A teacher's reflections on learning and teaching in an English-medium CLIL teaching experiment

Bachelor's thesis

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Tämän proseminaaritutkielman tarkoituksena oli tarkastella opiskelijoiden ja opettajan omaa suullista englanninkielen käyttöä englanniksi toteutetussa vieraskielisessä sisällönopetuksessa eli CLIL-opetuksessa työtään kehittävän ja ammatillista oppimista tavoittelevan tutkivan CLIL-opettajan näkökulmasta. CLIL-opetuskokeilu tapahtui Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulun musiikin koulutusohjelmassa lukuvuonna 2011–2012, ja oppisisältönä oli vapaan säestyksen opintojakso. Opetuskokeilun tavoitteena oli tukea osaltaan ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijoiden ammatillisen kielitaidon kehittymistä, erityisesti kykyä ymmärtää ja käyttää suullisessa kommunikaatiossa oman alan musiikillista sanastoa. Tutkimuksen taustana esittelen ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijoille asetettuja kansainvälistymisosaamis- ja kielitaitotavoitteita, CLIL-opetusta ja toimintatutkimuksen periatteita sovellettuna tutkija-opettajan työhön.

Toimintatutkimuksen periaattein ja observoinnin pohjalta reflektoin tutkija-opettajana yhdeksän opiskelijan ja omaa englanninkielen käyttöäni oppimisessa ja opetuksessa. Havaintoja reflektoitiin CLIL-opettajana kasvun ja ammatillisen kehittymisen näkökulmasta ja peilattiin CLIL-opetuksen periaatteisiin sekä ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijoiden kielitataitotavoitteisiin.

Havaintojen ja pohdintojen perusteella CLIL-opetuskokeilu tarjosi opiskelijoille mahdollisuuksia oppia ja kerrata musiikillista sanastoa, harjoittaa kuullun ymärtämistä ja jossain määrin myös suullista kielitaitoa englanniksi sekä lisäksi saada kokemuksia englannin käytöstä opiskelukielenä. Opetuskokeilu siis tuki osaltaan ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijoiden kielitaitotavoitteiden saavuttamista. Tutkimuksellinen ja itsereflektiivinen suhtautuminen opetustyöhön auttoi opettajana omien kehittymistarpeiden havaitsemisessa ja mahdollisti tietoisen toimintamallien muutoksen englanninkielisen opetuksen parantamiseksi ja opiskelijoiden kielitaidon tukemiseksi.

Asiasanat – Keywords CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) teaching, teaching experiment

Säilytyspaikka – Depository

Muita tietoja – Additional information

1 INTRODUCTION

The universities of applied sciences in Finland are attempting to respond to the need of educating linguistically qualified workforce in the increasingly internationalised labour market according to the aim of internationalizing higher education in Finland, expressed in the Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015. Consequently, also Jyväskylä University of Applied Sciences (JAMK) has its own Strategy that highlights internationalization as one of JAMK's three profile areas; JAMK's goal is to provide broad sections taught in English in all its degree programmes (JAMK Strategy). Thus, not only students but also teachers at JAMK are facing new linguistic demands and possibilities.

As a former JAMK teacher, I conducted an English-medium content teaching experiment during the academic year 2011–2012 with the aim of improving the limited provision of studies in English in the JAMK degree programme in music. I believe that JAMK music students, too, among other students, will most probably increasingly need better English skills, including knowledge of subject-specific vocabulary, not only in their future working life, which will take place in more and more international contexts, but also already during their studies, for example, when participating in English-medium instruction, such as master classes held by foreign teachers. Furthermore, for many music students contacts with exchange students are likely to be everyday reality and the possibility of becoming an exchange student themselves a feasible possibility. As far as I can see, my project can be considered a contribution to the internationalization aim, part of internationalization at home, referring to, among other things, offering students instruction in foreign languages such as English. The aim of my experiment was to support students' compulsory English language studies and focus on a specific part of it, namely music-related vocabulary and practical use of English as a medium of learning. The English-medium teaching experiment can be considered what is known as CLIL teaching. CLIL refers to Content and Language Integrated Learning, an approach in language teaching where language is learned or acquired while learning content. CLIL is being increasingly used, gradually also in higher education, where, however, it is still quite rare. The content of my CLIL course consisted of the study unit of '*vapaa säestys'* (VS) that music students study as part of their studies. My CLIL VS course, which was offered to the students who wished to study the contents of the course through the

medium of English, was, as far as I know, a pilot CLIL teaching project of this type in the JAMK degree programme in music.

While running the course, taking the role of a teacher-researcher doing a kind of classroom action research, I tried to consciously observe and reflect on my teaching and the students, focusing especially on the use of English as the medium of instruction and learning. The aim of this study was to reflect on the spoken use of English of the students and the teacher with the aim of improving my practices and developing as a CLIL teacher.

In the second chapter, I will discuss the framework of the study, including language learning aims of and opportunities for JAMK music students, CLIL teaching, and action research from the point of view of teacher-researcher. In the third chapter, I will discuss the present study; I will describe the context of the study and state the research questions, after which I will look at data collection and the data collection method as well as the participants. Then, in the fourth chapter, I will present my observations and reflect on them. Finally, I will discuss these observations and reflections and draw some conclusions.

