



International Chinese Language Education Communications

Volume 3, Issue 1, 46-59

<https://doi.org/10.46451/iclec.20251129>

Received: 20 October, 2025

Accepted: 28 November, 2025

Published: 1 December, 2025

## “Three Teaching” Issues in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language in Congo-Brazzaville Universities: The CLIL Approach

Roland Naguydem Mabiala

Beijing Foreign Studies University, China

(Email: [mabialaroland@hotmail.com](mailto:mabialaroland@hotmail.com))

### Abstract

CLIL is an essential educational approach for acquiring academic knowledge and linguistic skills. Most research indicates that the implementation of such an approach often raises challenges, notably for teachers, teaching materials, and teaching methods, mainly in non-African countries. In contrast, fewer research findings have been identified in African contexts, especially those using Chinese as an instructional language at the tertiary education level. To fill these gaps, this study analysed the “three teaching” issues—teachers, materials and methods when Congo-Brazzaville establishes the Chinese language and literature school using Chinese as a hard CLIL medium. Through a documentary research method, focused on secondary data analysis, the research findings revealed that this future school would face well-trained issues of teachers, due to the limited number of pre-service teachers enrolled in doctoral studies. To alleviate this, the inclusion of less-trained pre-service teachers might be necessary, but they would face a lack of systematic, theoretical, and academic knowledge, mainly research-based academic. This might increase the workload of well-trained teachers. The findings also found that this future school would be exempt from teaching materials and methods. While the future teachers would be well-trained, they could develop some suitable materials and implement some practical pedagogical methods. But these teachers could not guarantee the availability and accessibility of those resources. The findings of this study have implications in deepening the understanding of CLIL beyond the conventional geographical regions. Concurrently, it enhances the promotion of the Chinese language education.

### Keywords

“Three-Teaching” issues, Chinese as a foreign language, Congo-Brazzaville universities, Chinese language and literature schools, CLIL, pre-service teachers

# 刚果（布）高校对外汉语教学实践中的“三教”问题：CLIL 视角

马夏渔  
北京外国语大学，中国

## 摘要

内容整合式语言学习（CLIL）是获取学术知识和语言技能的重要教育方法。多数研究表明，这种教育模式的实施往往面临诸多挑战，尤其体现在教师、教材和教学方法方面，这种情况在非非洲国家更为突出。相比之下，针对非洲语境的研究成果较为匮乏，尤其缺乏高等教育阶段采用中文作为教学语言的实践案例。为填补这一空白，本研究以刚果（布）创办中文语言文学学校为案例，深入剖析了该校采用中文作为硬（hard CLIL）媒介时面临的“三教”问题——教师培养、教材开发与教学方法创新。通过以二手数据分析为重点的文献研究方法，研究发现这所未来学院将面临师资培养不足的问题，原因在于攻读博士学位的预备教师数量有限。为缓解此困境，可能需要吸纳培训程度较低的预备教师，但他们将面临系统性、理论性及学术知识，特别是研究型学术知识的匮乏。这可能增加高素质教师的工作负担。研究结果还发现，这所未来学院将不受教材和教学方法的限制。虽然未来的教师将接受良好培训，他们可以开发一些合适的教材并实施一些实用的教学方法。但这些教师无法保证这些资源的可用性和可获取性。本研究的发现有助于深化对跨学科整合式语言学习（CLIL）的理解，超越传统的地域限制。同时，它也促进了汉语教育的推动。

## 关键词

“三教”问题，刚果（布）大学，国际中文教育，中国语言文学学院，跨学科整合式语言学习（CLIL），预备教师

## Introduction

In light of globalisation, soft power, and the economic growth of certain nations like China, several countries urge their citizens not only to acquire proficiency in the Chinese language but also to become experts—teachers who ensure the instruction of Chinese as a major locally, notably at the tertiary level (Cui, 2010; Wang, 2023; Mabiala, 2025a; Xu, 2024). This may involve the acquisition of specific knowledge while studying Chinese. Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) appears to be an effective educational approach to reach such goals. CLIL emphasises acquiring subject content knowledge using additional or foreign languages. That is, the students acquire academic knowledge while gaining linguistic proficiency (Marsh, 2002; Eurydice, 2006).

Currently, many European countries have already attempted to implement CLIL to enhance the local education system, which fosters the advancement of multilingualism and enhances the intercultural communication of their students. Unlike other countries in Latin America and Asia are also implementing this approach, not necessarily using Chinese to teach subjects (European Commission 1995, 2004, 2008; Banegas, 2012, 2020; Mehisto, 2007; Sun & Yang, 2024). In African contexts, many local universities have adopted the CLIL approach in one way or another (Mathole, 2016; Fassé & Takam, 2024) by opening Chinese language and literature schools with a teaching Chinese as a foreign language programme as one of the main majors, whereby local students might concurrently acquire pedagogical and academic knowledge, and linguistic skills.

