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### Looking for the i in CLIL

Martens, Liesbeth; Mettewie, Laurence; Elen, Jan

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**Looking for the i in CLIL**  
**A literature review on the implementation of dual focus in both subject and language classrooms**

**Liesbeth Martens\***

*University Colleges Leuven-Limburg and KU Leuven*  
[liesbeth.martens@ucll.be](mailto:liesbeth.martens@ucll.be)

**Laurence Mettewie**

*Université de Namur*  
[laurence.mettewie@unamur.be](mailto:laurence.mettewie@unamur.be)

**Jan Elen**

*KU Leuven*  
[jan.elen@kuleuven.be](mailto:jan.elen@kuleuven.be)

**Abstract**

In the acronym CLIL, the “i” refers to the integration of both content and language objectives, also referred to as “dual focus”. In order to realise this dual focus at least three aspects need consideration: agreeing on the meaning of dual focus, making explicit how teachers can collaborate to achieve it in their classes, and examining what content and language can be covered to enact dual focus (Halbach, 2014). Contrary to the unquestioned role of language as the vehicle for content learning, the role of language teachers and their collaboration with the subject teacher remain vague. Therefore, a systematic literature study, based on 71 relevant studies, has been conducted to answer the research question: What does dual focus in a CLIL context entail? More specifically, the following aspects have been examined: (1) How has dual focus been defined in the literature?, (2) How can teacher collaboration, outside the classroom, strengthen the dual focus?, and (3) What does dual focus imply, inside the classroom, for curriculum and planning regarding language and content covered in CLIL subject and language courses?

The findings allow to better contextualise the concept of dual focus, by identifying two main clusters of parameters: (1) outside the classroom: collaboration between subject teachers and language teachers for planning, execution and evaluation of dual focus, (2) approaches to language and content to co-stimulate dual focus inside the classroom. We hope these results can provide CLIL researchers and practitioners with a clearer conceptual basis to frame dual approach in CLIL contexts.

**Keywords:**

*CLIL, content and language integrated learning, dual focus, integration, teacher collaboration*

## 1. Introduction

Since its inception in the 1990s, CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has sparked debates regarding its scope, characteristics, and relationship with other multilingual teaching approaches. Met (1998) devised a continuum illustrating the integration of content and language, ranging from content-driven immersion to language instruction with substantial content use.

CLIL functions as an integrated pedagogical method where subject material is taught through a target language. Cenoz (2015), Cenoz et al. (2014), Coyle (2007), Dalton-Puffer et al. (2014) and others place CLIL predominantly at the content-driven end of the continuum, although literature also acknowledges instances of language-driven CLIL. In this study, we envision CLIL lessons as subject-based courses delivered in an additional language by content teachers. This approach facilitates both content learning and *implicit* language development (Heras & Lasagabaster, 2015). The *integration* of language and content acquisition is a defining feature of CLIL, affirmed by scholars (Nikula, Dafouz, et al., 2016; Nikula, Dalton-Puffer, et al., 2016; Reitbauer et al., 2018) and invoked within the “i” in CLIL.

While CLIL subject teachers are usually not trained as language teachers, students also receive dedicated language instruction, led by language educators, where *explicit* language learning takes place (Dale et al., 2018, 2021; de Graaff et al., 2007). In these language lessons, teachers are mostly bound by a curriculum identical for both CLIL and non-CLIL learners. Upon the (at times unanticipated) presence of CLIL learners within their student cohort, language teachers might face a pedagogical quandary about potential modifications of their instructional methodologies for CLIL students’ sake. Nevertheless, many language teachers have not yet pondered this question.

The concept of *dual focus* emerges in this context, involving a focus on both language and content. Llinares (2015) distinguishes CLIL’s “integratedness” from dual focus, suggesting that integration goes beyond balancing content and language; it intertwines them seamlessly. Nonetheless, the exact interpretation of integration and dual focus remains ambiguous, necessitating further exploration of how they can be best approached. Integration seems to be more prominent within subject courses, while dual focus may also manifest in collaboration between language and content courses. Since the collaboration between target language teachers (LTs) and CLIL subject teachers (STs) is advocated for successful CLIL implementation (cf. *infra*), we will concentrate on the notion *dual focus*, which we will further conceptualise. We will use the terms *subject course* and *language course* to refer either to the CLIL subject course taught in the target language or to the target language course within the same CLIL school context.

