EMI, CLIL, EAP: What’s the difference?

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Overview

Try to answer two questions:

1. What is the difference between EMI, CLIL and EAP?

2. What does it mean to become disciplinary literate in a first, second and third language?
English Medium Instruction (EMI)
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In an English Medium Instruction class, the aim is not to learn or acquire the language at all. The language serves only as a tool, as a vehicular language in which content needs to be learned and taught.

Beyza Björkman
disciplinary language learning at university level is often relegated in status to a remedial activity carried out in EAP courses outside the standard curriculum.

(Airey 2016:74)
Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), in which pupils learn a subject through the medium of a foreign language, has a major contribution to make to the Union’s language learning goals. [...] It provides exposure to the language without requiring extra time in the curriculum [...] (European Commission, 2003:8)
The teaching of so-called content courses in English at university level has variously been termed; English Medium Instruction (EMI), Teaching in English (TIE), English Medium Education in Multilingual Settings (EMEMUS), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education (ICLHE), etc. Although potentially signalling different interests, these terms are far from mutually exclusive. Moreover, their interpretation changes depending on observer and setting.

This proliferation of terms along with a lack of rigorous definitions has at times led to disagreement in the literature about the definitions of CLIL, EMI, and immersion (see for example Lasagabaster and Sierra, 2010, Somers and Surmont, 2012). In an attempt to resolve this debate Hüttner and Smit (2014) suggest CLIL can best be conceptualized as a series of local responses to the global status of English. They return to Marsh’s (2000, p. 56) earlier description of CLIL as an “umbrella term” for a range of diverse pedagogical activities. Drawing on this notion they suggest that CLIL can best be conceptualised in terms of Wittgenstein’s (1958) family resemblance. Here, the individual members of the CLIL family are unique but share some identifiable features with other members. Clearly then, in order to avoid potential confusion it is important to be specific about the particular instance of CLIL that is being discussed.

For the purposes of this chapter I suggest that in higher education there is essentially a continuum of approaches to what is termed CLIL (Fig.1). Learning outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Only Language</th>
<th>Language and Content</th>
<th>Only Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>CLIL</td>
<td>EMI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1 The language/content continuum.

Airey 2016:73
True CLIL is uncommon in higher education
So could CLIL really mean we get “two for the price of one” as claimed by the European commission?
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Yes and No.
It is generally accepted that immersion courses at lower levels of education have positive effects …
It is generally accepted that immersion courses at lower levels of education have positive effects ⋮

But what about courses at higher levels?
EMI courses at higher levels
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Met & Lorentz (1997), and Duff (1997) have both suggested that limitations in L2 may inhibit students’ ability to explore abstract concepts in non-language subjects.
EMI courses at higher levels

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This appears to have been confirmed by Marsh, Hau and Kong (2000, 2002).

Found negative correlations between EMI and performance on content courses.
So EMI is bad then?
So EMI is bad then?

I suggest this is asking the wrong question.

I suggest we should actually be thinking in terms of Disciplinary Literacy
Disciplinary Literacy
The relationship between disciplinary learning and our first language is by no means straightforward.

Learning is intimately linked to language.
Disciplinary Literacy

The relationship between disciplinary learning and our first language is by no means straightforward.

Learning is intimately linked to language.

All learning can be viewed as language learning even in a monolingual setting.

From this perspective any university lecturer is a teacher of a disciplinary discourse.
Disciplinary literacy

I suggest the goal of any degree programme is the development of disciplinary literacy.

Airey (2011b)
What is Literacy?

– Gee (1991) suggests that we have one primary discourse (the oral language we learn as a child) and many secondary discourses (specialised communicative practices used in other sites outside the home).

– Gee defines Literacy as ’fluency in’ these secondary discourses.

– So literacy depends on the site i.e. Where will it used?
Disciplinary literacy

– So what site does disciplinary literacy refer to?
I suggest that the disciplinary literacy goals of any degree course will entail a unique mix of fluency for three specific sites:

- The academy
- The workplace
- Society
Disciplinary Literacy Triangle

Academy  Society  Workplace
Disciplinary Literacy Triangle

Society

Academy  Workplace
Disciplinary Literacy Triangle

Society

Each of these sites places different demands on language

Academy

Workplace
Disciplinary Literacy Triangle

Society

Academy

L1

Workplace
Disciplinary Literacy

Academy

Workplace

Society

L1

L2
Disciplinary Literacy

Academy

Society

L1

L2

L3

Workplace
Bring together my discussion of disciplinary literacy in a simple heuristic tool—the Disciplinary Literacy Matrix.

The three columns of the matrix correspond to the three sites in which disciplinary literacy may be enacted.

The rows of the matrix relate to languages and other modes that students may need to become fluent in.
Disciplinary Literacy Discussion Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where used?</th>
<th>Academy</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
<th>Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Third language</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other modes (please add to the list):
- Graphs
- Tables
- Diagrams
- Mathematics

Adapted from Airey (2011a)
Using the Matrix

Discuss with a colleague.

What are your disciplinary literacy goals for your students?

Go though the matrix describing what you think your students need.

Swap and let your colleague do the same
Summary

EMI  content focused
EAP  language focused
CLIL combined focus
CLIL is uncommon at higher levels of education
Summary

Each discipline fosters a unique form of disciplinary literacy for three sites: Society, Academy and Workplace.

The demands placed on languages in these three sites are very different.
Finally…

Until content lecturers see their role as one of socialising students into the discourse of their discipline, there can be no discussion of disciplinary literacy goals. Without such a discussion lecturers will continue to insist that they are not language teachers and that this should be a job for someone else.

(Airey 2011a; 2012)
Questions or Comments?
References


