których każda poświęcona jest jednemu podejściu do nauczania. W drugiej części artykułu poświęconej aspektom językowym kształcenia przywołuję cechy języka angielskiego jako języka pomostowego (*English as a lingua franca*) oraz omawiam taksonomię efektywnego nauczania typu CLIL na podstawie badań przeprowadzonych w szkołach holenderskich przez zespół Ricka de Graaffa (Graaff et al., 2006, 2007).

Key words: CLIL, Content and Language Integrated Learning, VET, Vocational education and training, ESP, English for Specific Purposes, needs analysis.

Abstract: The aim of the paper is to offer a critical comparison of approaches to English language instruction – two CLIL and ESP provision. The theoretical section falls into two parts, each devoted to one of the respective approaches. The latter section of the paper is devoted to linguistic aspects of instruction and bring to the readers' attention the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca, followed by a presentation of a taxonomy of effective CLIL provision based on research carried out in schools in The Netherlands by Rick de Graaff and collaborators (Graaff et al., 2006, 2007).

Theoretical background

One facet that seems to be present in both fields of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) – apart from connecting a (foreign) language with a non-linguistic subject – is a wealth of sub-domains engendered by the two overarching concepts. Temporal precedence of the two instructional approaches is difficult to univocally establish: some would locate the origins of CLIL in the 1994 coinage of the term by David Marsh or the term's reemergence as one of the foundation concepts of the 2004-2006 Action Plan of the European Commission (2003), others would trace its origins

in antiquity (Akkadian-Sumerian, or Greco-Roman, cf. King, 2018; Mehisto et al., 2008) or the anglo-francophone experiment in bilingual education in Canada in the 1970s (Mukan et al., 2017, p. 38); while some would see the beginnings of ESP in post-WWII globalization of technology, commerce and business of the 1960s, others would trace it to post-communicative functional English. What follows is a characteristic of ESP and CLIL with an analysis of content aspects and linguistic aspects of the two.

On ESP

Whatever definition of ESP one inspects, it seems that they all, at one stage or the other, point in the direction of needs – learners' needs. Take this: "[ESP] [...] is an approach to language teaching and learning which centered on learners' and stakeholders' *specific needs* for learning the language" (Abrar-ul-Hassan and Fazel, 2018, p. 126, emphases added). The authors further state two questions which they claim are at the root of ESP: "Why does a learner *need* to learn the language, and what does the learner *want* to do with English?" (Abrar-ul-Hassan and Fazel, 2018, p. 126, original emphases). Especially in the context of VET (Vocational Education and Training), the answer to the above questions – particularly to the latter – is not always straightforward. Learners are often unmotivated and see no or limited reasons for studying (in) a foreign language. This may occur if the ESP course is offered as part of pre-service mainstream vocational education, not as in-service vocational training (cf. also Fig. 1 and the subdivision of the EOP branch). In the former case, students may either not be aware of their PSA (Present Situation Analysis), their linguistic and vocational strengths and weaknesses, or may not have a clear vision of their TSA (Target Situation Analysis), or – to use Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) notions – their Ideal L2 Self and Ought-to L2 Self, as part of their L2 Motivational Self System. In such circumstances, what may aid learners is a series of awareness raising workshops and activities. Needs¹ then seem to guide all the facets of the instructional process: "curricular decision-making, materials development, and pedagogy" (Abrar-ul-Hassan and Fazel, 2018, p. 126).

The field of ESP² can be sub-analyzed into two main areas (cf. Fig. 1): English for occupational purposes (EOP) and English of academic purposes (EAP); the former category can be subdivided into English for vocational purposes (EVP) and English for professional purposes (EPP); each of the ultimate categories can fall into two sub-types: for general purposes (with "G") and for specific purposes (with "S"); finally, time-wise, each field may be subdivided into three categories: pre-experience, in-service, and post-experience (cf. Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 3).

¹ For a comprehensive overview on learner needs and needs analysis, see Long (2005a), specifically Long (2005b), but also: Belcher (2009), Benesch (1996), Možeško (2013), Robinson (1991).

² It seems also interesting to identify what *preceeds* ESP in Fig. 1: English language teaching falls into teaching English as a mother tongue and teaching English as a foreign/second language; this latter category falls into ESP and teaching English for no obvious reason.