Collaboration between LTs and STs being recommended, it is not consistently observed in educational settings (Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017; McDougald, 2016). This inconsistency is unsurprising given the unclear conceptualisation of dual focus (Barwell, 2016; Chohey-Paquet, 2015; McDougald, 2016).

The role of the LT in the CLIL context remains enigmatic, as research primarily explores didactic practices within the CLIL subject course (Fernández Fontecha, 2012). If, in the literature, the language course is concerned, it is mostly in the context of so-called *soft CLIL*: the language-driven variant of CLIL, encountered in foreign language classrooms (Ball et al., 2015). The role of the LT and the pedagogical implications for the language course in *hard CLIL* contexts remain underexplored, as well as a comprehensive examination of both STs' and LTs' roles in achieving dual focus (for an exception see Bárcena-Toyos, 2020). This leaves significant questions unanswered about the realisation of dual focus in CLIL settings.

## 2. Aims and research questions

This study delves into literature to examine theoretical definitions and practical implementations of integrated and dual-focused teaching. First, we define integration and dual focus. Then, we explore the enhancement of dual focus through teacher collaboration and analyse the implications for classroom practices.

The research question that guided the literature study, was: “What does dual focus in a CLIL context entail?” Since this question yielded a large amount of data, the scope for this article will be more specifically on (1) how dual focus has been defined in the literature, (2) how teacher collaboration, outside the classroom, can strengthen dual focus, and (3) what dual focus implies, inside the classroom, for curriculum and planning regarding language and content covered in CLIL subject and language courses.

## 3. Methodology

Following Xiao and Watson's (2019) phased plan, this systematic literature review employed the “Limo” academic search engine to explore relevant references. Limo scans catalogues (LIBISnet), scientific publications (Lirias), and the “Central Discovery Index”, searching over 8500 databases, commercial (e.g., Web of Science, Scopus) and non-commercial (e.g., PubMed, JSTOR). Limo aggregates billions of articles (KU Leuven Bibliotheken, 2022; LIBISnet, s.d.).

The search was conducted in July and August 2021. Search terms were chosen in English, French, and Dutch, using “Advanced Search” and Boolean operators. Keywords encompassed CLIL, language teaching, teacher collaboration, and dual focus on content and language<sup>1</sup>. To ensure comprehensive coverage and avoid publication bias, both conceptual and empirical works, peer-reviewed or not, were included, focusing on theoretical foundations, empirical research and practical narratives. The initial criteria for reference filtering were:

1. written in English, French or Dutch (in line with the authors’ linguistic competences)
2. published from 2000 to 2021 (to include recent publications, especially those written after 2002, the year the European Union formulated its “mother tongue + 2” policy).
3. addressing CLIL didactics, more specifically the linguistic aspect of content teaching or LT-ST collaboration.

After eliminating duplicates, 601 hits were obtained (564 English, 35 French, 2 Dutch), comprising articles, books, and theses. The second selection employed stricter criteria, refining “the linguistic aspect of CLIL teaching” to

4. focus on didactic approach and language’s role in the subject course or content’s role in the language course.

Screening titles and abstracts yielded 54 items. These search results were enriched with relevant conceptual works. Thus, the final review encompassed 71 titles, introduced into Nvivo for qualitative analysis (Reference section: sources indicated with an \*).

The research question was addressed by examining sources for dual focus definitions and practical implementations. Quotations on these aspects were systematically coded. Distinctions were made between language and subject courses, and data applicable to both courses (Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> Key words applied: dual focus, integration, teacher collaboration, teacher cooperation, CLIL, AICLE, immersion, bilingual\*, multilingual\*, subject\*, content\*, language, foreign language, L2, EFL, English as a foreign language, target language, teacher\*, dual focus, integration, teacher collaboration, teacher cooperation, subject\*, content\*, language teach\*, content teach\*, discipline\* and their French and Dutch equivalents.