2 FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will discuss the components of the framework of this study. First, I will look at language learning aims and opportunities in the degree programme in music of the JAMK University of Applied Sciences (JAMK). Second, I will briefly describe CLIL as a versatile phenomenon and approach to language learning and teaching. Third, I will look at action research from the point of view of a teacher-researcher who through his action research attempts to improve his teaching and develop professionally.

2.1 Language learning in JAMK degree programme in music

Regarding foreign language skills of students of universities of applied sciences, they should achieve in one or two foreign languages such written and spoken language skills that are necessary to practise a profession and to develop in it, according to a decree concerning universities of applied sciences (2003/352, 8 §). A foreign language mostly refers to English. According to the JAMK Principles of the Curriculum (PC) (2011–2012: 4), the goal is that, by developing the so called internationalization competence, every student:

- possesses communicative competence necessary for one's work and for professional development in the subject field
- is able to operate in a multicultural environment
- takes into account the effects of and opportunities for internationalization development in one's own field

As was mentioned, JAMK Strategy (p. 8) highlights internationalization as a profile area and aims at offering sections in all degree programmes that are taught in English. One way to realize internationalization is through "internationalization at home" which refers to studying in Finland in one's own school in a "multicultural and genuinely international study environment" created by foreign degree and exchange students and also foreign teachers and experts (PC 2011–2012: 7). For the students studying in the Degree Programme in Music, Master courses and workshops given by visiting foreign teachers may offer opportunities for developing their English skills (Mestarikurssit). Music students can develop their international competences also by participating in courses taught in English; instruction in English is available in instrumental studies, ensemble playing, choir conducting and accompaniment (Degree programme in music). In addition, the practical part of the studies as well as the pedagogical studies can be undertaken in English (Degree programme in music). The teaching staff is "highly international", which enables arranging tuition not only in English but in many other languages as well (Degree programme in music).

Compulsory English language studies consist of only one basic studies course, "English for working life", of 3 ETCS credits. According to course information (English for working life, Course information), the English language course, lasting one period and consisting of about 30 contact lessons and 50 hours of independent study, is recommended for 1st or 2nd year students. The objectives of the course are described as follows:

- The students have the ability to use the English language in both spoken and written forms to successfully carry out work-related tasks in a multicultural context.
- The students are equipped to meet the demands of the job application process and job responsibilities.
- They have the skills to find information related to their field of study and
- they have a reasonable command of its essential terminology.
- The students know the difference between formal and informal language styles and can use them appropriately.

Of these objectives, the first, i.e. having "the ability to use the English language" in *spoken* form "to successfully carry out work-related tasks" and the fourth, i.e. having "a reasonable command of" the "essential terminology" of the student's "field of study", are the ones that my CLIL VS course could possibly support.

The contents of the English course include: essential terminology, retrieving and handling information; job application process (e.g. job ad, cover letter, telling about one's education, CV, job interview); oral situations in working life (e.g. telephoning, discussions, guidance); presentations (e.g. product or company presentations, tutoring, informing, etc.); work environment and situations; producing and understanding formal texts (e.g. e-mails, memos, summaries); and multicultural working life.

Above all, the aim of the course seems to be to equip students with the ability to use English in their future work where communication in English will be more and more likely to be needed. For music professionals, practical spoken language skills are likely to be more important than more academic written skills and mastering essential music-related terminology also important; instrument pedagogues might need these for successful teaching of foreign students and musicians to enable communication with foreign colleagues. The terminology that the course introduces is related to studies in a university of applied sciences, but even more specifically, a small part of the course focuses on music vocabulary such as intervals and chord types. However, according to the teacher responsible for this course, only very limited time can be allotted for studying this special vocabulary. One could conclude that thus the mastery of this vocabulary may be only partial and shallow and that students could benefit from extra encounters and recycling of this vocabulary in another context.

2.2 CLIL teaching

Content and Language Integrated Learning, most commonly and henceforth referred to with the acronym CLIL, is, generally speaking, a broad concept or label encompassing many diverse educational approaches in which language learning and content learning are integrated. For example, bilingual education, immersion and content based instruction can be placed under the umbrella of this generic term. Although CLIL-type learning is no new phenomenon, interest in CLIL has been growing since the coining and adoption of the new term in the mid-1990s. CLIL seems to have rapidly become a popular approach in language teaching now well established particularly in the European context and also beyond. CLIL seems to have been adopted as a tool for promoting foreign language learning goals set at EU level.

