



16 Poland

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16.1 Background

Poland used to be a multilingual country before the Second World War, but adjustments of the borders (including some western territories, earlier belonging to Germany, and renouncing some eastern territories on behalf of the Soviet Union), great migrations and the general policy of the communist government made Poland a monolingual country. Minority languages, e.g. Kashubian, were mainly languages of communication within family and friends and similarly to the dialects had very low status. Until 1989, i.e. the fall of the communist regime, minority languages were not languages of social and political life. Thus the official language of education was Polish. The situation has changed slightly since 1989. Some minority languages are taught at schools and used in offices. In the Kashubian district the names of some institutions and some streets are given in two languages, Polish and Kashubian. However, Polish is still the only official language.

Up to 1980, with the rise of Solidarity, Russian had been the first and the most important foreign language, introduced as early as the fifth class of primary school, and being an obligatory foreign language in all types of education, tertiary education included. In high schools, but seldom in vocational schools, students had a possibility to study a foreign language of their choice: Latin, French and English, and in some cases German, but the latter language was not very popular, among either students and their parents or among the authorities.

The level of foreign language teaching, Russian included, used to be relatively low. The number of qualified teachers was limited, since English Philology Departments (five-year philological studies in which foreign language methodology used to be a marginal subject) existed at only a couple of universities and the number of study-places was greatly limited. Teaching materials were usually locally produced and, especially in the first years after the war, foreign language course-books could include texts the function of which was to praise the political system of the time, and criticize rather than highlight the political, social and cultural life of the country whose language was the object of study. The situation improved in the seventies, when Poland established more lively economic and cultural cooperation with Western countries, but the number of people knowing foreign languages was relatively low and the number of qualified teachers of English far too low to meet the needs. Access to the BBC, satellite television and visits to countries outside the communist area were restricted.

The political changes initiated by Solidarity in 1980, and finally adopted as the result of the election in 1989, have strongly affected foreign language teaching in Poland. Russian has been abandoned and English has been introduced as the first foreign language to be taught, dependent on the availability of teachers, from the second or third class of primary school up to tertiary level. To remedy the negative effects of the earlier educational policy, hundreds of teacher training colleges, both state-owned and non-public, have been opened. Similarly, a great number of universities have established faculties of English Philology, and the number of study places at the universities that already had such faculties has doubled or tripled. Poland has been flooded with modern and interesting course-books, informed by the Communicative Method. Teachers and students have been offered courses in England, satellite TV is no longer forbidden, and hundreds of private evening language schools, offering all possible kinds of professionally run evening courses have been opened. Similarly, the scale and the level of teaching of other foreign languages (French, German and Spanish) have improved.

As stated in the publication *Key data on teaching languages in Europe* (Eurydice, 2005, p. 46), there has been an increase of the percentage of all pupils who are learning English in primary education from 24.9% in 1999 to 49.2% in 2002. In secondary education, 90% of the students studied English in school year 2001/2002 (Eurydice, 2005, p. 51).

The number of people knowing at least one foreign language has greatly increased, and at present the interest in foreign language learning is enormous. Consequently, many high school graduates choose teacher training colleges (three-year vocational school) or English philology (five-year education, the interest in teaching English or studying the language being enormous). Very many graduates of such academic departments as economics, geography, biology, history and chemistry not being able to find a job within their field of specialty, enter teaching training colleges to complete their education. Thus, the number of teachers of English, and what is more important, dual-qualified teachers of English, is constantly growing.

16.2 CLIL in Poland

As early as in the early seventies, a number of high schools, e.g. III Liceum in Gdynia, introduced bilingual education.⁵⁵ The early attempts involved, in addition to regular English classes, an increase in the number of language lessons when compared with ordinary schools, and teaching of some subjects in English for the whole or part of a lesson on a more or less regular basis. Since the first bilingual teachers were originally content subject teachers, not qualified to teach English, this type of education could

rather be classified as teaching content through the medium of English rather than CLIL – Content and Language Integrated Learning, but in the remaining part of this article I will use the term CLIL even if in Poland the term LAC (Language Across Curriculum) is often used. English was rather a medium of communication than the object of study. The graduates of this school, from the very beginning of reputable status, usually had a very high command of English. Some bilingual schools like the one described above were in existence in some other large Polish towns, but those schools were somewhat elitist (students had to pass a very difficult entrance exam in English) and constituted a marginal phenomenon in mainstream education. The objective was to raise the level of foreign language (FL) knowledge. In the early seventies studying or working abroad was almost impossible.