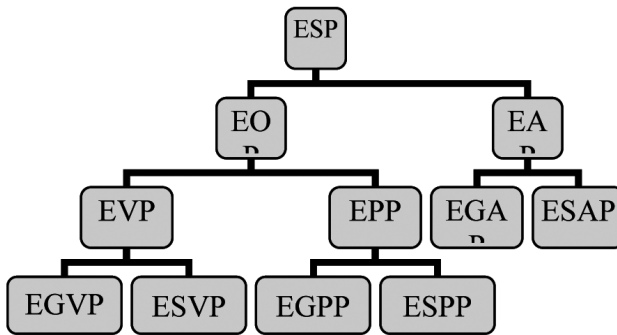


Fig. 1. Classification of ESP by professional area (adapted from Robinson 1991, p. 3-4 and Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 6)

A slightly different approach is put forward by Carter (1983), who identifies three areas of specific courses: (a) English for Science and Technology (EST), (b) English for Business and Economics, and (c) English for Social Studies. Only later, each of these subject areas is in turn further divided into two branches: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP).³

When investigating classifications of ESP, one can come across the following taxonomy of ELT course types (cf. Table 1), dependent on the one hand on the level specificity but also on the level of language proficiency. Here EGBP stands for “English for general business purposes”; all the other acronyms are explained in relation to Fig. 1.

Table 1. Continuum of ELT course types (adapted from Bojanovic, 2006, p. 489)

General ←		→ Specific		
Position 1	Position 2	Position 3	Position 4	Position 5
English for beginners	Intermediate to advanced EGP courses with focus on particular skills	EGAP/EGBP courses based on common-core language skills not related to specific discipline/profession	Courses for broad disciplinary/professional areas (e.g. Report writing for Scientists, Medical English)	1) An academic support course related to a particular academic course 2) One-to-one work with business people

³ An example of EOP for the EST branch is „English for Technicians”, whereas an example of EAP for the EST branch is „English for Medical Studies”.

Stevens (1988) recognizes two main features of ESP: absolute and variable. The absolute characteristics of ESP are that ESP consists of English language teaching which is:

- designed to meet specified needs of the learner;
- related in content (i.e. in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities;
- centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse;
- in contrast with General English.

The variable characteristics are that ESP:

- may be restricted as to the language skills to be learned (e.g. reading only);
- may not be taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

(Stevens, 1988; after Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 3, original bullet points)

Dudley-Evans & St John (1998, p. 4-5), on the other hand, define the absolute and variable features of ESP as follows:

Absolute characteristics:

- ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learner;
- ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves;
- ESP is centered on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities.

Variable characteristics:

- ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines;
- ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English;
- ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level;
- ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be used with beginners.

(Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 4-5, original bullet points)

ESP courses may be said to comprise the following distinctive features. Carter (1983) lists three characteristics common to all ESP provision:

- the use of authentic materials,
- purpose-related orientation,
- self-directedness.

In order for self-direction to occur, the learners must have a certain degree of freedom to decide when, what, and how they will study. So, we commenced our

discussion of ESP with the figure of the learner and their needs and we can treat it as a bridging element connecting ESP and CLIL (in the coming section). First, however, let us delve into needs analysis and language instruction (cf. Gillett, 2018). Brown (2016) emphasizes that ESP is fundamentally linked to the specific needs of a particular group of students and „if there is no needs analysis, there is no ESP” (2016, p. 5). Johns (2001) says that ESP is „a movement based on the proposition that all language teaching should be tailored to the specific learning and language use needs of identified groups of students – and also sensitive to the sociocultural contexts in which these students will be using English” (2001, p. 43); these learners are also, traditionally, identified as adult learners, whose needs more often than not are related to their professional, occupational or academic contexts. In her „Introduction” to *English for Specific Purposes in Theory and Practice*, Diana Belcher (2009, pp. 2-3) say the following about the social responsibility of EAP/EOP:

There are, and no doubt will be, as many types of ESP as there are specific learner needs and target communities that learners wish to thrive in. Perhaps the best known of these (especially among language educators who are themselves most often situated in academia) is EAP [...], tailored to the needs of learners at various, usually higher, educational levels. Less well known (to many academics) and potentially more diversified, given the breadth and variety of the worlds of work, is EOP, or English for occupational purposes. [...] EAP, EOP, and still further combinations of both are not the whole story either, as socially conscious ESP specialists have begun to consider highly specialized sociocultural purposes too (hence, English for socio-cultural purposes, or ESCP) by addressing such needs as those of language and literacy learners who are incarcerated, coping with physical disabilities, or seeking citizenship. What Hyland (2006) has recently observed of EAP is arguably also an apt descriptor of ESP in general: its motivation to help those especially disadvantaged by their lack of language needed for the situations they find themselves in, hope to enter, or eventually rise above.

(Belcher, 2009, p. 2–3)

Both in an ELF (English as lingua franca) setting and in a CLIL setting, it may be argued that language instruction has the potential of promoting social change, of furthering social equality (I will return to the notion of ELF in the further part of the text).