CLIL can be defined as "a dual-focussed educational approach in which an additional language is used for learning and teaching of both content and language" (Coyle, Hood and

Marsh 2010: 1). While CLIL teaching can be implemented in many ways with different emphases on content and language, in Europe at least CLIL is more of the content-driven kind, as opposed to language-driven (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula and Smit 2010: 2). CLIL is commonly seen, according to Dalton-Puffer and Smit (2007: 8–9), as enabling naturalistic, meaningful and efficient language learning. Naturalistic 'language bath' refers to the fact that language per se is not consciously studied, instead the focus is on real content to be studied anyway, making the use of language thus meaningful. CLIL enables killing two birds with one stone, i.e. learning two curricular subjects simultaneously, and also greatly increases the hours of exposure to the target foreign language. With the focus on meaning rather than form, CLIL may cause less anxiety and increase motivation in learners, in other words, their affective level is positively affected. CLIL is believed to improve communicative competence that is often seen as *the* aim of foreign language learning. Language learning in CLIL has been traditionally seen mainly through the ideas of Krashen's monitor model and thus considered rather acquisition brought about essentially by exposure to a lot of foreign language input. However, Swain, according to Dalton-Puffer and Smit, has argued that producing output is equally important in language learning, as, requiring deeper processing on a lexico-grammatical and not only on a semantic level, active production leads to deeper learning (p. 10). Furthermore, language learning, in CLIL, too, is increasingly seen also as a socially construed and situated process, not only as an individual cognitive phenomenon (pp. 10–11).

CLIL is used for many reasons, including among others the following ones: preparing for future studies, providing skills for working life, accessing subject-specific knowledge in another language, improving overall target-language competence, developing oral communication skills, developing self-confidence as a language learner and communicator, and increasing learner motivation (Coyle et al. 2010: 17). CLIL teaching is becoming more and more common at the primary and the secondary level, while at the tertiary level, including universities of applied sciences, its uses are rather still explored (p. 25).

CLIL teachers need various skills. Teacher competences that can be helpful and "to be aimed in CLIL" at are presented in The CLIL teacher's competences grid, a "tool for reflecting on and guiding professional development for future and currently in-service CLIL teachers" (CLIL Cascade Network). A part of the grid, concerning the competence area of Second

Language Acquisition, "Applying SLA knowledge in the classroom", states the following as indicators of competence (Bertaux, Coonan, Frigols-Martin and Mehisto 2010: 6):

- Can support students in navigating and learning new words, terms, idioms and discourse structures
- Can call on a wide repertoire of strategies for supporting students in oral or written production
- Can use a wide range of strategies for scaffolding language use so as to produce high quality discourse
- Can navigate the concepts of code-switching and translanguaging, and decide if and when to apply them
- Can decide whether production errors are linked to language or content
- Can use a wide range of language correction strategies with appropriate frequency, ensuring language growth without demotivating students
- Can use strategies such as echoing, modelling, extension, and repetition to support students in their oral production
- Can develop a classroom culture where language learning is supported through peers and learner autonomy

In essence, students are to be supported in the learning, comprehension and production, of the foreign language by the teacher through various strategies, and also through peers and learner autonomy.

2.3 Action research: the teacher as a researcher

Action research can be understood in many ways; the term covers a number of different traditions (Heikkinen and Jyrkämä 1999: 51–55). However, typically action research has a dual nature and purpose; action research aims at bringing out new information on an activity while also developing it. As, for example, Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998, cited in Heikkinen and Jyrkämä. 1999: 32) put it, action research "aims to help people to investigate reality in order to change it. At the same time, -- it also aims to help people to change reality in order to investigate it". Many definitions for the term have been given, each with a slightly different emphasis (see Heikkinen and Jyrkämä 1999: 32–35); for example, the definition by McNiff (1992, cited in Heikkinen and Jyrkämä 1999: 35) highlights the point of view of reflection and that of professional development:

> Action research -- encourages a teacher to be reflective of his own practice in order to enhance the quality of education for himself and his pupils. It is a form of self-reflective enquiry that is -- used in school-based curriculum development, school-improvement schemes, and so on, and, as such, it actively involves teachers as participants in their own educational process.

Indeed, as the definition describes, action research, which can be characterized with keywords such as reflection, practicality of the study, and (change) intervention (Heikkinen and

Jyrkämä 1999: 36), is typically carried out by teachers wanting to develop their work (p. 40). Through reflective thinking action research aims at improving a given activity (p. 36). Action research is often seen as self-reflective circles, or a spiral formed by many cycles, consisting of action, observation, reflection and (re)planning (pp. 36–37). Intervention in action research, refers to changing something, i.e. making things differently than before, and then looking at what happens; it aims at a change for better, an improved way of doing something (pp. 44–45). While action research is often seen as participatory by nature or community-based, e.g. in South-American or Australian traditions, other approaches, prevalent in England and the US, focus rather on self-reflective activity with an individual as the subject (pp. 49–50). For example, Hopkins, according to Heikkinen and Jyrkämä (Hopkins 1995, cited in Heikkinen and Jyrkämä 1999: 50) would rather avoid using the term *action research* and use "*teacher research*" or "*classroom research*" instead.

Action research has been done for example by Markkanen (2012), an elementary teacher and English teacher, who conducted a longitudinal action research on learning and teaching content and foreign language in English CLIL-sessions. The purpose was to explore the learning of content and English of her pupils in CLIL sessions and the pupils' attitudes towards the sessions. Furthermore, the aim was to develop and improve teaching strategies, practices and knowledge of teaching methods. It was found out, among other things, that most pupils developed in English, communicating in English more eagerly than before. Like her, I took an action research-like stance towards my CLIL VS teaching. Conducting action research is mentioned as a tool of "[a] dynamic CLIL teacher", described as "a learner who follows a personal path of enquiry, reflection, and evaluation" in European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education (2011: 24), under Research and evaluation, one of the eight target professional competences of CLIL teachers.

