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Ten Years of CLIL Teacher Training at ELTE TÓK

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Since the 1990s the provision of early foreign language education in Europe has risen and become a priority after the publication of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. The recommendations, studies and reports have resulted in lowering the compulsory start age in almost all European Union member states, in 25 out of 28, except for Hungary, England and Netherlands (Enever, 2014:13). Now in Hungary the compulsory start age is 10 years, therefore, pre-primary foreign language teaching and the concept of educational bilingualism have clearly intertwined with each other recently. Hungarian children attending bilingual (or CLIL = Content and Language Integrated Learning) programmes from an early age have an access to foreign languages a lot earlier than their peers who take part in mainstream education encountering the first foreign language only in their 4th grade i.e. at the age of 10.

Thus the impact of bilingual primary and pre-schools on Hungarian young learners' foreign language acquisition in Hungary is huge and invaluable. At this point the term CLIL should be clarified. According to the definitions offered by Marsh and Langé (2000) and Maljers and his colleagues (2010) CLIL is a generic term naming a dual-focused educational approach that refers to any educational situation in which an additional language is used for the teaching and learning of (subject) content and language with the objective of promoting simultaneous learning of content and English. Even though CLIL seems to be an effective, age-relevant and popular methodology, the key figures of early programmes are inevitably the teachers. Their knowledge, personal qualities, skills, beliefs and attitudes immensely influence the success of young learners' holistic development and dual-focussed education. CLIL teachers' tasks and challenges are much more multifaceted than those of working in mainstream monolingual contexts. Early bilingual development places specific personal and professional requirements on teachers concerning proficiency both in the target language and their mother tongue, the knowledge of the subject matter, CLIL and language teaching methodology, intercultural awareness among many others. The knowledge, skills, and desirable attitudes form a complex system of competences that are all necessary for CLIL teaching. The CLIL teacher professional profile includes apart from the foreign language competence and subject methodology, pedagogical, psychological, intercultural, social,

cognitive and communicative elements, learner-centeredness, adaptivity, ICT (Information Communication Technology), skills in materials development, assessment, quality assurance and the need for Life Long Learning (LLL).

Therefore, CLIL teachers' training should be appropriate and effective in order to best support their professional and personal development. ELTE TÓK (Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Primary and Pre-school Education) is one of the very few teacher-training institutions in Hungary and in Europe that offers CLIL education at BA level for future teachers of young learners aged 3-12 (Marsh, Maljers & Wolff, 2007; Novotna & Hoffmannova, 2007:47-49; Kovács, 2009a:47). In this paper after reviewing the historical and theoretical background, the CLIL teacher specialisation run at ELTE TÓK will be introduced in some depth.

The Background: CLIL in Hungary, CLIL in Europe

Bilingual primary schools, and starting foreign language education at an early age have received special attention in Hungary since the change of the political regimes. In 1989 the first bilingual primary school opened its doors two years after launching the first dual language secondary school programmes. Mainly parents and the schools initiated this process, while the earlier innovation concerning the implementation of CLIL in secondary schools was supported by the Ministry of Education (Kovács, 2006). In 1997 the Ministerial Decree No. 26/199 outlined the main principles for CLIL type education and the rules to follow for all bilingual schools including the number of target lessons, the special language syllabus, the number of subjects to be taught through the foreign language and the involvement of a native speaking professional among many other requirements.

From 2001 when a Hungarian-English Foundation called Szőlőtő launched the first bilingual team-teaching programme for children aged 3-14 (Kovács, Molnárné-Lipták, 2003; Kovács, 2008), as a result of the social and market needs, the popularity and the growing number of bilingual primary schools, gradually more and more pre-schools have decided to introduce various programmes that involved integrating a foreign language into their curricula (Tárnok, 2009; Tolnai, 2009; Bozzayné-Kaáli, 2014; Noé, 2014; Horváth & Erdélyi, 2014; Hierholcz & Molnár, 2014; Kitzinger, 2014; Kovács, 2009a; Kovács & Trentinné-Benkő, 2010 among others). The proportion and the intensity of using the target language immensely differ in these institutions since the early bilingual forms of education follow a great variety of language programmes ranging from a language shower to CLIL or immersion (Baker, 1996; Marsh, 2002; Kovács, 2006; Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols, 2008). As a consequence of the social and educational processes outlined above, the need for specialised pre- and in-service teacher training has

emerged in Hungary: both early foreign language education and CLIL required qualified teachers.

