

A convergent approach to corpus and glossary creation for higher education CLIL

Abstract:

During the last few decades, there has been growing scholarly concern for the enhancement of the international dimension of education with a view to opening wider perspectives for the learners' study and subsequent employment in the European space. One of the frameworks conceived so as to address the internationalization of education is Content and Language Integrated Learning, which is aimed at providing learners simultaneously with knowledge in a certain field of study and with communication skills in a widely-spoken language. The study presented in this paper is interdisciplinary, lying at the intersection point of language pedagogy, corpus linguistics, information technology and lexicography. It is an integrative approach borrowing methodology from all these disciplines while pursuing the objective of formulating a teaching and learning methodology to be used in English-taught academic Content and Language Integrated Learning, the participants of which are non-natives speakers of English. The novel methodology herein suggested is considered an effective means to enhance the acquisition of both specialized terminology and content knowledge in such educational contexts. More precisely, the paper attempts at demonstrating that corpus compilation and glossary-making can be joined in a complementary way so as to establish a better balancing act between the improvement of the students' English language performance inside and outside their field of study and their acquiring the relevant content knowledge. It reports on the experiment undertaken with Romanian students enrolled in the English-taught programme of Automotive Engineering at Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania. They were initially guided to adopt collaborative learning strategies throughout the activities related to corpus compilation and glossary-making so as to develop autonomous learning skills for long-time professional engagement. The methodology was conceived in eight steps, which were scheduled to stretch over a whole semester, during the students' initial study stages. The two main activities, corpus compilation and glossary-making by means of electronic tools, are dedicated separate sections in this paper, which highlight the gradual development of the learners' language skills, abilities to handle electronic tools for the creation of learning and working resources and the acquisition of knowledge in a particular field of study. Nonetheless, focus is laid on the relation of interdependency between these two major activities and on the benefits of approaching them convergently by undertaking the adjacent actions in an integrative way and with the end-product in constant view. The methodology is designed as a coherent whole meant to positively impact the overall quality of the learners' study. The advantages of the proposed methodology have been discussed along two coordinates, one pertaining to the process and the other to the product. The two chief benefits of the methodology have been outlined as (i) enhancing the balance between content and language acquisition in Content and Language Integrated Learning for non-native speakers of English, fostering autonomous and self-directed learning abilities, and (ii) providing the learners with valuable resources during and after the study.

Keywords: *Higher education CLIL; Specialized corpus; Glossary; Autonomous learning*