3 PRESENT STUDY

In this chapter, after motivating the present study, I will present the context of the study, the CLIL VS course, and then state the research task in the form of two research questions. Finally, I will look at data collection and the method used to collect it as well as the participants.

3.1 Context of study and research task

The present study is important personally for my professional development and improvement as a CLIL teacher. Furthermore, CLIL teaching with *vapaa säestys* (VS) as content in the context of universities of applied sciences (UAS) has not been studied. Whether UAS students', or more specifically JAMK music students', foreign language learning, which, as was noted, is an important profile area at JAMK, could be supported through CLIL teaching was definitely worth some research. As the context for the study and data collection, I will next briefly look at the content course during which data was collected. In the course in question students study some basic piano playing and accompaniment skills, including mastering chords, accompaniment patterns and improvisation. The Finnish '*vapaa säestys*' (literally *free accompaniment*), henceforth referred to as VS, means solo (piano) playing or accompanying that is often 'free' of written music, unlike classical playing/accompaniment. VS is often studied as part of the studies of e.g. music pedagogues or music educators. The JAMK VS course lasts one academic year; it consists of 30 lessons of 45 minutes and includes three matinees and an end-of-year examination. Tuition is given in groups of three students.

The CLIL approach has a dual-focus, the learning of content and of language. CLIL can be implemented in different ways depending on the context and needs. As is most often the case in CLIL teaching, also my course was of the content-led approach. This was due to the fact that the VS content course is part of students' studies and only the mastery of content is formally assessed at the end of the course. Thus, I naturally had to make sure first and foremost that the students would learn the course contents as well as possible. English was only the medium through which this content was conveyed, and thus any linguistic goals had to be understood to be secondary. However, it was clear to me that while the content teaching / learning was the first priority, the course had secondary linguistic aims, too. Linguistically, my intention with my CLIL course was to provide the students with an opportunity to use English as the medium of studying music-related course content; while studying they could acquire specific music-related vocabulary in English and at the same time improve their listening comprehension and also spoken language skills. In other words and more specifically, the aims included that the students would 1) activate and improve their potentially passive general and specific receptive and also productive English language skills (that they possibly had previously learned in their UAS or other English studies); 2) acquire

and learn new skills, especially profession-specific language use, that is, musical terms and other related vocabulary; and 3) become more competent in comprehension and more fluent in speaking, feeling less anxious about actually using English as a medium of communication in class – and subsequently in other studies / future working life. On a general level, I expected that (most of) the students participating would be motivated by the language learning opportunity offered by the CLIL course. As was mentioned, the students' English course included musical vocabulary and practicing spoken skills, although arguably these areas could only be given a very limited time in a course lasting only one period in a group of many students. Thus, my VS CLIL course was linked with the students' English studies and may have importantly helped them develop in the mentioned areas of language competence.

The language material during the course consisted essentially of spoken teacher (and student) input or teacher-talk and two English-Finnish vocabulary hand-outs to support learning. However, as the language part of the course probably posed some extra work, any learning or studying of the related vocabulary material had to be voluntary, and thus it was up to the students' own activity, or lack thereof, which naturally also had an important influence on how well they learned new vocabulary. For the students, the main part of the language aspect of this course was simply attending the English-medium instruction and hopefully also active participation in class, which could help them implicitly acquire English while concentrating on learning the course content. However, deeper and long-term learning, that is likely to be improved by additional explicit, autonomous self-learning of new words, was left for students to do individually if they so wished.

The research task was, as a teacher-researcher, with hindsight to reflect on the English-medium CLIL VS course as supporting the students' language learning aims and my instruction and actions with the aim of self-learning, development and improvement as a CLIL teacher; in these teacher reflections observations on the spoken use of English by the students during the course are looked at and used as important starting points. Based on my observations, I will try to describe some instances on the use of English to give insights into the reality of the CLIL teaching experiment. Below the research task is expressed in the form of two main research questions:

1. What was the students' use of English like?
2. What was the teacher's use of English like, and how did I as a teacher manage to support the students' learning of English in the English-medium CLIL VS course?

3.2 Data and collection method

The data of the present study consists of observations on the use of English by the learners and the teacher during the CLIL course. Observation, according to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara, (2004: 201–202), has been considered a necessary basic method common to all sciences, although many disciplines have their own observation methods. The major advantage of observation is that it provides immediate, direct information on activity and behaviour in natural, real life situations. Thus, it is a suitable method for qualitative research, for example, when studying interaction as well as in situations that are difficult to anticipate and fast to change or when the subjects have linguistic difficulties or when such information is wanted that the subjects do not wish to express directly. Possible disadvantages may be that, if the observer is an outsider, his/her presence may disturb or even change the situation that is observed. This did not happen in my study, as I was both the teacher and observer. The objectivity of the study may suffer if the observer is committed emotionally to the subjects. Sometimes it may be difficult to record observations immediately, as Hirsjärvi et al. (202–203) point out, and then the researcher must needs to rely on his memory and write observations down later. This was often the case in my study; I mostly wrote things in my notebook after lessons but occasionally also made jottings during the lesson. In my study, observation was participant observation; as mentioned, I was the observer and, furthermore, my observation was free and shaped by the situations observed, as opposed to structured observation (Hirsjärvi et al. 2004: 203).