Earlier literature revealed that the implementation of CLIL often raises challenges. Most research has indicated that these challenges are related to learners' assessment, performance, local policies, teachers' training, and teaching resources, especially in non-African countries (Banegas, 2020; Mehisto, 2008). In African contexts, this literature remained unexplored (Mathole 2016; Fassé & Takam 2024). When it comes to Chinese, this literature revealed that most research remained focused on the traditional topics, such as grammar errors, learners' incentives, language policy, and learning environments (Mabiala, 2025a, 2025b, Wang, 2023), while only a few were documented on teachers, teaching materials and pedagogical techniques (Cui, 2010), especially in the African contexts. Taken together, this study seeks to fill these gaps by analysing the "three teaching" issues—teachers, teaching materials and teaching methods when Congo-Brazzaville establishes the "*Chinese language and literature school*" at Marien Ngouabi University using Chinese as a CLIL medium (UMNG's CLLS).

The present study aims to understand "why" potential "three teaching" issues might arise in such a specific context. By examining the Congolese scenario, this study contributes to (1) deepening the understanding of CLIL beyond the traditional geographic areas—Europe, Asia and America, (2) promoting the Chinese language education through a pragmatic educational approach—suggesting a nuanced perspective of learning a given foreign language.

Using a documentary research method, this study employed a secondary data research approach, which involves a systematic analysis of existing literature (Bailey, 1994). In other words, this study involved collecting and analysing relevant data from the review literature that aligns with the research purpose. Through documentary research method—the relevant data were critically identified, analysed and assessed (Treece & Treece, 1982; Bailey, 1994; Ahmed, 2010). Currently, many research studies have adopted the documentary research method in applied linguistic and educational fields (Nunan, 2003; Bankuwiha et al., 2022). Their findings revealed that this method remained one of the effective ways for data collection research, notably in areas where the collection of primary data—explanatory research, seems unmanageable due to the local sociocultural realities. By reducing any potential data biases, this study prioritised the data from reputable sources, where the data have undergone a systematic and rigorous review, such as research articles and academic books published across *Springer*, *Taylor & Francis*, *Wiley*, 中国知网(CNKI), etc. Meanwhile, some international organisations' websites that broadly address education were also privileged, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and even websites located at the African continental level, such as the Conference of Ministers of Education of La Francophonie's States and Governments (CONFEMEN), and the Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC) were also included. Alongside this, the reports from Congolese national statistical organisations related to local education, such as the National Institute for Statistics (INS) and the Congolese National Institute for Educational Research and Action (INRAP), were incorporated. Taken together, all resources allowed not only to provide relevant insights into a consistent data collection, but also to ensure a critical and rigorous analysis that responds to our research purpose.

The study is structured into four main sections. The first addresses research related to the "three teaching" issues, both in the CLIL and teaching Chinese as a foreign language context. Alongside this, a section dedicated to the situation related to the Congolese educational system in general, the tertiary one in particular. The second discusses the "three teaching" issues. The third section highlights the discussion. Finally, we conclude with research implications.

## **Literature Review**

### **CLIL overview and "three teaching" issues in teaching Chinese**

As an educational approach and pedagogical framework, the concept of CLIL was developed by some educators and linguists in the 1990s in the European context. This concept addresses the dissemination of academic content through the use of foreign or additional languages as the instructional language (Coyle et al., 2010; Marsh, 2002; Eurydice, 2006). By integrating the subject content and language acquisition, CLIL attempts to provide a holistic student who is equipped with academic knowledge and linguistic proficiency. To this end, four principal principles were—Content, Communication, Cognition, and Culture, identified as the 4Cs principles (Marsh, 2002; Coyle et al., 2010; Coyle, 2011). That is, content addresses the adjustment of subject content to specific teaching contexts by taking into account the interdependence between the subject and language throughout the learning process. The communication refers to interactivity in language communication to enhance language skills. Cognition addresses the development of cognitive skills. In other words, how to cultivate the thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills of the students throughout the educational process. Culture highlights how to enhance students' transcultural experiences beyond linguistic barriers and foster their awareness of globalisation (Mehisto, 2008; Perez-Vidal & Juan-Garau, 2010; Marsh, 2002; Coyle et al., 2010). Alongside the 4Cs principles, CLIL is also categorised into *Hard CLIL*—where foreign languages are used to teach academic content; *Soft CLIL*, which highlights the language proficiency by delivering some subjects as parts of language courses (Bentley, 2010; Ball et al., 2015; Fasse & Takam, 2024). Taken together, CLIL aims to promote a balanced 50:50 ratio between content and language skills, known as the “CLIL-equilibrium” (Ting, 2010).