On CLIL

The concept of CLIL is often viewed as an umbrella term (Ball, 2011) encompassing a number to related notions. Let me offer a brief overview (cf. Table 2).

Table 2. notions related to the term CLIL

LAC	CLIL	sheltered instruction
EAC		CBA
EMI		CBI
CLIT/CLIP		CBLT

If the strength of a scientific endeavor shows in the number of subfields it engenders, then CLIL surely is a prolific discipline. The notions in the left-hand column show terms which were used in the past to describe provisions aiming at combining language instruction with content instruction: LAC (Language across the curriculum), EAC (English across the curriculum), EMI (English as a medium of instruction), CLIT/P (Content and language integrated teaching/project). The right-hand column represents notions that are traditionally associated with integrated instruction in the United States of America, including sheltered learning (programs for immigrants), CBA (Content-based approach), CBI (Content-based instruction), CBLT (Content based language teaching). As a subconclusion of Table 2, one can try and capture the relation between CLIL-the-umbrella-term and its subsidiary terms relating to various dual-focused approaches. As King (2018) puts it, "it has been argued that it is distinct from these due to its focus on cognitive and constructivist theories of learning" (King, 2018, p. 547).

The umbrella term itself has been defined in a number of ways. Quite intuitively, it is viewed as "an approach in which pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language" (http://ec.europa.eu/.../clil_en.html). The next two definitions focus our attention on the role of the language of instruction, emphasizing its importance: "[CLIL is an approach] which seeks to develop proficiency in both the non-language subject and the language with or through which it is taught" (www.eurydice.org), and "[CLIL is] teaching *through* English rather than [...] teaching it *in* English" (Gozdawa-Gołębowski, 2008, p. 9, original emphases). The last definition introduces an additional perspective, namely that of dual-focus: "[CLIL is] a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language" (Mehisto et al., 2008, p. 9).

What is at stake while investigating CLIL provision is the relation of the two constitutive components (content and language) to one another. "Although the emphasis can in theory be on either the content or the language, generally CLIL is considered to be content-driven" (King, 2018: 547). This relationship between content and language can be captured on a continuum (cf. Fig. 2).

Strong/hard CLIL Content-oriented		←—————→			Language lessons taught by CLIL language teachers
Total immersion	Partial immersion	Subject course	FL classes based on thematic units	FL classes with greater use of content (model by Ball, 2009)	
Partial immersion		Subject-led (modular) instruction		Language-led instruction (model by Bentley, 2010)	
Subject lessons taught by CLIL subject teachers			Language lessons taught by CLIL language teachers (model by Dale & Tanner, 2012)		

Fig. 2. A comparison of three continuum models of CLIL (adapted from Ikeda, 2013, p. 32)

What is worth noticing in models presented in Fig. 2 is that they all offer certain leeway for teachers in choosing the extent of focus on one aspect of CLIL provision or the other, and this flexibility enables a certain universality of this type of provision. In a globalized world where there is increased international mobility, including labor mobility, CLIL provision (and CLIL-like ESP provision for this respect) can offer effective education solutions (cf. King, 2018; Waller, 2018). The following section presents two perspectives on CLIL/ESP provision: one global, connected with Global English (i.e. English as a lingua franca, ELF), one implementational, connected with Rick de Graaff et al.'s (2006) categories of effective CLIL instruction.

Linguistic foci

In this subsection, we will investigate CLIL/ESP provision by two standpoints: one connected with the phenomenon of English as a lingua franca (ELF), one connected with a model of effective CLIL learning and teaching.

Since CLIL/ESP instruction is realized globally, and since its goals are also often global (e.g. communication with the global scientific community, conducting global trade and commerce), it is well worth recalling the attributes of ELF, i.e. attributes of the language which is used in non-native communication.

Research into ELF's lexicogrammatical features has revealed the following characteristics (Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004, original bullet-points, original italics):

- 'dropping' the third person present tense -s (as in "*She look very sad*")
- 'confusing' the relative pronouns *who* and *which* ("*a book who*", "*a person which*")
- 'omitting' definite and indefinite articles where they are obligatory in NS English, and inserting them where they do not occur in NS English
- failing to use 'correct' forms in tag questions e.g. *isn't it?* or *no* instead of *shouldn't they?* (as in "*They should arrive soon, isn't it?*")
- inserting redundant prepositions (as in "*We have to study about...*" and "*can we discuss about...?*")

- 'overusing' certain verbs of high semantic generality, such as *do, have, make, put, take*
- 'replacing' infinitive constructions with *that*-clauses, as in *I want that...* (e.g. "*I want that we discuss my dissertation*")
- 'overdoing' explicitness (e.g. "*black colour*" rather than '*black*' and "*How long time?*" instead of '*How long?*")

This catalogue of ELF's lexicogrammatical features indicates areas of language which proved non-decisive for successful non-native – non-native communication. Research into the nature of ELF has also revealed its phonetic shape and has singled out the following core features and peripheral features of pronunciation in ELF (Jenkins 2000). The core features (or the Lingua Franca Core, LFC) include:

- consonants, except /θ/, /ð/ and [ʃ]
- vowel length distinctions
- initial consonant clusters
- the mid-central vowel (long schwa)
- nuclear stress.