Based on and in line with the relevant European CLIL strategies, documents, networks, surveys and projects starting from the 1990s, this special field of education and research has also developed in Hungary at all levels. The early European CLIL milestones (cf. URL 1) included the launch of Lingua DG XXII in 1990, the publication of the European Models of Bilingual Education in 1993 and of the European Commission White Paper in 1995. The term CLIL was introduced in 1996 by Marsh et al. European networking and workshops focussing on bilingual education also supported the CLIL development in this period. From 2002 the research output (e.g. CLIL/EMILE The European Dimension 2002) as well as the dissemination and consolidation of the experiences have taken place in the European platform (e.g. Eurydice CLIL at School 2006, the launching of CLILCOM and ECML CLILMatrix in 2006, Windows on CLIL in Europe 2007).

Meanwhile Hungary has also taken some important steps in order to create the necessary circumstances enhancing bilingual educational development. Among the first activities Hungary's own professional network, KIE, the Association for Bilingual Schools was established in 1991 (Kovács, 2006; Vámos, 2008). In the 1990s several good practices evolved in the fields of teacher education and professional development: students teachers from UK institutions (Lancaster) completed their teaching practice in Hungarian primary schools, native speaker TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners) specialists and advisors sponsored by the British Council worked in collaboration with Hungarian teachers and trainers in the framework of a Lower Primary Project, mentor teachers could participate in mentor training programmes in the UK (Lancaster) and 14 Hungarian professionals were trained in the UK (Leeds University) to become TEYL specialists. Cross-curricular teacher training materials were developed by ELTE professors in 1998 (Sárosdyné-Szabó and Kovács) and in 2003 the first primary CLIL teaching materials were published by Konsept, a specialised local publishing house. The materials development process has been an example of fruitful professional cooperation successfully integrating theory and practice since both practising primary teachers and university specialists participated in the project. From 2004 in-service CLIL teacher-training programmes started nation-wide organised by KIE.

CLIL teacher training at ELTE TÓK

In 2006 ELTE TÓK (Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Primary and Pre-school Education, at that time Lower Primary Teacher Training College) introduced its CLIL teacher training programme at BA level for future teachers of young learners aged 3-6 (Kovács, 2009b). Nowadays ELTE TÓK is still one of the few teacher-training institutions in Hungary and

beyond that offer such training for undergraduates. Since then the CLIL teacher specialisation has become available for both full-time and part-time kindergarten teacher trainees, and as a module also for primary teacher trainees. Thus, the scope of target age groups has widened to future CLIL teachers of learners aged 3-12.

In the past decade there has been a constant and growing interest in ELTE TÓK's English pre-school teacher specialisation, thus many student teachers apply to the CLIL training year after year. The market needs make the level of the CLIL module high enough to maintain quality assurance. All the applicants have to take an entrance examination and demonstrate a good level of English in order to be able to enrol the CLIL course. The exam consists of two parts: the multiple choice test concentrates mainly on accuracy and appropriacy while the oral examination focuses more on fluency. However, accuracy is also important and good pronunciation is vital since teachers of young learners have to provide a good model to support children's language acquisition.

The aim of the English-Hungarian CLIL specialisation is to prepare student teachers to conduct playful and holistic sessions through English in the subject/development areas of Science, Visual Art, Music, Children's Literature and Physical Education. A pre-requisite for acceptance to the CLIL training is an appropriate level of English, therefore applicants need to take an oral and written language assessment test when they apply. Since 2009 the students have been invited to fill in a profession-oriented questionnaire too to gain insights into the applicants' beliefs and motivations. The training programme presented in Table 1 starts with a preparatory target language development phase focussing on integrated skills development and pronunciation practice. The skills development courses include general topics and materials; promote the acquisition of specialised vocabulary and classroom interaction practice as well as the consolidation of students' grammar knowledge.

Then in the second phase alongside with the professional foundation course called "Theory and practice of bilingual education" trainees do their first teaching practice in an English-Hungarian bilingual kindergarten. While in the course they gain theoretical knowledge about bilingualism and bilingual education, by participating in a great variety of practical activities at the same time they also prepare for their individual pre-school practice. In the bilingual practice institutions they have the chance to shadow the English native speaking mentor teachers' work and they are invited to join in the everyday activities of the bilingual programme. The main aim is to observe bilingualism in the target language pre-school with a special focus on the communication forms of everyday activities. They can experience the interactions between the children and the mentor teacher in the foreign language, practise their classroom language and collect teaching ideas and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) resources in a real life context.