While CLIL has been systematically developed, many research studies have revealed that its implementation often raises several issues, such as teacher shortages, teaching materials, and teaching methods (Banegas, 2012; Doiz et al., 2013; Codó, 2022; Sun & Yang, 2024; Pérez, 2020). The earlier literature showed that the teacher's issues were situated as one of the crucial challenges related to CLIL, mainly using foreign languages. The trivial problems were identified as a shortage of qualified teachers. That is, those who are equipped with both academic knowledge and language skills (Mehisto & Banegas, 2012; Klimova, 2012; Verspoor et al., 2015; Barrera, 2018). Regarding this, Giampapa and Barreras (2022) reported that CLIL teachers should possess a systematic knowledge of both language and academic subjects—CLIL requires specialised trainees to become both language and academic subject specialists. The seven key competences to alleviate the teacher shortage were identified: linguistic proficiency, methodology, scientific knowledge, organisational, interpersonal, collaborative competence, and ongoing professional development (Pérez, 2018). These challenges were also extended to teaching materials and teaching methods. The earlier literature revealed that the absence of adequate materials and teaching methods continues to affect significantly the implementation of CLIL across several countries. (Banegas et al., 2012) demonstrated that the implementation of CLIL was impacted due to the utilisation of inappropriate teaching materials by Colombian teachers. Regarding this, some teachers were engaged to develop by themselves some materials to align with their teaching needs. Unlike the inadequate materials, the availability of materials and the application of innovative pedagogical techniques remained the salient issues impeding the implementation of CLIL in many countries. In most cases, teachers lacked materials and preferred adopting traditional teaching methods over innovative techniques that enhance effective learning for students (Klimova, 2012; Ball, 2018; Gozdawa-Golebiowski et al., 2024).

Unlike CLIL teachers, materials and methods issues, teaching of the Chinese language as a major or foreign language is facing similar challenges. Cui (2010) highlighted that teachers' challenges remained the core problems of teaching Chinese. This has been due to the high demand for learning Chinese across the globe, and the macro, meso and micro solutions are

needed. In the African contexts, teacher issues in teaching Chinese have been observed considerably. Many studies have revealed that “three teaching” issues were extensively related to the shortage of local Chinese language teachers, teachers lack professional competence, as well as inadequacy of teaching materials, lack of specific material, and inappropriate use of teaching methods (Cha, 2016; Song, 2022; Liang, 2023). Alongside this, there are problems such as insufficient teaching resources, uneven teacher quality, and a lack of continuing training. At the teaching materials level, there is a lack of local Chinese language textbooks, outdated material contents, and a lack of material diversity. Excessive reliance on traditional teaching methods and the absence of innovative teaching techniques were identified as the main problems affecting the teaching of Chinese at the African level (Liu, 2020; Wang, 2016).

Most of these research studies related to CLIL were focused on non-African countries—Congo-Brazzaville. Meanwhile, the “three teaching” issues were more developed in the African countries, such as Sudan, South Africa, Nigeria, and Burundi. It appears the present literature to overlooked the exploration of the Congolese context, mainly adopting CLIL as an educational approach. These gaps motivate this study by analysing the “three teaching” issues—teachers, teaching materials and teaching methods when Congo-Brazzaville establishes the Chinese language and literature school at Marien Ngouabi University using Chinese as a CLIL medium.

### **The Congolese educational system: Teaching Chinese as a foreign language**

The Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) is a country in sub-Saharan Africa, located in central Africa. Congo-Brazzaville covers an area of 341,821 km<sup>2</sup>, with 6,142,180 population in 2023. It is geographically situated between the Central African Republic to the north, Cameroon to the north-west, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the south and east, and Gabon and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The capital is Brazzaville, and the economic centre is Pointe-Noire (INS, 2020, 2023).

The Congolese educational system is structured into preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education. The preschool level, which comprises classes P1 to P3, requires a three-year course of study. The primary level comprises six forms from CP1 to CM2. The secondary level encompasses a quartet of junior high school forms, followed by a trio of high school forms, culminating in the obtaining of certificates. In addition, technical secondary education and vocational training are offered by various industrial centres and technical schools, with enrolment dependent upon specialisation (Mabiala, 2025b; Wang, 2023; UNESCO, 2010).

The focus of this study is on tertiary education. It is constituted of more than seven academic years, which comprises three for bachelor's, two for Master and three years for PhD studies (Table 1). Currently, Congo-Brazzaville holds two public universities throughout the country—Denis Sassou Nguesso University and Marien Ngouabi University (UMNG). UMNG holds 11 faculties, schools and institutes. While some delivered Chinese as elective courses, the faculty of humanities and social arts studies designed a specific department of foreign modern languages—English studies (INS, 2020). It appears that the future Chinese language and literature could be housed within the current faculty alongside English studies.

