TEACHER STRATEGIES TO ELICIT KNOWLEDGE FROM STUDENTS IN THE CLIL CLASSROOM

THE PURPOSE OF QUESTIONS IN CONTROLLED PATTERNS OF TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION

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UAB

Per a TU:

Gràcies per ser-hi sempre.

Table of contents

ABSTRACT

This Master Dissertation comprises two differentiated parts: a personal reflection and an empirical study. The personal reflection reviews the process of professionalization undergone by its author throughout the Master Degree, both in the theoretical courses at the university and the practical stages in the secondary school. This section shows the importance of the Practicum in the process of becoming a teacher, the process of designing and implementing a Teaching Unit, as well as the challenges and most valuable experiences which the teacher has encountered during this process. The empirical study tackles teacher strategies to elicit knowledge from students in the CLIL classroom and more specifically the purpose of questions in controlled patterns of teacher-student interaction. The study finds its starting point in a literature review on theories from several relevant authors such as Vigotsky, Mercer and Tsui. These theories are used as a framework to analyze the data presented from a qualitative and ethnographic approach taking into account the ideas and categories coined by the aforementioned authors.

The analysis shows that the teacher uses different strategies to elicit knowledge from students and that the questions she uses are appropriate for the controlled pattern of interaction analyzed. Moreover, it also foresees areas which could be improved by the teacher.

KEY WORDS: CLIL, controlled patterns of interaction, Practicum, questions, strategies to elicit knowledge from students.

RESUM

Aquest Treball de fi de Màster inclou dues parts diferenciades: una reflexió personal i un estudi empíric. La reflexió personal revisa el procés de professionalització al qual s'ha vist sotmesa l'autora durant el Màster, tant en les classes teòriques a la universitat com a les estades de pràctiques a l'institut. Aquesta secció mostra la importància del Practicum en el procés de professionalització del professor, el procés de disseny i implementació d'una unitat didàctica, així com els reptes i les experiències més valuoses a les quals s'ha enfrontat el professor durant aquest procés. L'estudi empíric aborda les estratègies del professor per obtenir coneixements dels estudiants a la classe AICLE i més específicament la finalitat de

les preguntes en models controlats d'interacció entre professor i alumnes. El punt de partida de l'estudi és un resum de literatura basat en teories d'autors rellevants com Vigotsky, Mercer i Tsui. Aquestes teories serveixen de marc per analitzar les dades presentades des d'una perspectiva qualitativa i etnogràfica tenint en compte les idees i categories encunyades pels autors mencionats anteriorment.

L'anàlisi mostra que la professora fa servir diferents estratègies per a obtenir coneixements dels estudiants i que les preguntes que fa servir són apropiades pel model controlat d'interacció analitzat. A més a més, també entreveu àrees que es podrien millorar.

PARAULES CLAU: AICLE, estratègies per a obtenir coneixements dels estudiants, models d'interacció controlats, Practicum, preguntes.

INTRODUCTION

This Master Dissertation is based on the work carried out and the data collected during my two Practicum stages in the secondary school Lluís de Requesens in Molins de Rei. It comprises two differentiated parts both in content and approach. The first part is more personal as it is a reflection on the process of professionalization that I have experienced during the course. The second part is more theoretical as it is an empirical study based on a research literature review and the analysis of the data coming from a CLIL classroom video recording (vignette) and its transcript.

The focus of observation follows the research line started in my first self-observation paper and developed in my second self-observation paper, both carried out within the Master course: teacher strategies to elicit knowledge from students in the CLIL classroom, giving special attention to the purpose of questions in controlled patterns of teacher-student interaction. It is important to mention that the second self-observation paper, on which the present empirical study is based, was written by Pallarès, Planas and Santiago (2010).

This Master Dissertation starts with the contextualization of the vignette used for the study, the global objective of the paper and the methodologies used in the two main sections of the Dissertation. It continues with the presentation of the first main section, i.e. the reflection on the process of professionalization undergone throughout the course, and the second one, i.e. the empirical study. The following

section includes the conclusions drawn from the previous two sections: the reflection and the empirical study. Finally, you will find several annexes relevant to this Master Dissertation such as the teaching materials used for the session which appears on the vignette, the video recording of the vignette, the transcript of the recording and a video with feedback from students.