Name	Files	References
<input checked="" type="radio"/> definitions	0	0
<input type="radio"/> dual focus	9	24
<input type="radio"/> other	32	148
<input checked="" type="radio"/> dual focus in class	0	0
<input type="radio"/> dual focus in both courses	36	246
<input type="radio"/> dual focus in the language course	24	104
<input type="radio"/> dual focus in the subject course	32	216
<input type="radio"/> dual focus outside class	26	132

**Figure 1:** A Screenshot of the Codes, Their Corresponding Files and References in Nvivo

After initial global coding, conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) explored subcategories, themes, features, examples, and descriptions from theoretical and empirical sources. Concerning concentration on dual focus “in class”, a large amount of data could be collected.

#### 4. Findings

The literature review presented a wealth of data on various dual focus dimensions, categorised as *what?* (lesson content, curricula, planning, and institutional level), *who?* (teachers, students, and their dual focus beliefs), and *how?* (classroom practice and didactics) (Nikula, Dalton-Puffer et al., 2016; Llinares, 2015). The available space of this article forcing us to limit our scope, we will address two crucial *what?* elements: 1) planning, execution, and evaluation of dual focus outside the classroom, involving teacher collaboration in the absence of the students, and 2) dual focus achieved through language and content selection in the subject and language course.

##### 4.1 The concepts of integration and dual focus

Dual focus in CLIL emphasises addressing language and content concurrently, while integration intertwines these elements (Llinares, 2015). Though CLIL lessons were expected to naturally foster language learning, evidence showed room for improvement, particularly in productive skills (Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Lyster, 2006; Meyer, 2010). Students struggled to express subject-specific issues appropriately (Meyer, 2010). Hence, targeted attention to language development, through scaffolding, rich interaction, or pushed output, was deemed essential (Meyer, 2010).

Improved cooperation between LTs and STs is seen as holding untapped potential to enhance students' learning experiences, hence our preference for the term dual focus over integration. However vaguely the term is circumscribed, it is seen as “the key to a successful implementation of CLIL” (Reitbauer et al., 2018, p. 90) and is entrenched in the most commonly used definition for CLIL:

CLIL can be described as: a *dual-focused* educational approach in which an additional language is used for the *learning and teaching of both content and language*. That is, in the teaching and learning process, *there is a focus not only on content and not only on language. Each is interwoven* even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 1, *emphasis in italics added*)

Additionally, *integration* is also used in pedagogical contexts other than CLIL. For example, Béliard and Gravé-Rousseau (2009) use the terms *interdisciplinarité* (interdisciplinarity) and *intégration* (integration) in the context of “une mise en relation de deux ou plusieurs disciplines” (linking of two or more disciplines, p. 67), with *intégration* referring to the intended educational goal and *interdisciplinarité* denoting the means used to that end.

The literature review confirms the lack of conceptualisation of dual focus, exemplified by Lo (2020, p. 6-7). Inconsistent terminology is evident, with dual focus (Coyle et al., 2010), integration (Llinares, 2015; Lo, 2020; Nikula, Dafouz, et al., 2016), and sheltering and scaffolding (Lorenzo, 2013) used interchangeably. Ambiguity persists regarding the concept itself: are language and content not inherently integrated, as per Coyle & Meyer (2021), de Graaff (2016), and Leung & Morton (2016)? However, dual focus transcends mere interdependency; it involves pedagogical emphasis on integrated *teaching or learning* of both language and content, supported by Coyle et al. (2010), Dalton-Puffer (2013), Lin (2016) and Marsh (2008).