Later its independence in 1960, Congo-Brazzaville and China established diplomatic relations. In the early 1970s, the Chinese language was introduced into the Congolese educational system—at the secondary education level. In other words, the Chinese language is more designed for secondary humanities learners as an elective course among other foreign languages throughout the educational system (Boukete & Shen, 2025; Mabiala, 2025a; Wang, 2023). This has also been initiated at the tertiary level, where the assumption to open a Chinese

language and literature school rapidly becomes increasingly visible. Although the establishment of Confucius institutes and Confucius Classrooms throughout the last decade, this future school remains essential to systematically address the higher demands of local students' learning needs, by equipping them with systematic linguistic, pedagogical and cultural knowledge. To achieve this, this school would initially offer multiple academic programmes—teaching Chinese as a foreign language from undergraduate to graduate levels, using Chinese as an instructional language—which may emerge as *hard CLIL*. This may contribute to alleviating the pressure related to the diverse issues facing teaching Chinese in Congo-Brazzaville. Meanwhile, it may help to strengthen educational and cultural exchanges between the Chinese and Congolese populations.

Table 1  
*Congolese Tertiary Educational System Structure*

Academic ages	Study years	Education level	Schools	Level of degrees
26	8th			
25	7th	Postgraduate studies		PhD (Three years)
24	6th			
23	5th	Graduate studies	All institutions	Master's (Two years)
22	4th			
21	3rd			
20	2nd	Undergraduate studies		Bachelor's (Three years)
19	1st			

*Note:* Source Congolese Ministry of Tertiary Education. In Wang and Che 2021. (The table has been adapted to the current study)

Taken together, this study analyses the “three teaching” issues—teachers, teaching materials and teaching methods when Congo-Brazzaville establishes the UMNG’s CLLS using Chinese as a hard CLIL medium. To this end, the following research question is addressed: Why might the “three teaching” issues arise when Congo-Brazzaville establishes a Chinese language and literature school using Chinese as a hard CLIL medium?

### **The potential “three teaching” issues in the UMNG’s CLLS in Congo-Brazzaville**

#### **Teachers’ issues: Shortages and inadequate knowledge**

The number of well-trained teachers remains an indispensable factor for effective education. Their unavailability may reveal disastrous consequences in achieving pedagogical tasks effectively. According to the Congolese national institute for statistics (INS, 2020), UMNG holds 1,361 teachers, distributed into eleven faculties, schools and institutes (Table 2). Alongside this number, an additional 1,000 teachers are working as temporary teachers. In other words, the former numbers are officially recruited, having a permanent position, while the latter are not officially recruited and do not have a consistent position.

Table 2  
*Number of UMNG Teachers*

	Permanent teachers	Temporary teachers	Total
Numbers	1361	1000	2361
Percentage	57,64%	42,36%	100%

*Source:* Institut national des statistiques—statistiques de l’education nationale, p. 98

These statistical data capture the structure of UMNG's teaching personnel. Although the number of permanent personnel appears higher, the inclusion of temporary personnel helps explain why the number of permanent teachers seems insufficient. This tends to indicate that UMNG is not exempt from well-trained-teacher shortages.

Regarding teaching Chinese as a foreign language, the existing data seem to reveal that UMNG has not yet employed higher tertiary teachers working as Chinese language teachers. However, six young Congolese students enrolled in this programme are currently studying in Chinese universities. Alongside them, 16 young Congolese are pursuing their master's studies in a similar programme in China (Table 3), and three in-service teachers have already obtained master's degrees (Wang, 2023 & AECC, 2025).

Table 3

*Future “School of Chinese Language and Literature”: Teachers’ Availability Picture*

Pre-server teachers	PhD	Pre-server teachers	Master’s	In-service teachers	Master’s	Total
6		16		3		25

Data source: Wang (2023) and AECC (2025).

Taken together, the future UMNG's CLLS would have approximately 20-30 teaching personnel at the beginning. The effectiveness of this number would be determined by not only the sample size of available students, but also by the UMNG's academic curriculum policies from undergraduate to graduate programmes. If only doctors were considered as teachers, it would likely be a significant teacher shortage at the beginning. Teachers might face a higher workload, which would have a significant impact on their academic performance, including their research careers. While the inclusion of holding master's degrees as teachers might be necessary, this would raise another issue—insufficient systematic knowledge. Although they held academic degrees, they would lack in one way or another the theoretical and systematic basis of research awareness. This may drive pre-service “*doctor teachers*” to provide continual academic assistance.

This prospective analysis does not fully guarantee that the situation of the Chinese teaching would perfectly occur. Since these pre-service teachers have not fully revealed their intentions to go back home and act as teachers. This is another unmanageable factor that could exacerbate the teacher shortage in the future UMNG's CLLS.

Taken together, UMNG is facing its own teacher shortages, and the establishment of this future school likely would encounter a similar problem, notably at its beginning. This would be possible if only these pre-service teachers did not reveal their turnover intentions.

**Teaching materials and methods issues: Well-trained pre-service teachers as key actors**  
 In 2015, the United Nations officially adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, through which education has been identified as one of the crucial domains of the fourth goal, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UN, 2015, p. 3).” Subsequently, several nations are engaged to provide their citizens with a high-quality education by adopting some measures to ensure equitable access to coursebooks, integrating some innovative pedagogical techniques.

