APPLICATION OF CLIL IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

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Abstract: In *this article information is given about CLIL. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a methodology where students get familiar with a subject and a second language simultaneously. A science course, for instance, can be educated to students in English and they won't just find out about science, yet they will likewise acquire pertinent vocabulary and language abilities.*

Key words: *CLIL, L2, CLIL subject, disciplinary literacy, authentic communication, primary education, secondary education, tertiary education*

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) programs in primary, secondary, and tertiary education have been the predominant form of content-based language instruction in Europe for a long time. Certainly, one of the main arguments in favour of this transversal implementation of CLIL has been its potential to enhance the learning of foreign languages, mainly English, through the instruction of non-linguistic subjects in a language different from the language of schooling (Eurydice 55). CLIL is believed to overcome many of the weaknesses of the standard foreign language class, where the language is an object of study seldom used meaningfully and, hence, not learnt successfully (Muñoz 23).

CLIL is assumed to encourage learners to engage in authentic communication in the context of non-linguistic curricular topics and tasks (Dalton-Puffer, "Discourse in Content"; Pérez-Vidal, "The Integration of Content") and to provide the necessary scaffolding for developing the language needed to internalise and verbalise new knowledge (Coyle 97) . Nonetheless, when we cross the threshold of the CLIL class, teaching practices are much more content oriented than one would expect from a dual-focused educational approach which should devote balanced attention to content and language. In an observational study of CLIL programmes in primary and secondary education in Catalonia (Spain), Pérez-Vidal found that the CLIL teachers were particularly concerned with

content comprehensibility and encouraging student output, but paid very little attention to the linguistic dimension of content learning .(Perez Vidal 7) This seems to indicate that CLIL teachers' understanding of the language learning mission of CLIL is, at least in the Catalan context, that this learning occurs incidentally, through exposure to input in the target language and through numerous language production opportunities. Two major ideas can be invoked to question this understanding of language learning in CLIL. Firstly, second language acquisition studies have shown that incidental second language (L2) learning needs massive amounts of exposure for learners to experience observable gains in the L2 competence . In most European contexts, CLIL classes cannot offer the amount and intensity of exposure needed for substantial incidental L2 learning to occur.

Secondly, recent models mapping the development of the L2 competence in content-based language instruction showcase the connection between progress in terms of content learning and progress in terms of subject-specific language use, the latter being fundamental for understanding   and integrating new concepts and meanings. Deep content learning cannot occur without attention to the linguistic form because language articulates the development of knowledge in the different CLIL disciplines. From a practitioner's standpoint, what seems to be a major hurdle in the deployment of "an effective teaching performance for language acquisition in CLIL" is the lack of practical strategies on how to carry out this language work within content-focused tasks and activities. According to Gajo, the content/language integration requires "precise reflection on the linguistic aspect of subject knowledge and on the role of discourse in the learning process" .

In other words, CLIL teachers need to develop a language lens through which to scrutinise teaching materials and design classroom tasks and activities

(Lindahl 782) In this paper, we aim to provide CLIL practitioners with a series of strategies to create language learning opportunities in the CLIL class by enhancing learners' awareness of language use in relation to content. To achieve this, we bring together the insight provided by numerous studies in instructed foreign language learning and our experience as CLIL practitioners and teacher trainers.

Our proposal will be contextualised in primary school Arts and Crafts CLIL, a typical venue for CLIL implementation in Catalan primary schools. Arts and Crafts is supportive of low L2 proficiency levels in that input is not just verbal but also visual and manipulative, which increases   its

comprehensibility, and output is often non-linguistic (e.g., crafts, experiments, performances). It is also a subject which is not literacy-dependent. Underdeveloped literacy skills have been identified as a challenge for the implementation of CLIL in early age education but, due to its limited reliance on reading and writing, Arts and Crafts CLIL can be taught even with very young learners, whose literacy skills are only just emerging. Nevertheless, the activities and tasks that illustrate the different strategies proposed in this paper were designed for literate primary school learners, aged between 10 and 12 years old.

Second language learning research has provided robust empirical evidence that focusing exclusively on understanding meaning is not enough for learners to reach proficiency in the target language and to develop productive skills, and some attention or noticing of linguistic form is necessary for language learning to occur . (Spada231) How do we get CLIL learners to notice the language of content-focused activities and tasks? It is important to bear in mind that the strategies used to raise students' language awareness in the CLIL class need to be different from the ones employed in the standard foreign language class. In the foreign language class, students are aware that the language is an object of study, no matter how communicative or meaning-focused the instructional approach is, and they are sensitive to noticing language forms and often expect metalinguistic explanations and an itemised treatment of the language, from simple to more complex structures. In CLIL, the language is instrumental to understanding and communicating about the content and, as such, it cannot be approached in an itemised way, in terms of grammatical categories or lexical items, or dealt with in isolation from the content without losing the spirit of CLIL.

One should not forget that the CLIL class is timetabled as a content class (i.e., Science, Physical Education, Arts and Crafts, etc.) and, as such, CLIL students are in a meaning-processing disposition, expecting to focus on discipline-specific concepts and topics. In this context, raising their language awareness means creating opportunities for noticing the linguistic "mesh" of the content while doing content-related activities and tasks. If we adopt a terminological distinction from applied linguistics, the foreign language class and the CLIL class differ in that the former often promotes a focus on forms, whereas the latter fosters a focus on form, namely it tries to divert learners' attention from meaning processing to the linguistic form in activities or tasks where the meaning is the primary focus (see Ellis for a

thorough discussion of the distinction between focus on form and focus on forms . (Elis 32) The strategies that we propose in this paper are strategies for doing focus on form in (Arts and Crafts) CLIL settings.

Additionally, we have to establish what form one needs to notice in the context of a CLIL subject. Following the recent reflection on the role of language in CLIL carried out by the Graz Group , we believe that form (i.e., language) in CLIL should be understood as disciplinary literacy, namely the linguistic tools that inform knowledge construction and verbalisation in a given discipline, such as text genres and cognitive discourse functions. Developing this literacy is intrinsic to deep content learning as it allows the students to think clearly about the subject matter and communicate about it effectively and in accordance with the conventions of the field.

The Language Triptych of language of/for/through learning, which draws on a conceptualization of language as a collection of forms and functions and, as such, necessitates a type of expertise typically associated with language specialists, does not, in my opinion, align with the language expertise of content teachers as well as CLIL does. Chipping away at disciplinary proficiency is, for our purposes, how content language combination can be basically accomplished in the CLIL class. A starting point for dealing with disciplinary literacy in CLIL is discourse genres. The types of texts or discourse that students must comprehend and produce in order to learn the material are referred to as the genre. Specific lexis and language structures are used to encode a set of cognitive discourse functions that are associated with each genre. We find Rose and Martin's taxonomy of the major genres in an educational setting particularly useful for determining the discourse genres that underpin various CLIL subjects.

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