

# 9 Germany



Dieter Wolff

## 9.1 Linguistic Situation

The Federal Republic of Germany consists of sixteen states (*Länder*) that are more or less autonomous in matters of educational policy. Each *Land* has developed, over the years, not only a specific model for language teaching and learning, which may or may not differ from the models developed in the other *Länder*, but also specific profiles for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). To be able to characterise CLIL in Germany one should, in fact, put together and compare the distinctive features of sixteen different CLIL profiles. This was, of course, impossible, with regard to the space available in this report. Instead, I have tried to generalise the information at my disposal and not take into account all the specific features of each *Land*. If specific information is important, however, it is included.

Officially Germany is a monolingual country. Apart from the Sorbs (in Brandenburg and Saxony), and the Danes and Frisians (in Schleswig-Holstein), there are no officially recognized linguistic minorities. These three groups are guaranteed minority rights, they have their own primary schools in which they educate their children in their respective languages, and they are allowed to use their languages in all official matters. In the parliament of Schleswig-Holstein the Danish minority is represented by two members of parliament. However, linguistic reality in Germany is, of course, entirely different. Whereas Sorbs and Danes<sup>29</sup> are minority groups of approximately 50,000 people each, large groups of migrants have made Germany their workplace and in many cases also their home. They speak a language other than German as their first language and more and more often also at work. Large numbers of migrants have come from the Southern countries of the European Union, from Africa and the Middle East; the largest minority group are the Turks. Although migrant languages are not officially recognized, most of the minorities try to educate their children bilingually, making use of the facilities offered by the German educational system, but additionally creating their own schools which legally have private status and in which children study their heritage language and culture in the afternoon. In fact, Germany, like most of the Western European countries, is a multilingual and multicultural country.

## 9.2 Introduction of CLIL

Integrated language and content education that fits the working definition of CLIL has had a long history in the German school system. As early as in the first half of the 20th

---

<sup>29</sup> The Frisians make up only some ten thousand people.

century private and mostly elitist schools existed which made use of the main principle of CLIL, i.e. using another language to teach content subjects. After the Second World War, schools were founded by the military authorities in Western Germany which used either English or French as the working language in schools. Most of these army schools catered for the children of the American, British or French soldiers stationed in Germany, but later on they were also open to other children if they were competent in either of these languages. Other bilingual schools were founded in the sixties and seventies, the so-called European schools and the Franco-German and Anglo-German schools. Whereas in these schools English or French was the only working language, the first purely German schools to take up the CLIL idea offered only a limited number of content subjects in a foreign language. These were grammar schools that were founded right after the Franco-German friendship treaty concluded in 1963. They were normal state schools which, apart from the traditional subject-specific education, implemented so-called bilingual branches or wings in which up to three subjects and a language were taught in integration. For more than ten years French used to be the only CLIL language in this type of school. In the eighties more and more grammar schools founded bilingual branches in which English was the language of instruction. Nowadays CLIL schools can be found in all the *Länder* of the Federal Republic.

### 9.3 Types of CLIL

It is understandable that in a country in which more than five hundred CLIL schools are in existence (for some more statistics see the end of this paper) a number of varieties have developed and are still developing. From a structural point of view a distinction can be made between the following three types of CLIL:

#### 1 *General CLIL*

This is the first and most common type of CLIL. Foreign language teaching starts in year five (children are 10 years old then); it is more intensive in the bilingual branch because children are taught, in these preparatory courses, two more than the usual four to five hours a week. From year seven onward one content subject (often Geography) is taught in the foreign language (usually one or two extra lessons per week). Things vary, however, from one *Land* to another. From year eight onward a second content subject (often History) is taught in the foreign language. The second content subject also adds two additional hours to the curriculum. In some *Länder* a third content subject is introduced and this adds another hour to the curriculum. So, in general, CLIL programmes are available to students entering this branch from year 5 (beginning of the preparatory course) to year 13 (end of secondary education).

With respect to general CLIL a structural distinction can be drawn between Rheinland-Pfalz and the other *Länder*: in a way, one can differentiate between two models of bilingual education, an *additive* and an *integrative* model. There are many similarities between these two models; intensified language learning during the first two years, bilingual

education proper starting in year 7 etc., but there are also some differences. In Rheinland-Pfalz the non-language subject is taught in the foreign language as well as in German (one hour per week in each language). These lessons are sometimes given by different teachers – ideally the lessons in the foreign language are taught by a native speaker of the foreign language. In contrast, there is no such addition/subdivision of languages/lessons within the integrative approach.

Traditional CLIL is practised in Germany in the following contexts:

- Schools: mainly grammar schools, but also *Realschulen*<sup>30</sup>. Comprehensive and vocational schools have also started making use of this type of education.
- Languages: mostly English and French, but also Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Russian (these last four in very few schools).
- Subjects which are taught in bilingual education: in most cases Geography, History, and Politics, but also Social Science, Biology, Physical Education, Art, Music, Physics and Mathematics.