In the Congolese context, UMNG appears to lack sufficiently available teaching materials tailored to the needs of local students (Douniama, 2024; Ndongo-Ibara, 2016; Oko, 2014). Teaching Chinese is not exempt from this issue. While local Confucius institutions and INRAP

often provide the current teaching materials, these materials lack the practicality in the sense that they do not appropriately respond to local socio-educational contexts (Zhang, 2019; Mabiala, 2020). The existing data reported that these current materials, such as textbooks, “*Contemporary Chinese*”, “*Easy Step to Chinese*” and “*Learning Chinese with me*”, were directly imported from China. As a Consequence, they lack the characteristics of specificity and usability used in the Congolese context (Wang, 2023; Mabiala, 2025a, 2025b). Alongside materials, the existing literature highlights that the teaching methods of UMNG in particular, and the educational system in general, remain greatly traditional, with a focus on teacher-centred classroom techniques (Wang, 2023; Ndongo-Ibara, 2016; Mabiala, 2025a). That is, students seem to be passive receivers of knowledge and excellent memorisers of grammatical knowledge. Such methods often drive students to lack opportunities for imaginative and creative reflection, comprehensive understanding and application skills, and academic underperformance (PASEC, 2021; United Nations, 2022).

The most fundamental issues within UMNG’s CLLS regarding teaching materials and methods may stem from the academic training of pre-service teachers. Excellent teaching materials are crafted by competent teachers or educators, who are also able to implement effective pedagogical methods (Cui, 2010). In other words, UMNG’s CLLS would be guided by qualified teachers—the current pre-service doctor teachers who are currently gained systematic knowledge and could craft some teaching materials aligning with Congolese socio-educational contexts. The existing literature indicated that the Congolese Ministry of Education has already expressed a stronger wish to compile its own Chinese language materials—textbooks that could also cover the secondary schools (Wang, 2023). Unlike this, these future teachers might go beyond this framework of compiling materials and implementing innovative methods. As well-trained teachers, they might develop a critical mindset to do research for seeking solutions to many problems affecting the local teaching of Chinese. While these elements seem to demonstrate how UMNG’s CLLS teachers could optimise the teaching of Chinese by developing materials and implementing methods, this may not necessarily occur smoothly. UMNG’s CLLS would encounter some difficulties at its beginning due to unknown external factors.

Taken together, the Congolese educational system faces challenges regarding the teaching resources, while UMNG’s CLLS would not necessarily encounter similar issues, due to its chance to have well-trained pre-service teachers, capable of positively influencing the teaching of Chinese.

## Discussions

The existing literature has revealed that CLIL is an essential educational approach for acquiring academic knowledge and linguistic skills. Most research indicated that the implementation of such an approach often raises challenges, notably for teachers, teaching materials, and teaching methods, mainly in non-African countries (Banegas, 2020; Mehisto, 2007; Klimova, 2012; Verspoor et al., 2015; Barrera, 2018), while fewer research findings were identified in the African context—Congo-Brazzaville, especially using Chinese as instructional language at the tertiary education in a specific context. Through a documentary research method, focused on secondary data analysis, this study seeks to fill these gaps by analysing the “three teaching” issues—teachers, materials and methods when Congo-Brazzaville establishes UMNG’s CLLS using Chinese as a hard CLIL medium. This study is significant for deepening the understanding of CLIL beyond its traditional geographical contexts, and for promoting the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language.

The findings revealed that the establishment of UMNG's CLLS using Chinese as a hard CLIL medium might raise certain challenges, especially for teachers due—shortages. As UMNG is not exempt from the teacher shortage, UMNG's CLLS would likely face a similar shortage, due to the current number of pre-service doctor teachers studying in China. This limited number could be alleviated by integrating the current pre-service and in-service master's teachers. While these future teachers match adequately with CLIL requirements, such as CLIL language and academic knowledge, this would not be enough. Teachers holding master's degrees would not be exempt from lacking systematic, theoretical and academic knowledge, especially in academic research fields. In other words, these teachers "should not only excel at teaching but also be adept at research" to fill the gaps existing in teaching Chinese locally; in this way, they can become experts (Cui, 2010, p. 76). Furthermore, these teachers holding master's degrees might only deliver courses at the lower undergraduate levels, not undertake the higher level and graduate programmes. This would mean that pre-service doctor teachers might have a workload in terms of pedagogical and academic research tasks. Although they will be well-equipped with subject and language knowledge, such a workload may affect their academic performance. Since a hard CLIL tends to promote specialist teachers equipped with disciplinary knowledge and language skills (Eurydice, 2006), UMNG's CLLS teacher shortage would be visible because of a limited number of qualified teachers. This may require teachers holding master's degrees to pursue ongoing training, if necessary.