The peripheral features of ELF include:

- the consonants /θ/, /ð/ and [ʃ]
- final consonant clusters
- individual vowel quality (apart from long schwa)
- reduced vowels or weak forms
- lexical stress
- intonational tones
- stress-based rhythm.

The importance of the core/non-core features of ELF (i.e. those features with affect, or not, intelligibility in ELF settings, thus leading, or not, to communication breakdowns) for CLIL/ESP instruction can be illustrated by the following statement by Jennifer Jenkins.

[T]he differences between EFL and ELF [have] made [it] clear [that] it all depends on the individual learner's needs and wants. ELF is only being proposed where the target interaction community is an international i.e. largely NNS community. [...] ELF researchers believe that this is the most likely situation for the majority of learners in the 21st century...

(Jenkins, 2005, section 3)

Here, the field of learner needs and learner needs analysis is the common grounds joining ELF with ESP and CLIL. When tracing the historical origins of CLIL, one could propose the following extrapolation that elitist education also nowadays is offered in an elitist language, though English globally is more and more of an egalitarian phenomenon. In the contemporary world, English is often still perceived as a token of social status, yet increasingly, it is a communicative necessity for many users of

ELF and ELF. Let us inspect then how best to transmit the linguistic aspects in CLIL/ESp provision. In doing so, I will present the taxonomy of effective CLIL pedagogy as developed by Rick de Graaff and collaborators (2006, bullet-points added, cf. also Graaff et al., 2007).

- **teacher facilitates exposure to input (at level “i+1”)**; this can take place through: materials selection, materials adaptation in advance, materials adaptation during teaching, tuning of teacher talk;
- **teacher facilitates meaning-focused processing**; this can take place through: stimulating understanding, checking understanding, reinforcing correct and relevant meaning, applying meaning through active practice;
- **teacher facilitates form-focused processing**; this can take place through: facilitating noticing of problematic and relevant language forms, providing examples of relevant forms, correcting use of relevant forms, explaining problematic and relevant forms, giving feedback and organizing peer feedback;
- **teacher facilitates output production**; this can take place through: asking for reactions, asking for interaction, eliciting communication, stimulating target language use, stimulating improved language output, organizing written practice;
- teacher facilitates use of strategies; this can take place through: eliciting receptive compensatory strategies, eliciting productive compensatory strategies, eliciting reflection on strategy use, scaffolding strategy use.

The above catalogue can inform one’s teaching, but it can also form basis for a reflective introspection connected with ESP/CLIL provision.

Some have suggested that ESP practitioners may not really need as much specialist (or target situation) knowledge as has been assumed. According to Ferguson (1997), what ESP practitioners actually need is knowledge about an area – that is, its values (e.g., what counts as support for arguments) and preferred genres, rather than in-depth knowledge of an area. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) similarly remark, “Business people do not expect a Business English teacher to know how to run a business; they expect knowledge of how language is used in business” (p. 188).

(Belcher 2009, p. 11)

And back again - *in lieu* of a conclusion proper

Treating CLIL as an umbrella term “highlights the flexibility, operational transferability, and the holistic nature of CLIL as its implementation is usually dependent on context and it is this context which will determine the method chosen to combine content and language learning” (King, 2018: 547). In our case the context is vocational. And so, let me close the paper with an extensive quotation from Diana Belcher, a quotation which seems to perfectly join the two domains – that of ESP and that of CLIL (or CBI, here, Content Based Instruction):

Another means of keeping the subject matter at manageable levels, for both students and instructors, is the sustained content-based approach to instruction (SCBI), or, essentially, subject-area course simulation. SCBI classes focus on a limited range of closely related topics for an entire term, with materials taken from actual subject-area textbooks, such as introductory biology or world history, but usually at a lower grade level than that of the students, such as elementary or secondary school books for a class of tertiary language students. In this way, specialist knowledge demands on the instructor and language demands on the students are kept at less than overwhelming levels (Weigle & Nelson, 2001).

(Belcher, 2009, p. 12)

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