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CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING BY INTERACTION
Preface

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Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an established approach to support multilingualism by teaching various school subjects in an additional European language. The methodology, the procedures and the educational strategies used, however, vary considerably (Dalton-Puffer, 2011: 9), and so do the results (Ruiz de Zarobe et al., 2011). Our book considers this diversity by looking at CLIL scenarios, defined as learning environments supporting content learning, language learning and learning skill development, probably in a task-based learning setting, with a strong focus on interaction (Coyle, 2011: 68) in different curricular contexts and at various levels of proficiency. CLIL by Interaction is understood both as negotiation of meaning and form and as discourse with a CLIL learner to empower him or her to participate in social discourse (Bonnet, 2013: 189).

The curricular contexts are related to the editors’ academic network which is based at the Leibniz Universität Hannover (Germany) and related to schools in this region, where the editors collaborate with Alexander Woltin, a teacher of English and biology, who provides both a linguistic and a content-oriented perspective on CLIL. Peer-to-peer scaffolding is studied in a poster project carried out in a primary school science class by Carmen Becker using interaction analysis. A more linguistic perspective is shown in the research on interaction analysis in teacher education, carried out by Rita Kupetz together with Maxi Kupetz from Potsdam University. The collaboration with Ivana Marenzi from the research centre L3S in Hannover led to a study on CLIL material design in teacher education using the search-and-share capabilities of new technologies. Jana Roos completes this volume by investigating communicative tasks in CLIL learning scenarios at secondary school.

The book employs linguistic approaches such as interaction analysis and educational assumptions such as a constructivist approach to learning, design-based research or a case-based approach to learning, where CLIL scenarios are recorded and studied. The goal in all of these investigations is to recognize linguistic and pedagogic patterns, such as scaffolding, code-switching and repair, and their relevance for specific activities in CLIL interaction.
One major focus is on how classroom interaction analysis can make a difference in teacher education and ongoing professional development (Escobar Urmeneta, 2013). CLIL teacher education has changed in Germany from sporadic (Blell, Kupetz, 2005) to a more systematic approach covering all three phases of teacher education from university to on-the-job training (Gnutzmann, Rabe, 2013). The approach used at Leibniz Universität Hannover is characterized by its curricular contextualization in foreign language teacher education and a more and more intensified collaboration with teacher students’ second subject methodology, such as teaching history (in English) or teaching geography (in English).

Interaction is also described in the context of designing CLIL material, focusing in particular on communication and collaboration, and how the search-and-share capabilities of new technologies greatly facilitate the development of students’ conceptual understanding and procedural competence.

In sum, the CLIL research presented in this volume sheds light on CLIL from a predominantly linguistic perspective – interaction analysis in collaboration with subject teachers and an educational perspective – covering the concepts of multiliteracies, task-based learning and IT-enhanced learning.

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References


1. CLIL and education policy

The first bilingual programmes in Germany arose from post-war cooperation efforts between Germany and France (the Élysée Contract). These programmes focused on a partnership by developing the target language as the language of the partner. Thus, the German bilingual programme has a past of strong linguistic and intercultural emphasis due to socio-historical reasons back in 1963. This focus has changed over the last 50 years because the plurilingual background of the learners, who are partially or fully bilingual, had to be considered as well (Lyster, 2007: 1, Bongartz, Rymarczyk, 2010: 7f., Breidbach, Viehbrock, 2012: 10f., Königs, 2013: 34f.). Consequently, more languages are now involved in bilingual teaching settings, due to a diverse learner and teacher clientele. The potential for multilingualism is central since language policies desire that students acquire two foreign languages in addition to their first language (L1) (Wolff, 2013: 18). The re-cognition of the importance of the L1 in all learning processes, which could be the home language for students with migration backgrounds, is a part of this new orientation, which is discussed in detail in the context of the Canadian language situation, where territorial bilingualism occurs (Wesche, 2002, Swain, Lapkin, 2005). Bilingual branches teaching content in a foreign language at school level have been offered in Germany since the 1960s, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been popular since the 1990s in Europe as an approach which integrates teaching content in the foreign, second or additional language learning, where the additional language is used as a medium for authentic usage (Marsh, 2002).

Vollmer (2006: 5f.) discusses CLIL’s potential in terms of internal and external processes of plurilingualism in the context of Europe:

Acquiring conceptual literacy and discourse competence for subject-specific use and thus acquiring new varieties of language use within one and the same language is not to be seen as a luxury, but rather as a preliminary and fundamental form of plurilingualism.

A second form of plurilingualism develops when a learner acquires other languages, extends his/her repertoire with new languages through foreign language education adding to the new varieties of the language of school education and home
language if different. Both types of plurilingualism (the first discourse-based or internal one as well as the second external one, based on adding new language repertoires) are indispensable for learners to become intra-culturally and inter-culturally sensitive, knowledgeable and skilled and thus to develop towards democratic citizenship and participation within Europe. A special case in point concerns the integration of content and second language learning within the framework of CLIL (or multilingual education) leading ideally to support for both types of plurilingualism.