#### 2 *Modular CLIL*

Modular CLIL is an approach to bilingual education that was introduced some years ago when fully-fledged CLIL branches could no longer be financed. In some *Länder*, especially in Nordrhein-Westfalen, secondary schools are encouraged to use a foreign language when teaching specific parts of the curriculum of a content subject. History teachers are, for example, asked to teach the French revolution in French or the development of colonialism in English. Teachers are expected to teach these content modules in time spans of six to eight weeks using project work methodology. Modular CLIL is, however, not restricted to History or Geography. In other subjects teachers who are willing and competent in a foreign language can also make use of this approach. As far as we know, almost all content subjects taught in secondary schools have been chosen for modular CLIL; the languages used are, in general, English and French.

It is clear that modular CLIL cannot become a substitute for traditional CLIL. In general, ordinary student's language competence is not sufficiently developed for him or her to work thoroughly through the content subject and to deal with the complex matters a CLIL student can deal with. In modular CLIL, students are not prepared for the technical language necessary in CLIL. On the other hand, however, modular CLIL can be very helpful in the context of foreign language teaching: students' motivation, for example, increases when they realise for what purposes they can use the foreign language and fairly soon they understand why a foreign language is important for their future professional life.

<sup>30</sup> *Realschulen* are secondary schools that are more strongly focused than grammar schools on subjects related to later professional life (IT, modern languages etc.). Schooling ends at the age of 16 (i.e. after year 10), and learners' final diplomas are not comparable to a baccalaureate, A levels or the Abitur.

Thus, modular CLIL has become relatively popular in all secondary schools, especially in those that cannot implement traditional CLIL.

### 3 *Context-specific CLIL*

'Context-specific' CLIL is a term I have coined to subsume CLIL activities that are different from those in traditional or modular CLIL. Usually they are different because their coming into existence depends on the context and the environment in which they are embedded. It is not possible to sketch out all the numerous approaches found in Germany, so I will limit myself to two of them that are fairly special.

The *Staatliche Europaschule* Berlin is a merger of fifteen primary schools in which children of different nationalities are brought together with German children to form homogeneous groups: German-Turkish, German-Spanish, German-Russian, German-French and German-English etc.. These groups of usually about thirty children are taught content subjects in their two respective languages. However, they are also taught the two languages to be able to learn content in both. Language teaching is separate for the two halves of the group; Spanish children learn German, but they are also instructed in their mother tongue. The *Staatliche Europaschule* Berlin was founded when it became obvious that it was simply impossible in Berlin to cope with the multitude of heterogeneous groups of children in primary schools. It is still an experimental school but it looks as if the results obtained in this context are so convincing that the government of the *Land* of Berlin will further support this effort even in the secondary sector.

My second example is from Niedersachsen. In cooperation with the Republic of Italy, German-Italian bilingual and bicultural education is being practised in a number of primary schools in this *Land*. Teachers from Germany and Italy educate young children bilingually. Moreover, in the town of Wolfsburg there is a German-Italian grammar school that these bilingually educated primary school children can attend. The underlying approach is important as a possible model for other schools, especially as native speakers of both of the content-subject languages participate in the project. It is context-specific because Wolfsburg, the Volkswagen city, has attracted Italian workman for many years. This has created an environment that makes such an approach possible.<sup>31</sup>

The following remarks, which deal with other characteristic features of CLIL in Germany are valid – if not stated otherwise – only for what I have called general CLIL.

<sup>31</sup> It is interesting to note that some Länder are planning new CLIL initiatives right now. In Nordrhein-Westfalen, school authorities are discussing the possibility of making the teaching of one content subject in a foreign language compulsory in all secondary schools. All students would then be taught, let us say, social sciences in English from year 5 to year 10 or 13.

### 9.4 **Aims**

From the fairly scarce regulations that have been published by the different *Länder* it is easy to see that CLIL in Germany is regarded not as a language-oriented but rather as a content-oriented approach. Regulations specify that students who have studied a content subject through a foreign language should know as much about this subject as mother-tongue students. In addition, all assessment procedures rank content higher than language.

### 9.5 **Teacher Qualification**

In Germany, as in Austria and in the eastern part of Switzerland, secondary school teachers have, in general, a so-called dual qualification. They study two subjects at university, and degrees comprising a language and a content subject are frequent. A student who has a teaching degree in – let us say – French and History (a relatively popular combination) is qualified to teach both subjects in school. This means that there are qualified teachers for bilingual instruction.<sup>32</sup> Despite this qualification, German school authorities insist on an additional qualification for these teachers which they can obtain in initial training courses at university, in pre-service training before taking up a teaching post, or in in-service training at the different national teaching centres.

### 9.6 **Student Certification**

There is no specific certification for CLIL students in Germany. Those who have taken part in a CLIL programme over the years obtain the normal diploma (*Abitur*), in which participation in a CLIL programme is mentioned. For schools in which French is the CLIL language, an agreement has been passed between the French and the German authorities allowing students to obtain the French *baccalauréat* and the German *Abitur* as a double qualification at the end of their studies. For this they have to sit exams that are jointly prepared by the French Ministry of Education and the ministry of the respective *Land*.