At present, the main objective of CLIL is to prepare students for studies or work abroad. CLIL is being organized to follow the recommendations of the Council of Europe concerning knowledge of foreign languages.

16.3 Laws

The laws regulate teacher qualifications (Section 9). Otherwise, integration of teaching is recommended, but not specifically CLIL.

16.4 Structure

Since CLIL as such is not institutionalized, implementation depends on the resources of particular schools (financial and educational – access to qualified teachers). In some schools the whole cycle of education or a year of a student's education may be run in a foreign language, especially in the schools preparing for baccalaureate. In the latter type of schools, the number and kind of subjects delivered in English or some other FL are regulated. There may be differences in this respect, dependent on the school profile. In many schools numerous short-term attempts at teaching content through a foreign language are being made.

16.5 Aims

The general and most important aim of teaching through the medium of a foreign language is raising the general level of knowledge of foreign languages and preparation of students for study (mainly in high schools) and work (mainly in vocational schools) abroad. Thus, CLIL in Poland is rather linguistic than content oriented. However, classes are usually content oriented rather than language oriented.

16.6 Statistics

According to *Key data on teaching languages in Europe* (Eurydice 2005:32), Poland belongs to the group of European countries in which CLIL-type provision is part of mainstream education, but statistics for the whole country are not available.

⁵⁵ At the moment it is very difficult to establish if a central register of the number of schools in which content subjects are taught through the medium of a foreign language exists. The educational situation in Poland is described on the basis of one district, Pomorze Voivodship.

The extent of the phenomenon of teaching through the medium of a foreign language can be roughly estimated on the basis of statistics from Pomorze Voivodship. At present, as many as six high schools in West Pomorze Voivodship have officially introduced bilingual education, among other reasons, to prepare the students for the baccalaureate. CLIL is mainly a secondary education phenomenon in Poland.

The languages involved are: English (most popular, as many as three schools), German, French and Spanish, one school each; CLIL in Spanish is a relatively recent initiative. The lessons in foreign languages are typically run by dual-qualified teachers, and in two cases, language teachers work together with content subject teachers.

Apart from this, many (dual-qualified) teachers, not only in big towns but even in small towns and country schools, run a number of classes, or meetings of so-called interest groups (extra classes for students particularly interested in a given school subject) in English or some other foreign language, English being most popular. This is done at the teacher's initiative or at the students' request and these attempts at bilingual teaching are generally not included in the statistics of the local or central school authorities.

On the basis of the statistics from Pomorze Voivodship it may be estimated that a similar number of schools in the central Voivodships are engaged in CLIL and that the distribution of foreign languages must be similar. In the remaining districts, still lacking qualified teachers of English and in which student's motivation for language learning may not be high, some unofficial attempts to run single lessons or some meetings of interest groups have been reported.

16.7 Subjects

The choice of subjects is greatly dependent on the availability of teachers able to teach content through a foreign language. According to a directive from the Ministry of Education (19 June 1992) all school subjects except for Polish (language and literature), the history and geography of Poland and the second foreign language may be taught in a foreign language. According to Kołodziejska (*Foreign languages at school*, 2005:69) the subjects most often delivered through CLIL are mathematics, physics with astronomy, chemistry, biology and hygiene, environmental protection, history, geography, social sciences, informatics, music and physical training.

16.8 Languages

According to Kołodziejska (above ref.), bilingual education in Poland involves English, German, French, Spanish and Italian, the first three being more popular, English in particular.

16.9 Teachers

In Poland, teachers of foreign languages have traditionally been qualified to teach foreign languages solely (*Key data on teaching languages in Europe*, Eurydice 2005, p. 59). These teachers constitute the core of FL teaching staff at the moment.

With the increased level of knowledge of foreign languages, the number of content teachers having a decent command of English has also increased. Many university graduates (but not all) qualified to be content subject teachers have difficulties in finding a job. These graduates often choose teacher training colleges in order to obtain some additional qualifications that might give them better prospects for a future job, or simply to improve their knowledge of English. As a result, there are many dual-qualified teachers and their numbers are increasing. Thus, there is a huge potential for CLIL for Poland as far as access to dual-qualified teachers is concerned. The interest in CLIL is enormous, both on the part of the students and their parents, but at the moment CLIL is a relatively marginal phenomenon in Polish mainstream education. This situation will be soon changed as a result of an initiative of the Ministry of Education, organization of post-diploma (IN-SERVICE) courses preparing teachers to teach an additional subject, in many cases a foreign language (Law Gazette 2004 r. no. 256, entry 2572 with changes).