1. CONTEXT

I did my Practicum stages in the secondary school Lluís de Requesens in Molins de Rei. The school has around 500 students and 50 teachers. The immigration rate is very low and in general, the atmosphere in the secondary school promotes cooperative working among students. Even though the infrastructure of the school is quite old, it can be considered innovative from a linguistic point of view, as it takes part in several CLIL and PELE projects.

The vignette presented in the empirical study shows one of the streams of 1st of ESO. It took place on in the middle of our Practicum II during the third session of the CLIL history unit on Ancient Egypt that we prepared for them. The topic discussed that day was Ancient Egypt's society. The vignette lasts 2'37" and it shows class work in a teacher-fronted activity. The whole class participated in the activity. The tutor, the mentor and 4 peer student-teachers were in the classroom. In the vignette, we can see first the student-teacher explaining some part of the content to the students, more precisely the fact that all the priests in Ancient Egypt had a number of rules they needed to obey. Then students were nominated to read the different rules out loud from the PowerPoint slide projected on a big classroom screen. However, as the sentences were rather complicated, the ones who understood their meaning could volunteer to explain it to the rest of the class. It is important to remark that this was the first CLIL experience these students had and, therefore, they were not used to having other subjects, in this case history, taught in English. Moreover, it is important to mention that this was the strongest class out of the three 1st of ESO streams. However, this group also assembled many students with behavioral problems. According to our mentor, they used different tactics to waste time during the lessons, one of which was to throw questions to the teacher. Sometimes these questions were related to what the teacher was explaining but on other occasions they had no connection with the topic. This fact becomes relevant in the vignette, as it will be explained in the analysis, because the mentor had previously warned the student-teacher to stop this pattern of interaction at once.

2. GLOBAL OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The ultimate objective of this paper is to describe the process of one's professional development as a teacher. Therefore, observation, analysis and reflection on one's own teaching become essential and compulsory elements.

To continue with the research lines stated and developed in my previous Master course papers, in the present writing I will focus on two different aspects. As concluded in one of my previous papers, teacher-questions take up an important percentage of the classroom interaction and they can be considered a good strategy to elicit students' knowledge. With regard to these assumptions in this Master Dissertation I put two specific research questions:

> • **Which strategies does the teacher use to elicit knowledge from students in the CLIL classroom?**
>
> • **What type of questions does the teacher ask? Are they good for the purposes of controlled patterns of teacher-student interaction?**

To begin with I will present a brief review of ideas that have already been written about the topic. After that, I will analyze the vignette's transcript on the basis of the related ideas and concepts and, finally, I will draw some conclusions about the focus of my observation.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this Dissertation follows a classroom-based approach, as the data come from its natural context, i.e. a secondary school classroom. The recordings have been selected following an ethnographic approach since I am not only a participant in the videos but also the object of study and analysis. It all makes sense if we take into account that the final goal of this Dissertation is my personal professional development as a teacher, and consequently the data collected will be used to reflect on my teaching practice and improve it.

This Dissertation comprises two main sections: the overall reflection on the Practicum and the empirical study. The first section is more holistic and thus will be presented in the 1st person as it aims at being an account of my own opinions and experience in the secondary school during 8 weeks. On the contrary, the second

section is more analytic and therefore it will be presented in the 3rd person to distance myself from the data as well as to be able to analyze them without the interference of my feelings.

The eight weeks spent in Lluís de Requesens have allowed me to collect different types of data: video recordings, a personal diary, students' productions, photos, etc. Out of all these I have chosen the most relevant data sources and examples which will help me illustrate my topic. Thus, the reflection on the Practicum will include recordings, students' productions and photos. Meanwhile, the empirical study will contain a short fragment of a recording, the transcription of the aforementioned fragment and the teacher's materials used in the analyzed session.

The analysis of the data is carried out mainly from a qualitative perspective and is presented as a narrative account. However, counting and categorization are employed as additional procedures. It is important to acknowledge that the categorization used is external and has been coined by relevant authors on the topic, such as Mercer (1995), Tsui (1995) and Johnson (1995).

4. REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

I see Practicum I and Practicum II as a ladder. It is composed of little steps which start at observing other teachers and being scared of even standing in the back of a classroom, and then move up through the design of short single activities to a whole teaching unit and eventually to being able to perform in front of 30 students and to implement materials which have been self-designed. This ladder can otherwise be called process of professionalization, and it is the path that I have slowly climbed up during eight weeks in the secondary school Lluis de Requesens and during a whole course at the UAB. Nevertheless, I am not standing at the top of the ladder right now; I am only half-way. From where I am standing I can discern all the little steps that I have taken until now as well as the steps that lie ahead of me.