### 9.7 **Curriculum**

Apart from Nordrhein-Westfalen, no *Land* in Germany has developed a specific CLIL curriculum. School authorities in Nordrhein-Westfalen have developed curricula called 'recommendations' for almost all integrated CLIL programmes. They include programmes for English, French and Italian as CLIL languages, and for content, subjects ranging from Geography and History to Social Sciences and Biology. The content subject curriculum does not change compared with the mother tongue content subject; teachers are free, however, to include, to a large extent, content which is of specific importance as regards the CLIL language culture. The European dimension plays an important role, especially in History and Social Sciences, where Europe is an important component of the curriculum in at least one year of the programme.

<sup>32</sup> This is also the reason why modular CLIL is a good alternative within the German school system. From the experience with modular CLIL we have had up to now, it has become clear that normally only teachers who are qualified language and content teachers are ready to teach within this model.

## 9.8 Methodology

Although in theory CLIL methodology has been discussed extensively by foreign language and content subject methodologists, the methodological approaches in school are still fairly traditional. Teachers try, however, to make use of modern methodological procedures like group work, project work etc. Materials pose quite a problem. Most teachers use their own materials or exchange materials with other teachers. Some teachers use content materials from the CLIL language countries and adapt them to their own specific needs. School authorities do not recommend any specific materials, although some German publishers have developed materials adapted to specific CLIL curricula.

## 9.9 Structure and Organisation

Until recently, schools in Germany were more or less free to introduce CLIL branches as long as they had enough teachers capable of teaching specific content subjects through a foreign language. Nowadays ministries do not give permission so easily, especially as a school, when it introduces CLIL, obtains half an additional teaching post. During the last five years in Nordrhein-Westfalen, for example, the school authorities have granted only very few new CLIL branches. Apart from an increase in human capital, schools have no further advantages when introducing CLIL.

CLIL teachers in most *Länder* are organised in associations and meet regularly once a year. Interestingly, these associations are language-specific; in Nordrhein-Westfalen there exists a French and an English CLIL teacher association, which are not related to each other in any way.

In Germany, students are not officially selected for the CLIL branches. However, teachers usually advise parents not to enrol weaker children in a CLIL branch.<sup>33</sup> Students who are enrolled in CLIL classes usually know the advantages of such a learning environment very well. When interviewed they normally mention advantages in their professional or academic life. They can also see general advantages within the European job market etc.

## 9.10 Research

Research in CLIL has become very important in recent years in Germany. A book series has been founded recently (*'Mehrsprachigkeit in Schule und Unterricht'*, published by Peter Lang) and the second volume in particular (published in 2004) contains a number of research articles. Important topics are, for example, language-learning outcomes compared with the outcomes of foreign language classes, content-learning outcomes, concept development, and reading academic texts in a foreign language. The University

of Bremen organises regular symposia and conferences, and in Nordrhein-Westfalen, where four universities (Bochum, Cologne, Dortmund and Wuppertal) offer initial CLIL teacher-training courses, there is close research cooperation at PhD level.

## 9.11 Statistics

It seems to be almost impossible to collect reliable statistical data on the CLIL situation in Germany right now. The conference of ministers of Education (KMK), which is a coordinating institution with respect to educational matters in the *Länder* of the Federal Republic of Germany, is preparing a statistical overview, which was, however, not ready when this volume was prepared.

However, to give the reader an idea of the richness of CLIL in Germany I will give some reliable data on the situation in Nordrhein-Westfalen, which in terms of the number of inhabitants (17.5 million) is the largest state of the country. In the school year 2004/2005 in Nordrhein-Westfalen there were a total 188 schools that offered general CLIL. The CLIL languages used in these schools were English (in 151 schools), French (in 23 schools), Italian (in 5 schools), Greek (in 3 schools), Dutch (in 5 schools) and Spanish (in 1 school). Of the 151 schools using English as the language of instruction, 85 were grammar schools, 24 were comprehensive schools and 42 were Realschulen. For French the distribution was as follows: 18 grammar schools, 1 comprehensive school, 4 Realschulen. The 5 schools using Italian were 1 grammar school, 1 Realschule, and three comprehensive schools. Greek was the CLIL language in 2 grammar schools and 1 comprehensive school, and Dutch in 1 grammar school and 4 Realschulen. The one school in which Spanish was a CLIL language is a grammar school.

The content subjects were almost everywhere Geography, Politics and History. Biology was taught in some schools but only in English. Some schools additionally taught Arts, Music and Sports either in English or French. There are no data yet as to modular CLIL.

<sup>33</sup> In this context it is interesting to note that there are only a few foreign children of migrant families in CLIL classes. Parents are usually afraid of enrolling them because they fear that their competence in German is not sufficient for such a difficult programme.