Unlike teacher shortages, the findings found that the compilation of teaching materials and implementation of effective pedagogical methods would not necessarily be perceived as significant issues in the context of UMNG's CLLS. As an educational approach, CLIL requires materials mirroring not only a given educational context but also enhancing students' disciplinary competence and linguistic proficiency (Coyle et al., 2010; Klimova, 2012). The teachers are situated at the centre of this process—they are actors of compiling suitable materials, also eligible implementers of relevant teaching methods (Cui, 2010). The future UMNG's CLLS teachers are all experts who have acquired disciplinary knowledge and language skills; they would craft their own materials, aligning with local community contexts. Meanwhile, they would also prefer innovative teaching methods to the conventional ones—excessive memorising of grammatical rules, overemphasis on teacher-centred classroom models. Since the current materials, such as "*Contemporary Chinese*", "*Easy Step to Chinese*", and "*Learn Chinese with me*", do not accommodate local socio-educational contexts, they are also not designed for CLIL practice due to the absence of disciplinary knowledge. Similar experiences have already been observed across the African continent. As one of the leading promoters of the Chinese language, Cameroon has developed its own teaching materials, such as "*Bonjour Cameroun*", to match local community contexts. Meanwhile, local universities, such as Maroua, Ebolowa, Buea, Garoua have developed some responsive academic curricula and implemented some effective pedagogical techniques that allow Cameroonian students to acquire disciplinary knowledge and language proficiency (Gonondo, 2021; He, 2025; Wang, 2025). From these perspectives, these future teachers of UMNG's CLLS would fill the teaching resources gaps, while their access might raise potential challenges, mainly if a public assistance policy is absent.

### Conclusion and Implications

By establishing UMNG's CLLS using Chinese as a hard CLIL medium, the study has found some potential issues related to the "three teaching". Most pertinently, UMNG's CLLS would face teacher shortages, alongside inadequate disciplinary knowledge, including less engagement in research careers. From material and method views, UMNG's CLLS would not necessarily face suitable material and practical teaching method issues. However, other

problems, such as the availability and accessibility of materials, may occur, particularly when public support is lacking.

This study has some implications for enhancing the localisation of the Chinese language—at the tertiary level in Congo-Brazzaville, as well as in other countries. By integrating Chinese into the tertiary education stage through CLIL as an educational approach, some inclusive measures and sustained assistance will be required from diverse public and educational stakeholders to provide a systematic solution addressing these potential issues. Initiating measures to enhance teacher capacity to ensure a sustainable establishment of UMNG's CLLS by investing in teacher education. The potential well-trained teacher shortages reveal a significant need for the less-trained teachers to enhance their theoretical and academic knowledge early, particularly academic research training. In addition, the local institutions should put in place an effective retention policy—to guarantee a significant recruitment of these well-trained teachers. This expected shortage explains how teachers—pre-service doctor-teachers would be fully involved in pedagogical and academic tasks. In such contexts, it would be relevant to be well-paid to ensure any avoidance of turnover intentions. Furthermore, local authorities should provide multifaceted assistance in the availability and implementation of teaching resources. While the future teachers of UMNG's CLLS are well-trained and capable of implementing teaching materials, the local authorities should guarantee access to these resources. Otherwise, this could seem simply as an enticement. To avoid such enticement, Congo-Brazzaville could draw on inspiration from the experience of its sub-region neighbour—Cameroon, where the Chinese language and literature programmes are seeking to be well-established throughout several local universities. By expiring from the Cameroonian paradigm, Congo-Brazzaville could seek to develop its own materials compilation strategies, which take into account the sociocultural, socio-educational contexts.

This study has some limitations. It focused solely on the analysis of secondary data, which raises certain biases compared to the analysis of primary data. Alongside this, the study addressed only the “three teaching” issues in a specific context, while other challenges would likely affect the Chinese language education in such a context. In addition, similar research findings—using the CLIL approach in the context of promoting the Chinese language education were almost absent. This has led to a lack of diverse similar documents, specifically in the African context—Congo-Brazzaville. While all these weaknesses should be considered when interpreting these study findings, the author recommends a deeper analysis based on primary data in a further research topic.

## Notes

1. P1-P3 refers to preschool grade level, and CP1-CM2 refers to primary grade level.
2. Census of Congolese students in China launched by the Congolese Embassy in China, under the leadership of the Association of Congolese Students in China (AECC), 2025.

## References

Ahmed, J. U. (2010). Documentary research method: New dimensions. *Indus Journal of Management & Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1–14.

Bailey, K. D. (1994). *Methods of social research*. The Free Press.

Ball, P. (2018). Innovations and challenges in CLIL materials design. *Theory into Practice*, 57(3), 222–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2018.1484036>

Ball, P., Kelly, K., & Clegg, J. (2015). *Putting CLIL into practice*. Oxford University Press.