The data was gathered by the teacher, as was already mentioned, by using the method of keeping field notes. According to Hopkins (2002: 103), keeping field notes enables reporting observations, reflections and reactions. Ideally, they should be written either as soon as possible after the lesson; however, they can also be based "impressionistic jottings" that are made during the lesson. Field notes can be used for many purposes (pp. 103–104): 1) They can focus on a particular aspect of teaching or classroom behaviour. 2) They can reflect general impressions and the climate of the classroom. 3) They can provide a description of an individual that can be used as case study material. 4) They can record one's development as a teacher. I wrote down observations on all of these. As the main advantages of field notes Hopkins lists the following (p. 103):

- Very simple to keep; no outsider needed

- Provide good on-going record; used as a diary they give good continuity
- First-hand information can be studied conveniently in teacher's own time
- Acts as an *aide-mémoire*
- Helps to relate incidents, explore emerging trends
- Very useful if teacher intends to write a case study

Disadvantages of field notes are, Hopkins notes, e.g. that it is impossible to record conversations by them, and that they may be initially time-consuming and can be very subjective. The observer should, as Hirsjärvi et al. (2004: 206) remind, distinguish between observations and his/her own interpretations of them; or as Hopkins (2002: 103) puts it, the "information should be descriptive rather than speculative".

3.3 Participants

Of the nine participants, seven were males and two females. Seven were Finnish students and two foreign students, both males. None of the students spoke English as their native language. Although a total of nine students started the CLIL VS course, the amount of students observed decreased during the course, as two students, Jaana and a Jukka, dropped out after the autumn semester, and one more (Henri) at around the half of the spring semester; thus all of the groups eventually became groups of two students. The drop-out students are the last three participants *not* in bold in Table 1 below. The four Finnish students **in bold** gave the most possibilities for observations. The two students ***in bold italic*** are non-Finnish students. **Piia**, ***Igor*** and Jukka formed one group (Group 1); **Olli**, ***Albin*** and Jaana made another one (Group 2), and finally **Toni**, **Sauli** and Henri the third one (Group 3), the only all-Finnish group. Table 1 presents the student's basic background information, including name (an invented pseudonym) gender, age, native language, year of study, study orientation, main instrument, and the amount of observations related to the use of English.

Table 1. Students' background information: "name", gender (G), age, native language, year of study (Y), study orientation, main instrument and, group, and number of observations (O) related to use of English.

Name	G	Age	Language	Y	Study orientation[1]	Main instrument	Group	O
Piia	**F**	**25**	**Finnish**	**2**	**pedagogue**	**pop/jazz-singing**	**1**	**14**
Sauli	**M**	**23**	**Finnish**	**3**	**pedagogue**	**guitar**	**3**	**10**
Olli	**M**	**21**	**Finnish**	**3**	**pedagogue**	**piano**	**2**	**6**
Toni	**M**	**20**	**Finnish**	**2**	**pedagogue**	**accordion**	**3**	**10**
Igor	***M***	***29***	***Russian***	***1***	***instructor***	***piano***	***1***	***9***
Albin	***M***	***27***	***Hungarian***	***4***	***musician***	***piano***	***2***	***3***
Jukka	M	19	Finnish	1	pedagogue, instructor	guitar	1	***4***
Jaana	F	19	Finnish	1	classical instructor	piano	2	1
Henri	M	19	Finnish	2	musician	violin	3	2

4 OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

My observations consist of field notes made in a notebook after or sometimes during the lessons. The amount of relevant observations related to the use of English (see Table 1) per student is quite varied due to many reasons. I did not write observations down mechanically from every lesson; rather I made notes when it seemed important, when something had happened that I wanted to remember and be able to reflect on later: incidents, descriptions, impressions, feelings. I apparently made fewer notes on the group 3 (Olli, Albin and Jaana) whose lesson was the last one of the day than on the other two groups after which I had a small break before the following lesson. I could have been more systematic and balanced. On the other hand, my aim was not to make extensive written observations per se, a comprehensive record of every student; rather, the purpose of selected written down notes was to help me relate things and reflect on the course. In addition, every student also had more or less absences; and, as mentioned, Jukka, Jaana quit the course after autumn semester and Henri during the spring semester. As to the two exchange students, Igor and Albin, being rather fluent in English, they did not provide very interesting material. I mostly focused on the spoken use of English by the students, but I also observed my own use of English and reflect on it. The content analysis consisted of simply gathering and counting the relevant observations made on all students, sorting them out in order to then see the important points of each student (different from and common to other students) and to be able to make a short description on the students and their use of English (see Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2009: 92). From these student descriptions certain phenomena arise that I will reflect on.

I will now first describe and look at the observations on the students' use of English. Then, based on these observations and some additional observations concerning me as a teacher, I will discuss my own use of English and reflect on how I as a teacher acted or could / should have acted to improve the students' learning possibilities; I also reflect the situations to literature on CLIL and CLIL teaching principles. I will focus mostly on the four Finnish speakers (**Piia**, **Olli**, **Toni** and **Sauli**) who provided the most material. I will now describe and look at some instances, group by group. The numbers in parentheses refer to the number of the lesson (e.g. 4 = 4th lesson) from which my observation is.