The challenge lies in delineating the implications for teaching and learning, given vagueness in literature. Lo (2020, p. 144) characterises dual focus as complex, encompassing content and language teaching. Teachers must exhibit (pedagogical) content knowledge in both areas, mastering both subject concepts and didactics, while they must additionally have an excellent command of the target language, not only the communicative competences for teaching and interacting with students, but also the academic, subject-specific language. This complex mastery, coupled with the need for integration, demands skilful combination rather than mere juxtaposition of language and content teaching (Lo, 2020, p. 145).

The complexity arises from teachers often specialised in either subject or language, necessitating collaboration for effective integration (Lo, 2020). Despite the ideal partnership between “content aware” LTs and “language aware” STs (Lin, 2016, p. 3), practical implementation still remains unclear.

Given the lack of conceptualisation and limited collaboration guidance, achieving dual focus remains a challenge. It is unsurprising that STs’ and LTs’ cooperation, considered the optimal condition for dual focus enhancement, is not widely practiced (Lo, 2020). STs do their best to integrate language into their subject course, but struggle to accomplish the job on their own. As several authors suggest, collaborating with fellow LTs is then a potential solution. However, the kind of language taught or required in language classes is usually very different from the language used in subject courses. Whereas language lessons tend to zoom in on everyday or general academic language, subject courses involve a jargon-specific type of academic language, with typical structures and a specific discourse (cf. *infra*). This difference can compromise collaboration between STs and LTs (Dale et al., 2018).

In summary, dual focus and integration concepts lack uniformity, necessitating a delineated definition, which we did not even retrieve in the promisingly entitled edited volume *Conceptualising Integration in CLIL and Multilingual Education* (Nikula, Dafouz, et al., 2016). Enhancing dual focus requires collaborative efforts between STs and LTs, offering – as we believe – unexplored potential for improved learning experiences. The subsequent sections will delve into enhancing dual focus through teacher collaboration outside the classroom and the interplay of language and content within CLIL subject and language courses.

## ***4.2 Teacher collaboration for planning, execution and evaluation of dual focus***

For teacher collaboration outside classroom practice, we distinguish three stages. First, our literature review focuses on teacher collaboration in the planning phase: before CLIL implementation and before teaching. Second, ongoing teaching collaboration and, third, joint evaluation are explored.

### ***4.2.1 Planning***

Effective implementation of CLIL at a macro level necessitates thorough planning and school support (Baudet, 2012; Béliard & Grivé-Rousseau, 2009; San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2020). The literature reveals three collaboration-fostering factors during this preliminary stage: (1) strategic CLIL incorporation in the school’s language policy and appointing a coordinator

(Pavón Vázquez, 2014); (2) teacher professional development (Álvarez-Álvarez, 2016; Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017; San Isidro & Lasagabaster, 2020); and (3) dedicated time for meetings, knowledge-building, and try-outs (Baudet, 2012; Béliard & Grivé-Rousseau, 2009; Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Chohey-Paquet, 2015; Tardieu & Dolitsky, 2012).

Before teaching, analysing students' language needs appears to be vital in teacher collaboration. The language essential for pupils in the subject course serves as the guiding criterion. Coyle's *language OF/FOR/THROUGH learning* framework delineates these requisites. Language OF learning grants access to subject content, language FOR learning aids classroom participation and subject content incorporation, and language THROUGH learning develops school-based language skills (Coyle et al., 2010).

Another approach diagnoses language needs through *literacy*, *discourse*, and *genre* concepts, again tailored to subject matter (Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Coyle, 2020; Dalton-Puffer, 2007, 2016; Llinares & McCabe, 2020; Lorenzo, 2013; Pavón Vázquez, 2018). *Discourse* and *literacy* intertwine, with *disciplinary discourse* embodying discipline-specific "thinking, reasoning, explaining, arguing, evaluating, etc." (Lin, 2016, p. 182). *Disciplinary literacy* encompasses understanding concepts and expressing knowledge linguistically in a given discipline (Coyle, 2020; Lin, 2016). *Genre* signifies purposeful, staged, social text types tailored to specific audiences (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010).

Three methods are suggested for identifying students' linguistic needs: (1) analysing subject course materials (Woźniak, 2013), (2) observing and (3) reviewing recordings of subject lessons (Baudet, 2012).