At the moment, the required qualifications for teachers teaching through the medium of a foreign language are: a diploma of vocational higher education, or higher education (master's degree), pedagogical qualifications and a certificate confirming knowledge of English of the first grade (FCE, TOEFL), with a definite number of points, A or B (directive of the Ministry of Education and Sport, 10 Sept. 2002). Many schools require a certificate of second grade (CAE or CPE).

Common practice is that content subject teachers may teach through a foreign language, but not many singly qualified language teachers teach content subjects.

Teaching through the medium of a foreign language also takes place at the level of tertiary education. This is not CLIL proper, since a foreign language, mainly English, is a means of communication, focus being placed on the content.

There are no special teaching training institutions preparing CLIL teachers. In some teacher training colleges CLIL has become part of a general course in FLT methodology, but this is a marginal phenomenon. Locally, some in-service training is offered. A number of conferences and workshops have been organized to help teachers obtain some practical knowledge of teaching methodology, and some advice and support in organizational matters, e.g., *Zielona Gora*, September 2003, organized by the Polish Philological Society, CLIL conference in Gdansk, 2004, and in Krakow 2005, to name only a few. There have also been a number of other projects (Socrates, Lingua A, trans-language in Europe, 1998–2002).

The issue of CLIL has been discussed in the specialist journal *Foreign languages at school* (no. 6/2004 & no. 1/2005). Earlier, all the articles in the specialist journal *Foreign languages at school* (no. 6/2002) were devoted to bilingual education. Another useful publication is *Language across the curriculum: Network processing and material production in an international context* (Kołodziejska and Simpson 2002).

16.10 Certification

Students of bilingual classes have an obligation to take an additional final written exam in the subjects studied through the medium of a foreign language. This is marked on the school-leaving certificate. (Source: Director of the III Liceum in Gdansk, Ms. Bożena Ortak).

16.11 Curriculum and Methodology

The normal curriculum does not change; there is no special CLIL methodology, and the programme is delivered in both Polish and English. The methodology is that of the subject content, since content rather than language is in focus.

16.12 Materials

Teachers use original course-books imported from target language countries, especially for the baccalaureate, and otherwise materials from the internet and translated materials. There is some funding available for the purchase of necessary materials.

For primary schools, a special course-book has been published, *Surprise* (Kołodziejska, Lesińska-Gazicka & Simpson 2000), with a LAC element (regular teachers of English teaching some elements of content subject).

16.13 Organization

Bilingual education is scheduled and strongly recommended by school authorities. Implementation depends on access to competent staff (full qualifications in the subjects being taught, pedagogical competence, language competence).

16.14 Finance

Regular bilingual teachers in Pomorze Voivodship have extra salary supplied by the municipal authorities. Funds for in-service training are available. Since CLIL is prioritised, some of the funds at the disposal of particular schools are earmarked for developing CLIL (source: Director of the III Liceum in Gdansk, Ms. Bożena Ortak).

16.15 Logistics and Coordination

Cooperation between teachers in the same school is possible. There are also possibilities of cooperation between schools and (inter-) nationally, participation in international projects, workshops, etc.

16.16 Student Recruitment.

Usually only some of the classes are chosen for bilingual education on the basis of a language test. CLIL is of importance in competition between schools. CLIL schools are very popular.

Students choose CLIL to improve and consolidate their knowledge of the target language. Many of them hope to have the possibility to study and work abroad.

16.17 Quality and Research

No special research on the effects of CLIL is being carried out; neither are the outcomes monitored. However, generally students report that they are able to participate successfully in university courses in the target language country.

Weakness: One of the expectations used to be the possibility of receiving extra points for school exams taken in English, in recruitment to institutions of higher education (source: Director of the III Liceum in Gdansk, Ms. Bożena Ortak).

In 2005 Polish students were admitted to universities solely on the basis of their high school certificates (results of school-leaving examination). Earlier, recruitment was based on the results of entrance examinations organized by the respective institutions of higher education. Unfortunately, the sitting of the final exam in a foreign language was not taken into consideration as an extra merit. This caused a lot of disappointment and some loss of interest among high school students studying through CLIL (a more difficult enterprise not properly assessed and appreciated).