It would have been impossible climbing this ladder alone. During this process I have received the aid and guidance of my tutor at university Natalia Evnitskaya; and my three mentors in the Practicum secondary

school Núria Pelaez, Montse Roquet and Laura Beltrán, who have been there from day one helping me climb these steps. During Practicum I these mentors allowed us to be in their classes and observe them teaching. All of them count with a long teaching experience in secondary schools and watching them proved to be a very useful learning experience. During Practicum II Núria was unfortunately on a sick leave for a few weeks, and consequently Montse and Laura were the ones who spent more time with us. Montse teaches in 4th of ESO and spent her time mainly with Marta Santiago and Rosa Planas, as they prepared the teaching unit for that course. Similarly, Laura teaches in 1st of ESO, so she spent more time with Maria Mata, Tomàs San Juan, and me, as we had prepared the teaching unit for that level.

This section deals with the process that we followed to design and implement the teaching unit, describes the most important moments in my developmental process as a teacher and considers areas for future development.

4.2. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TEACHING UNIT

We felt a bit lost throughout the preparation of the teaching unit due to the lack of models. Moreover, it was the first time that any of us designed such a complex task.

The workload we had from all the subjects and the amount of theoretical classes that we had to attend every week at university prevented us from having as much time as we would have liked to prepare the unit properly. In my opinion, this subject and assignment are crucial for our development process as teachers and, consequently, I would have liked having more time to prepare things thoroughly and not having to rush. Having said all that, I am quite happy about the objectives and the contents stated for the unit and the way we achieved them through the lesson plans, the dossiers, the rubrics and the unit we put together, that is to say: I am satisfied with the final outcome, but in my opinion, it would be even better if we had had more time.

Regarding group work, our intentions were very good at the beginning, but as previously mentioned, time restrictions and our workload did not allow us to prepare the unit the way we first intended to. Having the time to sit down in group and discuss everything we wanted to prepare for each session together would have been a great leaning opportunity, but instead of that, we had to distribute the work and comment on it once it was ready. All in all, what it teaches us is that we are asking

our students to work collaboratively and it is a very difficult thing to do which we should aim at learning ourselves first.

Regarding the planning of the teaching unit, our tutor at university had already warned us that there would be differences between what we had initially prepared and what we would end up implementing for different reasons:

- Opinion on the materials from our school mentors

- Level of students

- Time limitations

- Response/feedback from students

- Etc.

We were often told that we should go to the lessons with a very good plan, carefully thought and timed, and then be ready to throw it to the bin if necessary. It seemed to be exaggerated, but in no time I realized that our teachers at university were right. We needed to implement changes: some of them could be anticipated beforehand, and others needed to be introduced 'on-the-spot'.

The teaching unit in its state before the implementation in school was revised both by Laura, the history teacher, and by Fàtima Gardeñes, the English teacher of 1st of ESO. As I have previously mentioned, Laura is a highly experienced teacher, and her advice was very welcome. Even though Fàtima was not one of our official mentors, she also helped us a lot during Practicum II.

The students' dossier included a "useful information" section in each lesson (see an example in Figure 1), which was a summary of what was mentioned in the corresponding PowerPoint presentation. It was intended to provide visual support to those students who had more difficulties in English, so that when they were at home they could find time to read this information and also have vocabulary support in order to do their homework. Still, Laura pointed out that students would not read those sections unless asked to do specific exercises using that information and therefore recommended their suppression from the dossier. By doing this, all the content was presented to students during the lessons, and the students' dossier became an activity book. This change was useful to realize that we should only provide students with relevant materials, and that it is better to give them less information but which

is important and necessary for carrying out the unit's activities rather than a lot of general or additional information.