For the analysis of students' language needs, the subject matter content serves as the foundation across these methods. In collaboration, LTs act as an "external eye", detecting linguistic needs, assessing CEFR levels, offering language corrections, and suggesting adjustments in didactic materials (Bárcena-Toyos, 2020; Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Dale & Tanner, 2012; Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017). This help seems welcome, since selecting language and literacy components is challenging (Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Ivanova, 2021).

However, the opposite is possible as well. STs could take into account what is covered in the language course so that both teachers' expectations in terms of learning outcomes can be aligned. In this case, LTs play a more substantial role. This aspect is explored in the following paragraphs.

To foster teacher collaboration, Béliard and Gravé-Rousseau (2009) emphasise seeking synergy between subject and language curricula, enabling the establishment and merging of linguistic and content objectives (Hamciuc & Parker, 2016; Woźniak, 2013). LTs, through curriculum analysis, pinpoint linguistic aims for their lessons. STs then endeavour to incorporate these linguistic goals into their subject classes, illustrated by Béliard and Gravé-Rousseau's (2009) example of applying newly acquired language features (e.g., use of comparatives and superlatives), in the subject matter class.

Conceptual references (Béliard & Gravé-Rousseau, 2009; Lin, 2016) suggest curriculum consensus encompassing content, language goals, and learning progression. Empirical studies (Hamciuc & Parker, 2016; Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017) demonstrate such practices. Collaborative lesson planning, advocated by Cammarata and Haley (2018), involves determining content organisation and pedagogical methods. Agreement on the former can lead to an integrated curriculum (Béliard & Gravé-Rousseau, 2009; Lin, 2016; Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017), even shared syllabi (Baudet, 2012), or distinct modules with cross-links (Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017). Teachers also collaborate on materials for the learners' linguistic support (Hamciuc & Parker, 2016; Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017; Woźniak, 2013) and simplify texts (Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017). Addressing pedagogy, tasks and activities is facilitated by joint decisions (Lin, 2016; Woźniak, 2013). Teachers can also jointly select strategies for which they create parallel opportunities for practice (Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017).

Cammarata and Haley (2018) note that these preparations might, but do not necessarily, lead to coteaching. This transition brings us to the subsequent stage: teacher collaboration during the teaching process.

#### *4.2.2 Execution*

In the realm of collaborative teaching implementation, literature outlines lesson organisation and teachers' adaptive attitudes.

For lesson organisation, two scenarios emerge: separate courses for language and subject (Hamciuc & Parker, 2016; Rui et al., 2022) and coteaching (ibid., and Béliard & Gravé-Rousseau, 2009). Based on empirical evidence, Wallace et al. (2020) highlight the effectiveness of separate lessons due to domain expertise, whereas coteaching may lead to delicate role balance (p. 141).

Regarding teachers' adaptive skills, continuous adjustments are essential throughout the year (Béliard & Gravé-Rousseau, 2009), since student response and learning progress are unpredictable. Reflection emerges as vital for fruitful teacher collaboration (Béliard & Gravé-Rousseau, 2009; Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Hamciuc & Parker, 2016; Woźniak, 2013)

#### *4.2.3 Evaluation*

Teachers not only evaluate their own actions throughout the teaching process, they collaboratively determine student assessment strategies. In Lin's view (2016), this step is a logical consequence in curriculum design of task-based learning that focuses on both content and language. Logically, students work towards the final task's success criteria, which include both content and language parameters. Teachers establish shared assessment criteria involving joint approaches to target language errors (Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017; Woźniak, 2013) and target language error approaches (Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017). Besides, STs and LTs jointly evaluate tasks and tests, assigning a combined grade (Dale & Tanner, 2012).

### ***4.3 Dual focus in the language and subject matter classroom***

Previously, collaboration between LTs and STs outside class was explored. Here, we delve into the didactic realisation of dual focus in language and subject courses, narrowing our attention to language in both courses and content in language courses.