4.1 Use of English by students

In Group 1 with **Piia**, ***Igor*** (non-Finnish) and Jukka, all the students were rather extrovert and, overall, did not really hesitate speaking in English. Igor, a Russian exchange student, seemed accustomed to using English and spoke mostly with ease, as evidenced by my evaluation "language fine" (4) and on a general level e.g. by him always making small talk in English when entering the class (10, 17) – and sometimes also in Finnish (5, 10), as he had started studying Finnish. Of course, at times he, too, searched for individual words. Jukka, who had to quit after autumn semester, was also fairly good at and confident in using English, "fluent" (6) and "natural" (8) according to my notes. He was able to pick up a correct English word, "*inversion"* (*sointukäännös),* from me to replace an incorrect one (voicing) he first used in his speech (8). Furthermore, I do not remember him using Finnish during the lessons. Once (8) I asked him and Piia, who had been talking in Finnish outside the classroom, whether they thought it was awkward to switch from Finnish to English when entering the class; their answer was "no". Later on, when I was a bit late and came at the door of the classroom (normally I was waiting inside), Jukka and Piia were waiting for me and they talked in Finnish and I also greeted them in Finnish outside the classroom; having entered I switched to English, and so did they (12). Using English in class seemed mostly natural, especially for Jukka. Anyway, I believe that the presence of a foreign student, Igor, was likely to have made the use of English even more natural, motivating and reminding or "forcing" the Finnish students to actively use English, especially Piia. Piia mostly managed to communicate in English but sometimes used Finnish as well (3, 26, 29), consciously or unconsciously, often as if asking for a missing English word by saying it in Finnish in the midst of an English sentence; e.g. "*aksentoitu"* (*accented*) or "*komppi"* (*a comp*) when talking about accompanying tango (6) or, later on, words such as "*trioli"* (*a triplet*, 11), *"tahdin alku"* (*the beginning of the bar*, 17) or *"(soinnun) käännös"* (*an inversion*, 26). Once (5) when she spoke Finnish at the beginning of a lesson, she then suddenly and spontaneously corrected herself, stating self-consciously: "*Puhuin suomea*" (*I spoke in Finnish*), and apologizing. Similarly during another lesson, already towards the end of the course (26), when Piia was alone with me, and she was feeling slightly ill, she used Finnish, and, again when suddenly realizing this, seemed embarrassed and apologized for it. I responded "It's ok" in English. The absence of Igor and the presence of only us two Finnish speakers probably caused that Piia unconsciously spoke Finnish.

Olli, ***Albin*** and Jaana formed Group 2. Albin as an exchange student, like Igor in the previous group, seemed used to communicating in English; he was rather fluent in it. Again, although not a native-speaker of English, he brought naturalness to using English as the medium of instruction and in interaction in general. Many times, I heard Olli and Albin talk in English before entering the class (27); and, when Albin was absent, and I was alone with one of the Finnish speakers, I believe I could sense some degree of unnaturalness or certain clumsiness between us sometimes when we as Finnish-speakers spoke mostly English in class. However, this feeling decreased over time. It was probably partially coming from my own initial insecurity or lack of self-confidence as a user of English and that of the students as well. Jaana seemed slightly shy and nervous about using English, probably partly due to being more of an introvert; however, according to my unfortunately few notes on her (she dropped out after the autumn semester), once she, being the first to enter the class, told me quite enthusiastically in English about a concert for children she had been doing with other students, with a few Finnish words, though. Olli was slightly more at ease using English, although he did not always seem to manage to express himself successfully in English. He sometimes directly asked me for words, e.g. "what is *kerrata*" (*to repeat*, 17) or "(*side)kaari*" (*a tie*, 29), and sometimes I corrected him, giving him the right word for an incorrect one, e.g. when I provided "*first ending*" – that I had myself learned by now! – to replace his use of "*goal*" (*maali*, 26). Sometimes his speech was a bit unclear, which may have been at least partly due to his uncertainty (19) about the right words. On one occasion, (28) he obviously could not say what he wanted in English. He spoke unclearly, and I had difficulty making out what he was trying to say. Then he said he had a blackout, i.e. he could not find the right words in English, and, attempting to communicate in English, he used some Finnish words. Finally, tired, he gave up and I said to him that he could say what he wanted in Finnish.

Group 3 consisting of **Toni**, **Sauli** and Henri was the only all-Finnish group. Henri, who had quite many absences, eventually left the group during the spring semester for personal reasons, which was a pity, as he was, although a bit shy, fluent (10) when he spoke, and seemed interested in and motivated by the English-medium teaching. Sauli was more of an introverted person and, probably partly owing to this, mostly rather shy to speak. However, it was as likely that he simply was not used to communicating in English. He sometimes asked things in Finnish (6, 22) to which I responded in English and then we usually continued in English (6) and e.g. tried to answer in English but failed and used Finnish (3). However, according to my notes, he seemed to gain some confidence as the course proceeded, he was