Mummies:

The best way to preserve a body was to mummify it. Poor people placed the bodies of their dead relatives out in the sun, in the desert sand. The bodies mummified naturally. Anyone had money went to a professional mummy maker. People wanted to look their best in their afterlife.
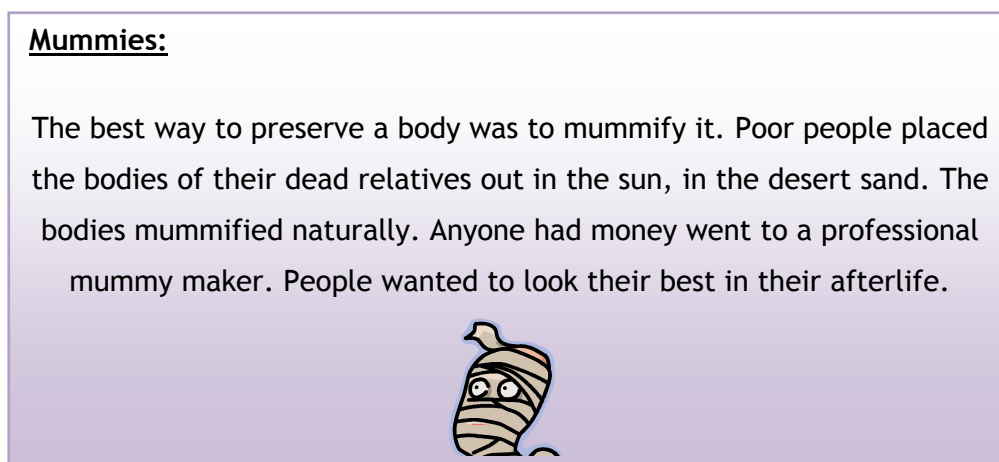
Figure 1: Example of part of a useful information section which was suppressed from the dossier.

Laura also suggested that the structure of our lessons should always be the same, or very similar, so that students knew what to expect. That is why we changed a bit our lesson plans, so that each of them would resemble a bit more what students were used to do in the history class.

In the beginning of every lesson we added 5 minutes for homework correction, and we checked who had not done the homework. Apparently, this is one of the aspects into which Laura puts a lot of attention, so we continued this line of action. Then, we also added 5 extra minutes to ask students the part of the glossary they were supposed to study every day. It did not cause a great change, as we had already planned it for most of our lessons, but Laura suggested it would be a good way to start each lesson. In my case, I tried to ask students it in a different way every day so that even if they knew that we would start with vocabulary they could not exactly predict what type of exercise was coming. Last but not least, we also needed to devote 5 minutes at the end of the lesson to write the homework on the blackboard and ask students to take out their agendas and write it down. All in all, it did not greatly affect the structure of the lessons we had designed, but it demanded 15 extra minutes which needed to be cut back from the activities that were initially planned. This modification made me realize how important it is to take into account the age of your students in order to define the most appropriate structure for your lessons.

These changes in planning can be illustrated by the following examples of a lesson plan before and after applying these modifications:

Tasks	Interaction	Timing
Previous knowledge	T -> S S <->S	5'
Video	V -> CLASS	5'
PowerPoint with content explanation	T <-> CLASS	15'
Group project explanation + distribution of necessary materials	T <-> CLASS	20'
Final assessment from previous knowledge questions	T< -> S	10'

Figure 2: Initial lesson plan

Tasks	Interaction	Timing
Homework correction	T <-> CLASS	5'
Warm-up glossary revision	T <-> CLASS	5'
Previous knowledge	T -> S S <->S	5'
Video	V -> CLASS	5'
PowerPoint with content explanation	T <-> CLASS	15'
Group project explanation + distribution of necessary materials	T <-> CLASS	10'
Final assessment from previous knowledge questions	T< -> S	5'
Explanation of homework for the next day	T< -> S	5'

Figure 3: Final lesson plan

The order of the sessions also needed to be altered due to changes in the dates of implementation. Initially, we were supposed to implement the first three sessions before Easter, and the three last sessions after Easter, as we wanted to give students time to prepare the pyramid project properly. Nevertheless, we implemented the unit the first two weeks after Easter, and therefore moved the order of the sessions around so that students could still have at least a week to prepare the pyramid project. The following charts illustrate the changes in order of the session:

1. Introduction and Geography
2. Daily life
3. Religion, gods and afterlife (explanation of the pyramid project)

EASTER HOLIDAY

4. Oral exposition pyramid project
5. Achievements
6. Final test – gymkhana

1. Introduction and Geography
2. Religion, gods and afterlife (explanation of the pyramid project)
3. Daily life
4. Achievements
5. Oral exposition pyramid project
6. Final test – gymkhana

9

Once more, what this change taught me is that even if it is crucial to be well prepared being flexible is a quality that every teacher needs.