#### *4.3.1 Language in the language course*

Dale et al. (2018) conducted a study in a CLIL context, analysing 69 sources to understand language choices made by LTs. They identified five *types* of language: 1) Subject-specific, 2) Classroom, 3) General academic, 4) General everyday and 5) Culture-specific language.

The authors then distinguish five *features* of language that are addressed in target language lessons: 1) Content/meaning, 2) Vocabulary, 3) Grammar, 4) Functions, skills and strategies, 5) Discourse. The study proposes a framework with horizontal (ranging from a focus on "content/meaning only" to a focus on purely "language/form") and vertical (ranging from "culture-specific" to "subject-specific") continua, positioning LTs in four quadrants based on their focus and context. This positioning influences their lesson priorities and potential for dual focus. The study implies that collaboration with CLIL subject colleagues could impact LTs' positions. Similarly, our literature review aligns with Dale et al., suggesting LTs' roles may

evolve due to collaboration. Illustratively, Table 1 presents language-related topics tied to subjects that LTs might teach.

Topic	Reference
Cognitive discourse functions as part of genre didactics for the subject course	Coyle & Meyer, 2021
Accuracy issues surfaced in the content lessons	Pavón Vázquez, 2014
Useful language strategies for the subject course such as reading (4) or note-taking strategies (2)	(1) Álvarez-Álvarez, 2016 (2) Breeze, 2014
Shifts in timing with regard to content from the language curriculum (1, 4) e.g., anticipation of the past tense because the history lessons require it (3)	(3) Chohey-Paquet, 2015 (4) Dale & Tanner, 2012
Working with subject-specific lexical elements, e.g., lexicon of image reading for photos, tables, diagrams, etc.	Béliard & Gravé-Rousseau, 2009

**Table 1:** Examples of Linguistic Topics Covered in a Language Course, as an Effect of Teacher Collaboration

In any case, Dalton-Puffer, Nikula and Smit (2010) argue for “specific curricula for language development across the various subjects taught” (p. 81).

#### 4.3.2 *Language in the subject course*

The preceding section explored linguistic elements addressed in language courses. The following paragraphs delve into how language is approached in subject courses. Within the literature, three themes emerge: (1) the role of STs in form-focused teaching, (2) various depictions of language in subject courses, (3) the link between language-aware teaching and effective didactics.

Our analysis of sources suggests that when implementing dual focus, STs not only cover subject-specific content but also the associated language, often collaborating with language colleagues. However, we know from Chohey-Paquet’s (2015) interviews with STs and LTs in secondary CLIL education, that STs do not identify themselves as LTs (see also Reitbauer et al., 2018, p. 91). Consequently, they do not consider teaching language classes, which they prefer to delegate to their fellow LTs. Instead, STs are expected to be “language aware”, attending to language and the way content is expressed (Álvarez-Álvarez, 2016, p. 19). This may lead to a focus on form within subject courses (Halbach, 2014), as seen in Lyster’s study in primary CLIL education, where “[c]ounterbalanced instruction requires teachers to shift the

instructional focus between language and content” (2019, p. 501). However, this focus on form within the subject course differs, according to de Graaff et al.’s study (2007), from form-focused activities used in the language course: STs prompt language form awareness and feedback but do not typically provide formal instruction or rule explanations.

In existing literature, various descriptions capture the nature of language covered in subject courses, suitable for a dual focus approach. In line with Cummins’ (1979) distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), both BICS and CALP co-occur within subject courses (Pavón Vázquez & Méndez García, 2017), bridged by STs guiding students from colloquial to scientific language (Coyle & Meyer, 2021) – the so-called (un)packing of subject-specific content (also in Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010, and Lin, 2016). Likely, Coyle et al.’s (2010) concepts of language OF/FOR/THROUGH learning distinguish subject-related, classroom, and process language. Besides, learners’ linguistic repertoire can reciprocate between L1 (referring either to the school language or the home language) and target language, enhancing content understanding and L1 skills (Tardieu & Dolitsky, 2012; Lorenzo & Dalton-Puffer, 2016). Addressing language strategies, particularly reading, is emphasised (Cammarata & Haley, 2018). The CLIL literature reflects significant interest in literacy and genre didactics, bolstered by the pluriliteracies approach (Chohey-Paquet, 2015; Coyle & Chohey-Paquet, 2020; Coyle & Meyer, 2021; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Dalton-Puffer et al., 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2016; Ivanova, 2021). The pluriliteracies approach focuses on subject knowledge, as well as written and oral literacy in multiple languages and disciplines across genres, benefiting from collaboration between STs and LTs. The genre approach, highlighting language-content interplay, is seen as key in LT-ST collaboration because STs are familiar with subject-specific genres (Chohey-Paquet, 2015; Coyle & Chohey-Paquet, 2020; Lorenzo, 2013). Utilising this language in both courses could effectively develop pluriliteracies.