more confident than before (10), as evidenced by my jotted note "had practiced, seems more relaxed and confident in speaking; slow, but ok" (11). Later on, when alone with me, I wrote that he "had more freedom / space when alone" (29). Apparently, Sauli even surprised me by being more active than earlier, saying something during the tenth (10) lesson, as I have written "when I speak less, I give them possibilities and they speak more, even take the initiative (S)", referring to him. As to comprehension, he seemed to understand with no problems, mostly, and he was, as I described him "more of a listener" (26); he asked me to repeat the homework (19) once, though. However, this may have been due to my own unclarity of speech. Compared to Sauli, Toni was a more relaxed and lively, quite extrovert person. He did not seem to have anxiety about using English. He spoke and answered quite freely and fluently in English (4), and e.g. explained in English the reason for being late right after entering the class (6). According to my notes, he was "confident in speaking" (10), "talks the most" (20); he participated and contributed actively during the lessons (10). Of course, although he was fluent, he also sometimes needed help in expressing himself (11), "some scaffolding", as I put it (26), typically a word such as "*incomplete chord*" (*vajaasointu*, 20). Toni made actively use of the vocabulary hand-out during a lesson (27) when he was alone with me and we played jazz waltz; to be able to say what he wanted, he looked up the expression "*to play with a swing feel*" and used it.

4.2 Teacher's use of English, ability to support student language learning and self-learning and improvement

After the lesson (26) when Piia was alone with me lesson I had made a reflective note saying that I had felt that at times I helped Piia even too much to express herself in English by giving her words (such as "*inversion*") in English that she did not seem to be able to find on her own right away. It is difficult to say whether I should had given her more time to think of the word or of another way of saying things or whether the help I provided was just what she expected and needed: thinking of this now, I can see her behaviour possibly as quite typical for a female like her; for her it did not seem a problem to use a Finnish word in a sentence and receive help in the form of an English equivalent from the teacher. She did not seem embarrassed for needing help, but rather for breaking the unwritten rule that English was to be used in class. Using Finnish was by no means prohibited; quite on the contrary, I had said that it was ok to use Finnish when needed, as the course was no English language course. I had said that I as a teacher I would try to stick to English, but even I could use Finnish when

needed, such as when providing a translation for a term. Such use of both languages in instruction is often referred to as code-switching or also translanguaging in CLIL, which, according to Coyle et al. 2010: 16) means "a systematic shift from one language to another for specific reasons"; it may be used, also in the form of first-language materials, such as vocabularies, to support teaching in the CLIL vehicular language.

Although I think it was necessary for me to speak more than the students at times, I also realized that at other times I could have given more space to the students to speak. I made a note quite early on (4) asking myself: "Should I try to speak less and ask more questions to give more opportunities for the students to practice English?" Later on again (6), I reminded myself of remembering to ask the students to express things and questions, instead of speaking for them. I believe that I learned to do this more and more as the course progressed, as evidenced e.g. by my asking the students to comment and reflect on their own playing (8, 10) or to think of what they learned from each other's playing (20) or when, instead of explaining it myself, I asked the students to explain a term: what a secondary dominant is; Igor explained it well in English (19). This not only made the students more active and forced them to think, but also provided natural opportunities to use English and learn from each other. In CLIL, cognitively engaging, interactive, student-led learning, according to the principles of social-constructivist learning, is encouraged and to be actively aimed at (see Coyle et al. 2010: 29).

I can also relate to the students' probable feelings of inadequacy and lack of fluency in using English appropriately, which, I think, is important, as recognizing such feelings as a normal part of the learning process and even expressing them, instead of ignoring them, can be liberating. For example, when Olli had difficulty saying what he wanted (28) I told him that I could relate to his experience, not being able to always say things, and not finding the right words immediately, or speaking Finglish, especially when tired. Linguistic fatigue refers to the fact that using and thinking in a foreign language is often much more demanding and tiring than doing the same in our first language, a foreign language requiring more attention, effort and energy (Marsh et al. 2001: 160). It is a normal and understandable phenomenon.

I believe that the students experienced to a greater or lesser degree what has been termed the reduced personality syndrome; the term describes "the experience a person has when they realize that their competence in the target language reduces their capability to express

themselves in as broad and deep a way as they would be able to in their first language" (Marsh et al. 2001: 161). The experience is common among CLIL teachers when they start doing CLIL teaching, according to Marsh et al. (2001: 161). My self-reflective observations describe and affirm this. In addition, I believe I also experienced some linguistic fatigue that was referred to. For example, my notes from the 27th lesson describe both of these phenomena. I wrote: "words don't come easy in every situation; I sometimes use Finnish, e.g. '*kolmimuunteisuus*'". I wrote that I felt I was a bad model, using Finnish. Dialoguing with myself I wrote asking whether I should I be a native-like speaker, obviously feeling inadequate and frustrated. I was tired. Nonetheless, I responded to this topmost feeling that I manage well, not perfectly, in the situations I encounter, comforting myself by writing that communication is not always perfect even in one's native language. It certainly is not. I realized the challenge of using certain terms in English such as the one just mentioned.