It is also important to mention that the session on achievements was prepared individually: so there are three versions of the same session. Even though we decided that hieroglyphics was a compulsory topic and we used the same symbols in order to prepare the final tests coherently, each of us prepared the rest of the session differently. In my case I dedicated more time to do a jigsaw reading on different achievements and an exercise in which students needed to decipher a message written in hieroglyphics.

Fàtima was also a great ally. She is the English teacher of 1st of ESO, so she knows exactly the level of the students' skills in English. She revised the materials with us, and expressed her concern that some students would find the proposed exercises a bit difficult. Still she considered that others could follow the activities quite well, and, therefore, if we wanted to promote collaborative work skills it was compulsory to create well-balanced groups. She suggested an idea which helped me create the working groups: *"let them decide a person with whom they want to work, and from these pairs we will create balanced groups"*. Consequently, thanks to Fàtima's idea and help, the groups were created in this way and most of them worked really well during the implementation of the teaching unit. The following two examples illustrate how the groups were created and how the difference in levels which can be found in them was compensated:

GROUP 1:   Macarena, Cèlia[1], Gabriel, Souad[2].

GROUP 2:   Kevin, Àlex, Sergi, Oriol.

Moreover, I spent a lot of time with Fàtima during the week of *Credit de Síntesi*, and it was a great opportunity for me to get to know my future students. That week was precious to get ready for the teaching unit as I had the chance not only to learn their names, but also to see which students got on well or worked well with which students, which of them had more difficulties with specific tasks, which of them were really good at English, which needed extra help, etc. It was also a great opportunity for them to be around me and to get used to me being in the classroom.

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[1] Students with more developed skills in English are marked in green.
[2] Students with less developed skills in English are marked in purple.

I think that knowing your students is very important in order to facilitate their learning process.


Picture 1: shows students listening to an explanation in the trip they took to Molí Paperer de Capellades during Crèdit de Síntesi.

Picture 2: shows students producing paper in the previously described trip.

Nevertheless, other changes needed to be improvised on-the-spot. Hereunder I will illustrate some of them.

In session 1, for example, one of the questions we were asking the students was about the Aswan dam, and just before the lesson I realized that this name was not specifically mentioned in the PowerPoint presentation. Therefore, I quickly added it on one of the slides, and then made sure that the students wrote it down. This change can be seen in the slides below:
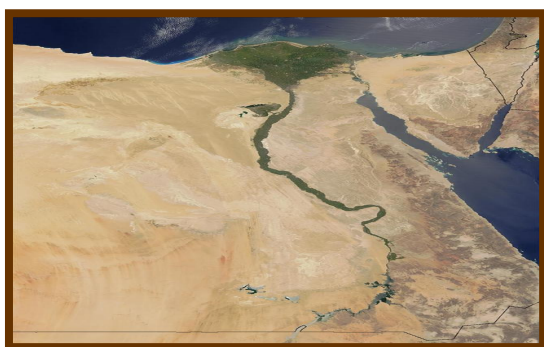
ASWAN DAM

Picture 3: initial slide   Picture 4: final slide

This change clearly shows the importance of a thorough revision of the materials before a lesson.

Name badges which went with a safety pin had been created for all the students. As I had some "difficult" students in my class and I already knew all the students' names I decided not to give them the badges as I ultimately regarded the safety pins as a potential danger. Nevertheless, having seen the name badges that another class had received, students claimed theirs. Hereunder you can see an example:

This event made me realize that we should not make any difference among students. Throughout our life we tend to get on well with some people and not so well with other people, but this attitude should be avoided as much as possible with students. As teachers, our responsibility is to remain as impartial as we can, even though at times this is a very difficult thing to do.

In session 2 I was supposed to explain to the students the group project: build your own pyramid. What they had to do was not too complicated, but I wanted to explain

it step by step, so that they would have time to process the information. I decided to distribute the materials they needed to produce it right in the end, to make sure that I would have their full attention during the explanation. The following two pictures were taken during the explanation of the pyramid project and they clearly illustrate the high level of attention the students were paying during my explanation:

Picture 5: explanation of individual work for the pyramid project.

Picture 6: explanation of group work for the pyramid project.