A relationship seems to exist between language-aware teaching and effective didactics. Coyle and Meyer (2021) highlight how principles from the pluriliteracies approach and CLIL didactics align with effective teaching, beyond CLIL. These principles encompass visible thinking, prior knowledge connection, feedback, verbalising content and knowledge transfer. Researchers (de Graaff, 2016; Nikula, Dalton-Puffer, et al., 2016) report about STs adopting CLIL methods in regular classes. The same applies to de Graaff et al.’s (2007) CLIL observation tool, which emphasises general didactic principles. Thus, with respect to dual focus, attention to language in subjects supports robust learner support.

### 4.3.3 *Content in the language course*

The content treated in language courses is an interesting object of study because – apart from the language itself and some semantic fields – official curricula leave an extent of freedom to the teacher in determining topics for reading, speaking, listening, and writing activities. This relative liberty provides occasions for alignment with the subject matter, since, as Coyle and Meyer (2021) put it, it is difficult to learn a language in a vacuum.

Dale et al.'s (2018) study reveals that language lessons' content – besides language itself – is linked to teacher quadrant position. Four content types are distinguished: school subjects, thematic content, cultural content, and language as content (p. 8). In school subjects and thematic content, the connection is evident. Texts from subject courses, or thematically related authentic texts, enrich language lessons, through authentic discipline-specific texts, or through texts with thematic links but without the specialised view from the subject course. In cultural content, Coyle and Chohey-Paquet (2020) demonstrate how gothic literature enhances general academic language and cognitive discourse functions, fostering transferable skills. Regarding language as content, Coyle & Meyer (2021) propose meaning creation through text analysis and co-construction, encouraging students to engage in “lexical harvesting”, i.e. the search for collocations and chunks in (subject-related) texts, so as to shift focus from content to how content is *language*d (p. 169). Table 2 presents examples from our sources, illustrating dual focus opportunities.

Category (Dale et al., 2018)	Topic	Reference
1) School subjects	Pollution (1)	(1) Banegas, 2015
	Preparing the writing of cause-effect texts using the example of the water cycle (2)	(2) Coyle & Meyer, 2021
2) Thematic content	The human body as a whole-school project	Pavón Vázquez et al., 2015
3) Cultural content	Gothic literature → writing skills (3)	
	First-hand introduction of cultural topics by native speakers language assistants (4)	(3) Coyle & Chopey-Paquet, 2020
	Posters and photos for class decoration (4)	(4) Julián-de-Vega & Fonseca-Mora, 2017
4) Language as content	Text analysis and co-construction Lexical harvesting	Coyle & Meyer, 2021

**Table 2:** Examples of Content Topics Covered in a Language Course, as an Effect of Teacher Collaboration

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this review highlights dual focus as crucial for CLIL success, while acknowledging its complexity and lack of precise definition. For dual focus, different stages of teacher collaboration were outlined. Additionally, the study examined the content in language courses and the language in both courses for dual focus potential. The next paragraphs will revisit these aspects, extracting insights about dual focus as a concept and its implementation in language and subject courses.