Also, when Sauli asked me to repeat the home work (19), it is quite possible that it was not because he was not paying attention or could not understand a word or expression I used, but due to my own unclarity of speech, which is quite likely, as after another lesson (20) I had made a note reminding myself of "being simple enough" and "speaking more slowly". Furthermore, there were times (6, 8) when I hesitated, or could not find the right word in English such as "*maali*" (*an ending*, 6). While these incidents of failure or inadequacy felt somewhat embarrassing even, I could see them, as I wrote, also as good; as a teacher I gave an example of paraphrasing, going around the problem, and by not being a perfect model hopefully lowered the students' level of anxiety of using English as a foreign language. Of course, this also led me to look up the word in a dictionary and prepare better for the coming lessons. My own occasional inability to express myself and find the right word strengthened the need of a vocabulary hand-out to support learning and the use of English. I had planned to make a vocabulary hand-out already before the course started and give it to the students soon after the start of the course, but preparing it was postponed. Eventually, I made two vocabularies, a thematic one and an alphabetical one with essential content-obligatory language and supporting, supplementary content-compatible language (see Coyle et al. 2010: 59, 36) , which were maybe even too extensive, in hindsight, as doing them, while beneficial for me, postponed giving them to the students. It was not until during the spring term that the students finally got the two vocabulary hand-outs; too late, unfortunately, I must admit, to make the most of them. Some students in the other groups, e.g. Olli and Sauli, would have needed them earlier perhaps even more than Group 1.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Probably the greatest potential benefit from the CLIL VS course was that it provided the students with English input, also and especially music-related vocabulary, mostly from the teacher but also from other students, giving possibilities for listening comprehension and acquisition of new words. My general impression was that the students understood the English-medium teaching well, although there were some instances where I needed to repeat or paraphrase. The students probably acquired words, perhaps mostly receptively, but probably at least some individual words for productive use as well during the course. The course also provided opportunities for speaking. Productive use of language is generally considered more demanding than mere receptive listening comprehension, and it reveals how well a language is mastered. Among other things it requires a sufficient knowledge of vocabulary, but also courage to speak which can only be achieved through practice and active use of the language. On the whole, the students managed to communicate, and seemed to become more confident and initiative over time. An active use of a foreign language is greatly influenced by a person's motivation, internal or external. Toni, for example, seemed motivated by the opportunity to use English as the medium of learning, and so did Sauli, although they were rather different as to their personality and starting level; Olli and Piia were perhaps less motivated, both, especially Piia, being apparently more interested in the VS content than the English language. In addition, the personality, being extrovert, like Toni, or introvert, like Sauli, clearly plays a role in how spontaneously a person expresses himself/herself in a foreign language. The role of the teacher is important, of course, as a source of input and a model of good (enough) language use and whether he/she gives space to the students to speak and encourages them or not. I believe I grew and learned a great deal in these areas during the course. Also the group dynamics, other students in the group, may influence the way a student uses a foreign language. As far as I can see, the relationships between the students, who knew each other as fellow students, were positive, and the atmosphere in the classroom was relaxed and non-threatening; mistakes were not focused on, although I usually tried to help the students in using English, e.g. by providing them with the words they lacked or proposing a right word for an incorrect one.

Overall, changing the language of learning and instruction from Finnish to English did not just happen, not for the students and neither for me; rather, it was a process during which the use of English became gradually more and more natural. At first, Finnish was more often

resorted to, which happened often without us realizing it until after a while; there was some code-switching between the two languages, even towards the end of the course. Nonetheless, all in all, I believe that the CLIL experience was a beneficial learning experience for all of us who participated, the students and I as the teacher. The students, I believe, gained positive and encouraging experiences during the CLIL course as they could learn actual VS content through English. Thus, the CLIL course could give its important, although necessarily limited, contribution to the students' English language skills, namely comprehension and oral communication, also decreasing the anxiety to use English for studying content. I as a CLIL teacher have gained many valuable experiences and learned important lessons, through my successes and failures. Although I definitely made my mistakes and was not always able to support the students, I do not feel that the CLIL teaching experiment was a failure: far from it, actually. I was able to run the course in English, after all! Overall, the big picture was good, although individual pieces of the jigsaw puzzle might have been initially missing; as the course progressed I believe I found and was able to put many of them in their proper places. Certainly, if I was to run it again, I would be better equipped now with the learning and experiential wisdom gained. But that was exactly what the aim was for me as the teacher: to gain experience, to explore my practices, to improve them, to grow as a CLIL teacher. So, would I do it again? I could. No, I would like to.

The reflections presented here are based on my own observations and understanding as the teacher of the VS CLIL course. Action research is commonly defined as a subjective approach and seen often as a criticism to positivism requiring objectivity of knowledge; the knowledge derived from action research is considered rather an interpretation from a certain angle, that of the researcher (see Heikkinen and Jyrkämä 46–49).The objectivity of the study could have been improved by triangulation, referring to using many methods (Hirsjärvi et al. 218), such as asking the students to write about their experiences or asking another person to make observations with of for me. However, as developing personal teacher practices was an essential aim, teacher observations and personal reflections were appropriate for this study, although admittedly, observations could have been conducted in a more organized and detailed manner to help better relate and reflect on language use in different phases of the CLIL VS course. The students' point of view and experiences which could only be indirectly looked at in this study remain an interesting area of further research. My Master's thesis will focus on exploring the students' experiences during this CLIL VS course, not only their learning of the English language but also their learning of VS content.

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