Table 1. The subjects of the CLIL specialisation

Courses in the English-Hungarian Bilingual/CLIL Module
English Language Preparation for Bilingual Education in Pre-school (1, 2)
Phonetics and Pronunciation Development
Theory and Practice of Bilingual Education
English Children's Literature (1, 2)
Methodology of Bilingual Pre-school Sessions: Visual Education
Methodology of Bilingual Pre-school Sessions: Physical Education
Methodology of Bilingual Pre-school Sessions: Science
Methodology of Bilingual Pre-school Sessions: Music Education
Individual Practice in Pre-school (1, 2)

The students take further courses in the following semesters in children's literature and they also start their methodology studies in the subject areas of music, science, visual art and physical education. All the courses integrate theory and practice whilst putting special emphasis on students' holistic development considering both their professional and personal skills. The tasks and requirements are varied ranging from singing children's songs to reading professional literature through giving Power Point presentations and micro-teaching sessions, listening to and discussing presentations on the internet, participating in professional debates and simulations, writing book reviews and self-development reports, creating portfolios and reflecting on one's own and each other's work among many other challenges.

At the end of their CLIL training they complete their second individual pre-school practice in one of the specialised English-Hungarian institutions with the help and support of their native speaking mentor teacher. This time the students' task is to prove that they are prepared and able to plan, organise, do and reflect on the activities in English as an English-speaking kindergarten specialist. They should initiate educational situations, cross-curricular activities and personal interactions with the children using English as the only means of communication. They have the chance to participate in professional discussions and post-session evaluations, and learn from the experienced mentor teacher in action whilst collecting and trying out real-life experiences in a bilingual pre-school context.

Table 2. The proportion and of subjects in the CLIL specialisation

Credits (Total: 32)	Contact lessons / hours (Total: 340)	Competence areas	Percentage of all contact hours (%)	Names of Courses
11 credits	120 lessons	Linguistic preparation Foundation: target language	40%	English Language Preparation for Bilingual Education in Pre-school 1, 2 Phonetics and Pronunciation Development
3 credits	30 lessons	Foundation: bilingualism	10%	Theory and Practice of Bilingual Education
10 credits	90 lessons	Bilingual / CLIL methodology	30%	Methodology of Bilingual Pre-school Sessions: Visual Education, Physical Education, Science, Music Education
4 credits	60 lessons	Professional background knowledge	20%	English Children's Literature 1, 2
4 credits	40 hours	Teaching practice	2 × 1 week in a bilingual pre-school	Individual Practice in Pre-school 1, 2

In the next section the subject 'theory and practice of bilingualism' is presented as the professional foundation course of the CLIL specialisation with its alternative exam practice.

The CLIL foundation course and its alternative exam practice

The subject called 'Theory and Practice of Bilingual Education' aims to train pre-school teachers who are able to run sessions in the target language in bilingual pre-school contexts relying on their competences i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes. During the course students become familiar with the theoretical and practical foundations of managing pre-school life, organising and conducting various sessions effectively in the foreign language. Trainees study the definitions, types and characteristic features of bilingualism, the beliefs and misbeliefs about bi- and multilingualism in the light of recent research findings. They also learn about the psychological and pedagogical foundations of early CLIL; its objectives, tasks, activity types, techniques, methods and challenges. Students acquire the special vocabulary related to bilingualism and get to know the language learning approach which focusses on acquisition rather than learning and promotes children's holistic development. They also prepare for the observation in the pre-school practice as well as for life

long learning concerning their professional competences: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

By the end of the course students are required to become familiar with the theoretical foundations, types, advantages and challenges of early childhood foreign language education. They should know the terminology of bilingualism and CLIL, be able to read and interpret the professional literature in the target language. They should be able to speak the target language fluently using the CLIL terminology appropriately. They should be familiar with both cultures and be aware of the intercultural issues and differences. They should be equipped with the appropriate skills and attitudes that enhance their own professional and personal development. They should demonstrate professional awareness and understanding of the necessary competences CLIL teachers should possess and the challenges they have to face during their everyday work.

The end of term evaluation of this course – The Theory and Practice of Bilingual Education – has always been an exam since 2006. In the past decade this exam has been gradually changed a lot, from a traditional oral exam – when students pick an assignment topic (see a possible list of exam topics in Figure 1) that they have to discuss in detail – into a creative portfolio.