This project was one of the activities that I prepared with more passion. I regarded it as good summary of everything important in the 'Religion, gods and afterlife session'. I feared that maybe students would find this activity too childish or that they would not prepare it at all. I was positively surprised when I saw that it was not the case: every student had prepared their pyramid wall as well as the oral exposition. The only negative aspect of that session was that the pieces of the pyramid were not glued together, but that was just a minor setback. In the following two pictures you can find examples of pyramids which students produced:

Picture 7: front side of one of the pyramids produced by one group of students.

Picture 8: back side of one of the pyramids produced by one group of students.

In session 5 the oral expositions took place, but they lasted less time than expected because students were nervous and did it very quickly. Hereunder you can see two groups of students doing their oral exposition:

Picture 9: shows group 1 during their oral exposition.

Picture 10: shows group 2 during their oral exposition.

Thus, we had 20 spare minutes which I allowed them to finish their pyramids, finish any exercises which they had not done in the dossier, and start studying for the test.

As they were doing their final test the next day the spare time could be used to finish everything they had to hand in, but it made me realize that teachers should always have a plan B or some extra activities prepared in advance in case if what was initially planned does not last a whole session.

Apart from the already mentioned reflections caused by the changes in the teaching unit during its design and implementation, I would also like to comment on some moments which I consider the most valuable experiences and challenges in my teaching practice.

My biggest concern before implementing the unit was how students would react to their first CLIL experience. They expressed their reticence to Laura, the history teacher, and therefore one of the challenges I had was to make them lose their fears of using English as a means to learn another subject, in this case history. At the beginning they were a bit nervous and used Catalan most of the times, or anytime they did not know how to say something in English. Little by little, their fear was gone and they used English more and more to communicate within the class.

Another challenge that I was facing was that in that stream there were many children with behavioral problems and at times it is difficult to make them work. Obviously Laura was there all the time, but I think they got really engaged in what we were doing and worked quite hard. For some reason, I imagined that they would not participate in the group activities, but they proved me wrong, as it can be inferred from the following pictures, taken during the Final Test - Gymkhana:
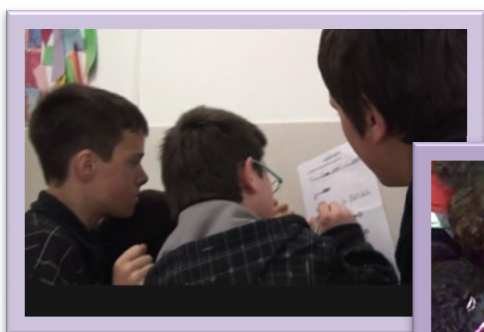
Picture 11: shows group 1
during their final test.

Picture 12: shows group 2
during their final test.

Picture 13: shows group 3
during their final test.

I fondly remember three very valuable experiences. The first one had to do with a student, who caused trouble all the time, failed all his subjects, and spent more time in detention out in the corridor than actually in the class. One day, not only he did his homework, but also offered to read it out loud in the class to correct it. That day I felt very proud, not of myself, but of that student, so I let him know in front of the class. In my opinion, praising students is a good strategy to encourage students if used in the classroom in the right measure.
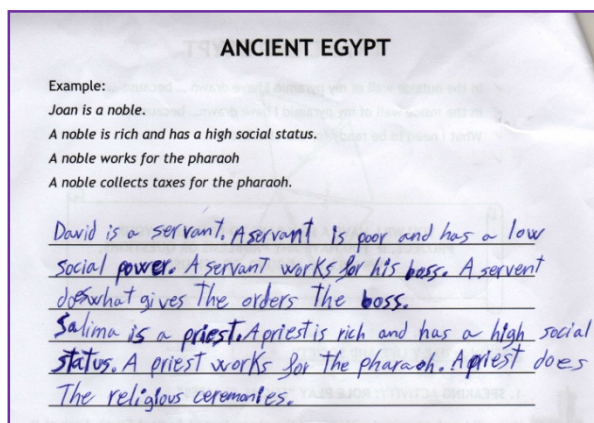
Picture 14: shows a scanned image of the homework exercise done by the aforementioned student.

The second experience had to do with a boy who belonged to the group which needed extra support lessons. He was not interested at all in English, and I was told that after our unit he participated in the English classes all the time, was constantly asking about how to say specific words in English, and tried to participate in English all the time. This event made me reflect on how our attitude as teachers can motivate or discourage students towards our subject and its learning.