The absence of clear delineation and conceptualisation of dual focus in the literature hampers its practical realisation. A common frame of reference is needed for research, practice and professional development. Therefore, we aim to align terminology and to conceptualise dual focus through a critical review. We follow Coyle et al. (2010), Dalton-Puffer (2013) and Lin (2016) by emphasising the pedagogical twist in the concept, referring to the aspect of *learning or teaching* content as well as language. Our literature review enabled us to emphasize two critical prerequisites for achieving dual focus. First, the responsibility for achieving dual focus should not be exclusively attributed to the ST alone, but, on the contrary, should be considered as a shared responsibility with the LT. Second, the concept of dual focus is not constrained to what happens in the classroom. From our analysis of the literature, work outside the classroom,

through collaboration between teachers, is an absolute prerequisite for achieving dual focus. To guide future research, we suggest the following working definition that incorporates essential elements drawn from the existing literature:

Dual focus in CLIL teaching pertains to a focus on both language and content goals in teaching and learning. It is achieved before, during and after the teaching experience, and through collaboration between CLIL subject teachers and target language teachers. The planning phase involves an analysis of the students' linguistic needs, the search for synergy between language and discipline curricula and agreements on content, language, teaching materials, didactic approaches and timing. Insofar as teaching does not take place in co-teaching, it entails, in the subject course, the deliberate focus on increasing and supporting students' language skills to foster their receptive competences in understanding the content, and their productive competences in expressing their knowledge of the subject matter in the target language. In the target language classroom, it relates to a conscious development of linguistic competences that support students – directly or indirectly – in learning content for the subject matter, whether or not using content related to the subject course. During and after the teaching experience, outside the classroom, teachers reflect on their lessons so that adjustments can be made in mutual consultation. The subject teacher and the language teacher also agree on a consistent evaluation of and feedback for the students.

This working definition reveals that the realisation of dual focus within the classroom hinges on its precedence **outside the classroom**. An initiating phase, even before CLIL has been implemented in a school, includes team planning, professionalisation and ongoing school support. Teachers collaboratively plan lessons, a time-consuming process emphasised in our definition, requiring ample time allocation for STs and LTs.

**Within the classroom**, collaboration dictates the ST and LT's positions on the content-language continuum (Dale et al., 2018), and vice versa. Regarding the **language** covered in the language course, choices correlate with the teacher's quadrant position, identity, role perception and cooperation openness. Integrating language objectives in the subject course is not widespread practice, yet beneficial for dual focus: (1) BICS/CALP distinction aids (un)pack demanding subject-specific content, (2) language OF/FOR/THROUGH learning provides teachers with an eye for necessary scaffolding and students with extra language practice opportunities, (3) form focus also enhances L1 skills, (4) strategies ensure cross-subject transfer, and (5) (pluri)literacy,

emphasising cognitive discourse and genres, has a key role in ST-LT collaboration. Some argue that dual focus aligns with good didactics, albeit in the target language (e.g., Coyle & Meyer, 2021).

Language course **content** implies flexibility due to non-rigid curricula. Again, LTs' choices relate to quadrant position, identity, role perception and willingness for dual focus and ST collaboration (Dale et al., 2018; Chohey-Paquet, 2015).

The study **answers the research question**: dual focus is realised through ST-LT collaboration, each in their own subject or in co-teaching, bridging language and content. Each can be complementary from their own expertise. After all, the thorough realisation of dual focus is very demanding for one person. In order to enact dual focus in practice, at least three hurdles need to be overcome: removing the conceptual ambiguities regarding dual focus, providing comprehensive professionalisation for both STs and LTs (including on the role of language in the learning process), and giving time to teachers to grow in dual focus proficiency.

This article initiates a working definition, incorporating language-content processes inside and outside the classroom, contributing to curricular and planning discussions. Thereby, we address what Nikula, Dalton-Puffer, et al., (2016) and Llinares (2015) label *what?* (the level of curricula and planning). Further analyses in terms of *how?* (the level of concrete classroom practice) and *who?* (the level of teachers and students) will enrich the working definition of *what?* This should enable the presentation of a more comprehensive framework for dual focus, serving as a solid foundation for future research and implementation in the field.

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