Banegas, D. L. (2012). CLIL teacher development: Challenges and experiences. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, 5(1), 46–56. <https://doi.org/10.294/laclil.2012.5.1.4>

Banegas, D. L., & Beamud, M. (2020). Content and Language Integrated Learning: A duo-ethnographic study about CLIL pre-service teacher education in Argentina and Spain. *RELC Journal*, 53(1), 151–164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220930442>

Banegas, D. L., & Tavella, G. (2021). Language-driven CLIL in primary education: An analysis of general English coursebooks in Argentina. In C. Hemmi & D. L. Banegas (Eds.), *International perspectives on CLIL*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Bankuwika, E., Mfitiye, F., & Bigirimana, C. (2022). Enseigner le chinois en Afrique: Engagement et innovation. *Revue de l'Université du Burundi (Série Sciences humaines et sociales)*, 21(4), 97–106.

Barrera, A. F. (2018). An interview with Thomas Morton on CLIL methodology in Spain. *Bel laterra Journal of Teaching and Learning Language and Literature*. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.763>

Bentley, K. (2010). *The TKT teaching knowledge test course: CLIL module*. Cambridge University Press.

Boukete, G (高翔), & Shen Lin (沈林). (2025). 刚果（布）中文教育的发展现状与展望 [The development status and prospects of Chinese education in Congo (Brazzaville)]. *International Chinese Language Education Communications*, 1(1), 39-51. <https://doi.org/10.46451/iclec.20250103>

Cha, Ersi (查尔斯). (2016). 尼日利亚孔子学院汉语教学情况调查与分析 [Survey and analysis of Chinese language teaching at Confucius Institutes in Nigeria] 哈尔滨师范大学硕士论文 [Master thesis, Harbin Normal University].

Codó, E. (2022). *Global CLIL: Critical, ethnographic and language policy perspectives*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003147374>

Coyle, D. (2011). Teacher education and CLIL methods and tools. Unpublished seminar presented in Milan, Italy.

Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *CLIL: Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge University Press.

Cui, Xiliang (崔希亮). (2010). 汉语国际教育“三教”问题的核心与基础 [On the “three concerns” of teaching Chinese as a second language]. 世界汉语教学 [Chinese Teaching in the World].

Doiz, A., Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. (Eds.). (2013). *English-medium instruction at universities: Global challenges*. Multilingual Matters.

Douniam, P. (2024). Education de base: Les manuels scolaires gratuits au profit des écoles publiques. *Agence d'Information d'Afrique Centrale* [EB/OL]. (2024-09-2) [2025-08-05]. <https://www.adiac-congo.com/print/content/education-de-base-des-manuels-scolaires-gratuits-au-profit-des-ecoles-publiques-154972>

European Commission. (1995). *White paper on education and training: Teaching and learning—Towards the learning society*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

European Commission. (2004). *Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity: An action plan 2004–2006*. Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

European Commission. (2008). *Multilingualism: An asset for Europe and a shared commitment*. European Parliament.

Eurydice. (2006). *Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) at school in Europe*. Eurydice.

Fassé, I. M., & Takam, A. T. (2024). The CLIL experience in Cameroon. In D. L. Banegas & S. Zappa-Hollman (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of content and language integrated learning* (pp. 661–675). Routledge.

Giampapa, F., & Barrera, A. (2022). Being and becoming a CLIL teacher: Discourses of identities, language, and emotional labour in Castilla-La Mancha bilingual schools. In E. Codó (Ed.), *Global CLIL: Critical, ethnographic and language policy perspectives* (pp.198-223). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003147374>

Gozdawa-Gołębiowski, R., Małgorzata, F., & Magdalena, W. (2024). Investigating Polish EHE teachers' practices and beliefs: A survey-based analysis. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*.

He, Jingyan (何景燕). (2025). 喀麦隆中文教育发展特征、动因与提升策略 [Characteristics, motivating factors, and enhancement strategies for the development of Chinese language education in Cameroon]. *语言与文化研究 [Language and Cultural Studies]*.

Institut National de la Statistique. (2020). *Statistiques de l'éducation, de la formation qualifiante et de la recherche: Annuaire statistique du Congo 2018*. INS-Congo Brazzaville.

Institut National de la Statistique. (2023). *Cinquième recensement général de la population et de l'habitation (RGPH-5)*.

Klimova, F. B. (2012). CLIL and the teaching of foreign languages. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47, 572–576. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.698>

Liang, Shier. (2023). 苏丹喀土穆大学孔子学院“三教”问题调查与研究 [Survey and research on the ‘three teachings’ issue at the Confucius Institute of the University of Khartoum, Sudan]. 哈尔滨师范大学硕士论文 [Master thesis, Harbin Normal University].

Liu, Duanxin (刘瑞欣). (2022). 南非孔子学院汉语教学“三教”情况调查与分析 [Survey and analysis of the ‘three teaching approaches’ in Chinese language instruction at Confucius Institutes in South Africa]. 哈尔滨师范大学硕士论文 [Master thesis, Harbin Normal University].

Mabiala, R. N. (2020). 刚果（布）马利安·恩古瓦比大学孔子学院汉语教材使用情况调查 [Investigation on the use of the “Easy Steps to Chinese” textbook at the Confucius Institute of Marien Ngouabi University]. In Wang Yuwen & Han Chao (Eds.), *中非教育研究 [Research on Sino-African Education]* (pp. 38–55). Beijing Institute of Technology Press.