My last most valuable experience took place in the last lesson, so just before finishing the implementation of the unit, when I asked students about their feedback. In my opinion, this feedback video provides precious evidence of how the implementation of the unit, and consequently my developmental process as a teacher progressed. It is illustrated in the following picture and you can watch the full video in annex 8.4.:

Picture 15: shows how students participated in the feedback activity.

4.3. AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The self-observation papers we wrote for the Innovation subject have proved to be very useful in terms of examining one's strong and weak points as teachers. Already in the first Practicum, I saw that students interacted quite a lot if I threw questions at them. It follows Tsui's idea that questions are a good strategy to elicit knowledge from students. That is precisely the topic that I analyzed in the first paper, and developed a bit further in the second paper, by researching on how to ask good questions and analyzing not only the type of questions that I ask but also the guidance strategies that I use, following Mercer's (1995) classification. Part of this research work is shown in the section "empirical study".

In my opinion, self-observation and self-critical analysis are key tools in order to improve our lessons and our way of teaching. Self-observation should be carried out during all our teaching careers, because there are always aspects which can be improved.

To sum up this section, I would like to go back to the metaphor with which I started it - the ladder. Our developmental process as teachers can only be carried out little by little, like the climb of the ladder. It started by observing other teachers, then creating activities and materials progressively, and finally leading a whole group of 30 students and implementing six sessions of a teaching unit. This climb would not have been possible without the help and guidance of our tutor and mentors, the support of our peer student-teachers, and, above all, the participation of our students. In my opinion, it is important to remember that we are not yet at the top of the ladder, there are many steps ahead of us that we still need to overcome in the future.

5. EMPIRICAL STUDY

As previously mentioned in the introductory section of this Master Dissertation, the empirical study that follows is based on Pallarès, Planas and Santiago (2010).

5.1. A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE TOPIC

Before going straight to the focus of my research, it is necessary to reference several concepts about Conversation Analysis (CA) and knowledge-building strategies. Since the focus of observation are the strategies the teachers use to elicit knowledge from students and the purpose of questions in controlled patterns of teacher-student

interaction, it is important to have a clear notion of the different types of interactions which can occur in the classroom context. Equally, since the main purpose of these interactions is to provide new information to students, it is important to understand how students integrate new concepts with the old ones in order to develop their knowledge of the studied topic.

5.1.1. On Conversation Analysis and spoken interaction

Conversation Analysis is a methodology used to study naturally-occurring talk on the assumption that spoken interaction is a highly and orderly organized phenomenon that should be treated as an object of analysis itself.

Educational talk vs. Informal conversation

CA describes the orderliness, structure and sequential patterns of interaction, whether educational or in informal conversation. All communication occurs in a specific context and classrooms are seen as environments which provide opportunities for learning. In the case of L2 classrooms, acquiring the language is the ultimate instructional goal. As it is obvious, many elements interact during the process of learning, but information is mainly achieved through means of talk.

As Eduards & Westgate (1994, as quoted by Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.69) state,

"talk remains the main means of transmitting information, and books and other prepared resources are essentially only adjuncts to it".

In classrooms, teachers tend to ask questions for which they already have the answer. Hence, it is true that in this case no "new information" travels from learner to teacher. As a result, it could be argued that no genuine communication takes place.

Nevertheless, under the premises of a constructivist model if "communication is a process of meaning construction carried out collaboratively between the interlocutors" then teacher questions and students' responses can be considered only as one step to achieve authentic communication in the end (Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.68).

In other words, educational and non-educational exchanges seem to be totally distinct. In the same way, the kinds of knowledge which are typically traded in such

interactions are also different. According to Dalton-Puffer (2007), the features which constitute educational talk are the following:

- The underlying structure of conversation generally follows the **Initiation – Response – Feedback (IRF) sequence.** This notion was introduced by Sinclair & Coulthard (1975, as quoted by Johnson, 1995, p.17).
- It talks about matters which are relatively remote from the immediate physical and personal context of the interlocutors.
- It has to make knowledge accessible to much larger groups of interactants.
- The accessibility of knowledge is tied to the purposes of the interaction in a more direct way.
- It is asymmetrical, since participants are constrained in the kinds of turns they might take according to their institutional roles.
- Turns are mainly allocated by the teacher whether by using general or personal solicits. However, students may self-select in appropriate interactional turns.
- The range of turn types is narrower, since they are quite restricted.
- Gaps are frequent.