A desired global aim and imperative in a world becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent through globalization (Wolff, 2000: 159) is the acquisition of multi-literal and intra- as well as inter-cultural competences. These competences unite important sensitive abilities, namely plurilingual and democratic participation as a part of global education, which focuses on the awareness and implications of dealing with global issues (O’Loughlin, Wegimont, 2002: 126). Lyster (2007: 1) points out similar changes around the world based on social and linguistic demographics, which lead to “a continued need to develop more effective second language programs to meet the changing needs of local communities.” In short, education ought to promote globally competent life-long learners. Since each and every subject teaches its subject specifically, and interdisciplinary methods including various literacies and content cannot be acquired without language and vice versa (Hallet, 2005: 5; Vollmer, 2013: 125), educators refer to this teaching approach as Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) (Vollmer, 2006: 5, Lyster, 2007: 56). Further, this approach clearly indicates every teacher’s responsibility for holistic language education, thus making purely bilingual education no longer appropriate. The term is even worth reconsidering. Content, languages and methods must be fused to meet the multicultural premises of the diverse learners (Hallet, 2013: 54) as well as to meet the goals of global education in terms of globally competent and multiliterate life-long learners.

Ruiz de Zarobe et al. (2011: 13) discuss the plurilingual perspective offered by CLIL and claim that it is “one of the most effective frameworks to foster plurilingualism in the European landscape, where it is firmly becoming a preferred educational approach.” However, CLIL practice in Europe is characterized by diversity, both in terms of language policy and the instructional approaches used at school (Königs, 2013: 48ff.).
2. A counterbalanced approach to CLIL in a global education framework

Researchers, mainly second language (L2) researchers, have investigated the learning processes involved in recent years leading to a theoretical turn in the CLIL community (Bonnet, Breidbach, 2004). Doff (2010: 12) argues that there was a bottom-up approach from teaching practice to empirical research in the 1990s. However, the current development is closer to a theoretical takeover.

Bilingual branches and immersion programmes are very popular with politicians, parents and students alike. The German-English competence study (DESI) (Nold et al., 2008), comparing the competences of 9th graders in German and English in Germany, shows that CLIL students are about two years ahead of language learners taught in conventional foreign language classes. The study clearly indicates higher competence within the fields of text reconstruction, listening and reading comprehension, grammar, writing and socio-pragmatic issues. The best results within these areas can be observed in the CLIL students’ listening and grammar competences. It can be assumed that this is the result of frequent L2 exposure and, thus, learning time within an authentic and communicative CLIL environment.

With regards to CLIL discourse, the dominating role of foreign language teachers and applied linguists has to be acknowledged. It is only recently that content experts have begun participating in this discussion (Ruiz de Zarobe et al., 2011). Breidbach and Viehbrock (2012) provide a good survey of CLIL and recent CLIL research in Germany. Surveys about competence development within the subjects are rare; case studies by Bonnet (2004), Koch and Bründer (2006) or Osterhage (2007) strongly indicate that subject specific competence development is also more sustainable. Despite the promising benefits of CLIL, not every school offers it due to a lack of resources. If schools offer CLIL classes, students are often selected according to their foreign language proficiency, because it is assumed that students with weak language competences are not able to adequately participate and, thus, might disturb CLIL lessons. This selection might lead to the formation of an elite (Breidbach, 2002: 23, Breidbach, 2013: 15). Furthermore, it is simplistic to juxtapose conventional language classes to content and language integrated scenarios, as language classes use content-orientation, too. It is preferable to speak of a continuum of scenarios from focus on form to focus on meaning. Most probably, the balance between the two will vary from model to model, from country to country; maybe, even from school to school and is, to a large extent, dependent on the didactic purpose.
If we acknowledge that the integration of content and additional language learning includes resources from both the target culture(s) and language(s) used across the curriculum, the potential for intercultural and transcultural learning, as demanded in terms of global competences, becomes obvious: due to more language exposure in the target language, more comprehensible language and content input is ultimately provided for the students. This leads to various communication oriented occasions for negotiating language and content meaning via student-student and / or student-teacher interaction. This language interaction in turn produces output that may lead to a desired intake of content and, if applicable, an awareness of cultural idiosyncrasies (Breidbach, Viebrock, 2006: 236). Discourse – in the sense of “language in use, for communication” (Cook, 1989: 6) – in CLIL classrooms is described by Dalton-Puffer (2007), where she claims that the CLIL classroom provides discourse space. The patterns occurring in this discourse space are clearly defined by the institutional school context with role-specific occurrences, such as questions asked by the teacher (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 123) and language functions, such as defining, explaining, hypothesizing and predicting, which are surprisingly rare (Dalton-Puffer, 2007: 131ff.). Discourse is a means within CLIL settings and a desired end; enabling the learner to share in democratic participation in globalized societies (New London Group, 1996), which is a clearly defined goal of multiliteracies pedagogy. This makes our perception of CLIL by interaction seen in the framework of multiliteracies pedagogy (see chapter 3) more comprehensive.

Figure 1 visualizes these assumptions and hints at their theoretical basis:

Figure 1: CLIL by interaction: discourse as a means and an end