Mabiala, R. N. (2025a). A study on the acquisition of Chinese potential complements by African French-speaking learners: A case study of Congo-Brazzaville. *Sinolinguistica: Journal of Chinese Studies*, 3(1), 87–101.

Mabiala, R. N. (2025b). Status, initiatives, and challenges of Chinese language education in the foreign language education policy of the Republic of the Congo. *African Language and Culture Studies*.

Marsh, D. (2002). *CLIL in Europe: Dimensions*. University of Jyväskylä.

Mathole, Y. (2016). Using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) to address multilingualism in South African schools. *European Journal of Language Policy*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.3828/ejlp.2016.5>

Mehisto, P. (2008). CLIL counterweights: Recognising and decreasing disjunction in CLIL. *International CLIL Research Journal*, 1, 93–119.

Mehisto, P., & Asser, H. (2007). Stakeholder perspectives: CLIL programme management in Estonia. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(5), 683–701. <https://doi.org/10.2167/beb466.0>

Ndongo-Ibara, Y. P. (2016). An empirical review of English language teaching in Congo. *Studies in English Language Teaching*, 4(4), 400. <https://doi.org/10.22158/selt.v4n4p400>

Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly*.

Oko, L. (2014). Enseignement secondaire: 366 571 manuels scolaires mis à la disposition des directions d'épartementales. *Agence d'Information d'Afrique Centrale* [EB/OL]. (2014-09-

2) [2025-08-07]. <https://www.adiac-congo.com/print/content/enseignement-secondaire-366571-manuels-scolaires-mis-la-disposition-des-directions>

PASEC. (2021). *Qualité du système éducatif congolais: Performances et environnement de l'enseignement-apprentissage au primaire*. CONFEMEN.

Pérez, C. M. (2018). Innovations and challenges in CLIL teacher training. *Theory Into Practice*, 57(3), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2018.1492238>

Pérez, C. M. (2020). Addressing the research gap in teacher training for EMI: An evidence-based teacher education proposal in monolingual contexts. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2020.100927>

Perez-Vidal, C., & Juan-Garau, M. (2010). To CLIL or not to CLIL: From bilingualism to multilingualism in Catalan/Spanish communities. In D. Lasagabaster & Y. Ruiz (Eds.), *CLIL in Spain: Implementation, results and teacher training*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Song, Hui (宋晖), & Tan, Zige (谭紫格). (2018). 对外汉语在线教学的“三教”问题 [The ‘three teaching’ issues in online teaching of Chinese as a foreign language]. *国际汉语教育* [International Chinese Language Education].

Sun, Y., & Yang, J. (2024). Global CLIL: Critical, ethnographic and language policy perspective, edited by Eva Codó. *Language and Education*, 38(1), 152–154. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2023.2260363>

Ting, Y. (2010). CLIL appeals to how the brain likes its information: Examples from CLIL-(Neuro)science. *International CLIL Research Journal*.

Treece, E., & Treece, J. (1982). *Elements of research in nursing*. The C. V. Mosby Company.

UNESCO. (1963). *International yearbook of education 1962*.

UNESCO. (2010). *World data on education*.

United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations.

United Nations. (2022). *Rapport général des consultations nationales sur la transformation de l'éducation au Congo*. United Nations.

Verspoor, K., & Xu, X. (2015). The effects of English bilingual education in the Netherlands. *Journal of Immersion and Content-Based Language Education*, 3(1), 4–27. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jicb.3.1.01ver>

Wang, Hui. (2025). Research on the current situation, challenges, and countermeasures of cultural teaching in Chinese major in Cameroonian colleges and universities. *Innovation Humanities and Social Sciences Research*.

Wang, Jihui (王吉会), & Che, Di (车迪). (2021). 刚果（布）文化教育研究 [Research on culture and education in the Republic of the Congo]. 外语教学与研究出版社 [Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press].

Wang, Xujian (王旭贝). (2016). 非洲六国孔子学院汉语教材使用调查报告及编写建议 [Survey report on the use of Chinese language textbooks in Confucius Institutes across six African countries and recommendations] (Master's thesis). Bohai University.

Wang, Y. (2023). Opportunities and challenges for the new development of Chinese language education in Congo-Brazzaville. *African Language and Culture Studies*, 23(6), 101–116.

Xu, W. (2024). Linguistic entrepreneurship in Sino-African student mobility. Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-2175-7\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-2175-7_5)

Zhang, B. (2019). Investigation and research on the teaching of Chinese in high schools in Congo: A case study of Brazzaville, the capital (Master's thesis). Nanjing Normal University.

***Mabiala Roland Naguydem***, a doctoral candidate at the School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Foreign Studies University, previously served as the Administrative Manager of the Pointe-Noire branch of the Confucius Institute in the Republic of the Congo and has taught Chinese for many years. His main research areas: localisation of Chinese language education in Africa, language policy.