Figure 1. Exam topics for the theory and practice of bilingual education course

- 1) Bilingualism. Definitions and types of bilingualism. Its place and role in the European context
- 2) Bilingual education. Definitions. Types of bilingual education. Classification issues
- 3) The images of bilinguals. Negative and positive assumptions
- 4) Language learning vs. language acquisition. The theory of multicompetence
- 5) Types of content-based language teaching. Immersion and CLIL. Similarities and differences
- 6) CLIL history. CLIL milestones in Europe and in Hungary
- 7) Language learning and young learners – making the match: Early CLIL
- 8) How young learners think and learn. Key factors for effective learning in the CLIL classroom
- 9) Basic language input in pre-school contexts. Content and methodology
- 10) Relevant European and Hungarian regulations, guidelines and documents
- 11) The role of the bilingual pre-school teacher. The CLIL teacher's competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes)
- 12) European research on CLIL (networks, projects, research findings...)
- 13) Planning for CLIL teaching and learning. Issues to consider

As an innovation, instead of the traditional oral exam practice the students have to compile a creative portfolio and write reflections for all the individual creative tasks in the portfolio, and send them to the examiner before the exam via email. The teacher observes and reads all the materials in advance and prepares for the exam with specific questions and personalised professional comments for further discussion. On the day of the oral exam the students introduce their concept map on the topic of early CLIL as the evidence of their theoretical knowledge in

the target language, and then defend the other pieces of their artwork on the basis of the examiner's questions.

The creative portfolio includes the following *four tasks plus their reflections* (on the process of the creative work, the thinking process, the symbols, the choices, the reasons, the message, the feelings, the technique, etc.):

1) Create a visual mindmap on the topic of early CLIL.

On the day of the exam the students have to present this task to the examiner.

The mind map should include all the important concepts and terms in connection with the theory of CLIL.

2) Create the visual image of the ideal CLIL teacher.

Any techniques can be used.

Students should be able to discuss the CLIL teachers' necessary qualities and competences on the basis of their visual representations.

3) Write a story about the CLIL teacher's adventures.

The students should be able to reflect on the type of story, the plot, the main character(s), the trials, the helpers and enemies, the symbols, the message and the magic elements etc. of the story.

4) Design a board game about the process of becoming a competent CLIL teacher.

The students can find out rules and prepare task/challenge/lucky-unlucky cards too. They should be able to reflect on the process, name the supportive and hindering factors and understand that the boardgame can support their own development.

I asked the students about their experiences and opinions concerning the alternative exam practice several times and in different ways (with the help of interviews, focus group discussions, asking written feedback, reflections). The findings help me continuously shape and improve my teaching and evaluation practice. Last year I sent out a questionnaire after the exam period to the students. Figure 2 shows that 56 % of the students have worked more or the same amount in this way. I was satisfied with this answer since I had feared that the students might not feel that they were preparing, they were studying, if they do it in an unusual way i.e. drawing, writing a story, etc.

Figure 2. The time spent on preparation for the exam

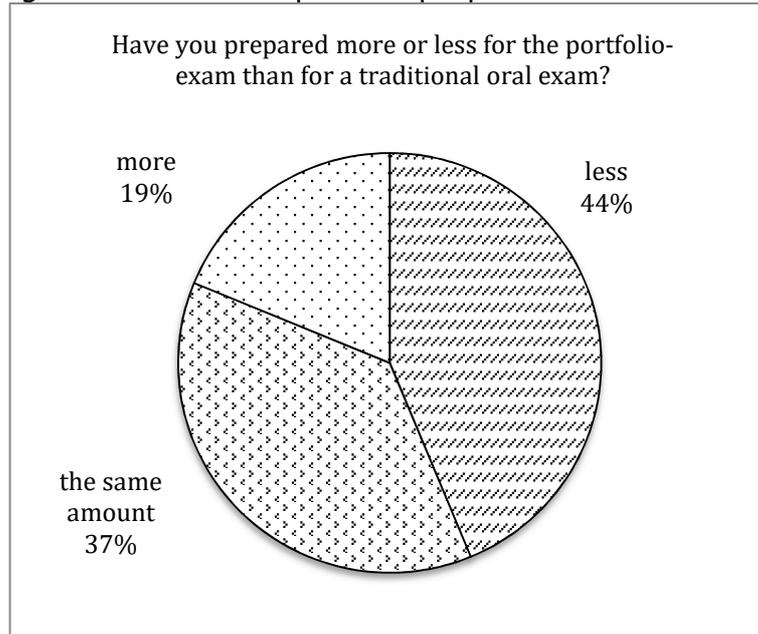
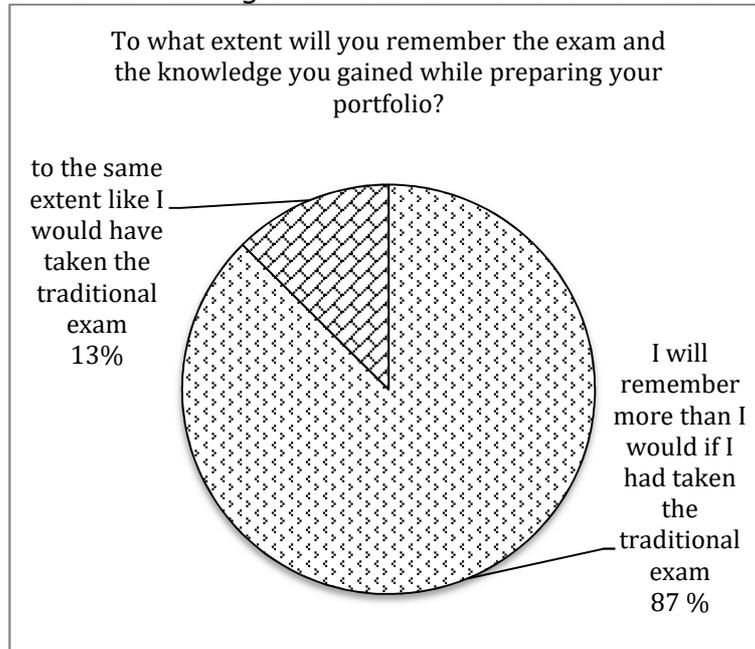


Figure 3 indicates that the majority of the students (87%) believe that they will remember the knowledge gained while preparing for the creative portfolio better than they could recall the studied material after completing a traditional oral exam. This result has matched my expectations since I believe that active learning means more effective and memorable learning experiences and the challenging and creative nature of the tasks also enhanced the positive outcome.

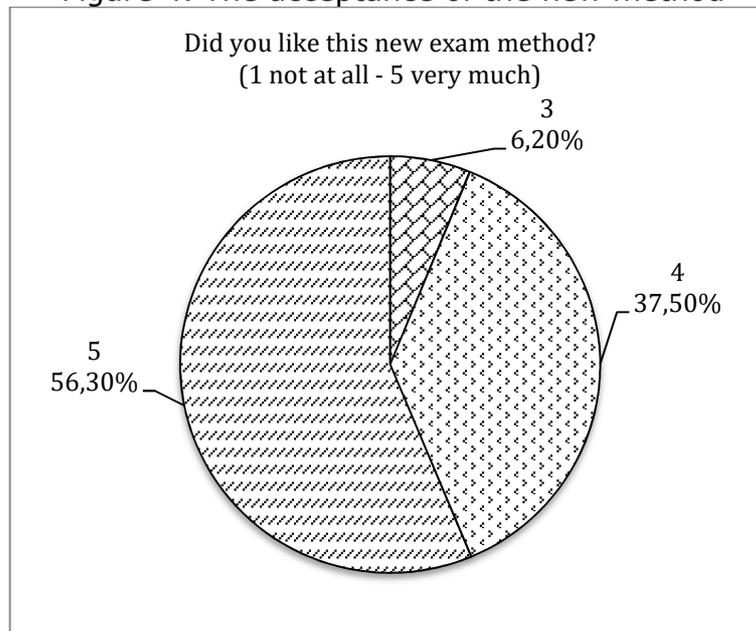
Figure 3. Remembering the material with the new exam practice



Finally I was looking forward to learning whether and to what extent students liked the new exam practice. It was an exciting question since at the beginning the majority was reluctant and anxious about the unusual

tasks. However, many of the reflections included a note that while preparing for the exam, doing the portfolio elements, they actually got to like the tasks and felt enthusiastic about them, and when they have finished the work they felt proud and satisfied with their achievements. After the exam period I was curious to see the results: 56 % liked the new evaluation practice very much (they gave grade 5), 38 % liked it (grade 4), and only 6 % have answered neutrally (grade 3).

Figure 4. The acceptance of the new method



On the basis of the findings I believe that there are good reasons for using this alternative exam practice. However, the constant reflection on the process, asking for students' feedback and the preparation to help them cope with the emotional challenges of this unusual task should not be neglected. I believe that this alternative exam method is a good practice that can be further developed and investigated.

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