To sum up, it can be said that whereas the IRF pattern limits students' interactional space and it is considered to be an unreal type of conversation, natural conversation characterized by adjacency pairs is viewed as the true and authentic type of communication. An adjacency pair is composed of two utterances produced by two speakers, one after the other. The first utterance provokes a responding utterance.

Against this statement, other researchers have argued that "tripartite structures are not as rare in non-educational interactions as it might seem, the main difference being that the feedback move is obligatory in educational contexts but not in casual ones" (Berry, 1981, as quoted by Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.72).

Likewise, it is important to mention that there is another type of sequence which can be found both in educational and informal conversations. Repair sequences can be and have often been interpreted as symptoms of conversational troubles. However, the function of "repair" is more than a strategy for dealing with miscommunications. Schwartz (1980, as quoted by Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.71) interpreted repair as a process of negotiation "involving speakers conferring with each other to achieve understanding". Therefore, some CA scholars have argued that repair should indeed

be understood as "the basic mechanism for establishing intersubjectivity in conversation thus according it the central role in collaborative meaning making" (Schegloff, 1992a, as quoted by Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.71).

5.1.2. Control of the patterns of communication

One of the mechanisms that teachers use to control the patterns of communication is the way they allocate speaking turns to students by either specifying who is to take it or by throwing it open to the whole class. Allwright and Bailey (1991, as quoted by Tsui, 1995) refer to this first type of turn-allocations as 'personal solicit', if it is done by nominating or using gestures; and 'general solicit', when it is done by simply asking the question and looking around the class.

Johnson (1995) also comments that there are two different patterns of classroom communication which teachers can implement:

- **Tightly controlled patterns of interaction.** In this case, students only answer direct nominations from the teacher, so there is a strict control over everything that is said or done during the lesson. Regarding this assumption, Wells (1986, as quoted by Tsui, 1997, p.7) found that "children in school speak with adults much less than at home, get fewer speaking turns and ask fewer questions. The reason is that teachers do most of the talking in the classroom, determine the topic of talk and initiate most of the questions and requests".
- **Highly spontaneous, adaptive patterns of teacher-student interaction**. These exchanges are meaning-focused and the discourse is more flexible, allowing students to take more self-initiated turns.

Although teachers try to control most of the exchanges that take place during the lesson, sometimes students self-solicit to participate by asking questions or making unexpected comments. In connection to that, Brown, Earlam, and Race (1998) mention some important tips that teachers should bear in mind when being interrupted:

- Accept that you are in fact being interrupted
- Keep track of where you were
- Accept that some interruptions are important and necessary

- Turn interruptions into positive learning experiences
- Look for the causes of interruptions

5.1.3. Knowledge-building strategies

<u>Introduction to Vigotsky's sociocultural learning theory</u>

Vigotsky's theory of socio-cognitive development, elaborated at the beginning of the 20th century, explains that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Therefore, an individual who does not interact with his or her social environment cannot reach higher cognitive functions. Vigotsky (1978, as quoted by Dalton-Puffer, 2007, p.9) stated that "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later on the individual level." He also affirmed that learners use language for social interaction and communication with peers and experts. In the context of educational talk within the classroom, the first are usually other students and the latter is a teacher.

Vigotsky also points out the importance of working within what he calls student's "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). According to the author, not every kind and amount of learning are possible at any given time. Therefore, since the possibilities for cognitive development are limited, it is important to know which student's real opportunities of progress are. Additionally, reaching the full potential of the ZPD hinges on the possibility of having social interaction. This approach also implies that the range of skills that can be developed by means of expert guidance or peer collaboration surpasses those which can be attained alone. This concept is especially relevant in the CLIL classroom where the teacher-student and student-student interaction are widely promoted as means of understanding and learning the content explained throughout the class.

<u>Teachers' strategies in teacher-fronted lessons</u>

Mercer (1995), in chapter 3, points out that teachers use language to achieve some aims, such as guiding the learning process of theirs students or constructing a shared model of knowledge with their students, even if sometimes they are not aware of the specific techniques they use. So, according to Mercer, teachers guide the learning process of students by doing the following three things:

a) **Describing classroom experiences**

Illustrate the educational experiences that they share with students by means of 'we' statements, literal recaps or reconstructive recaps. 'We' statements are a good strategy to show that the teacher and students have experiences in common. Teachers also recap things which have been said in previous occasions and reconstructively recap things said and done by themselves and students in previous lessons.

b) Giving feedback

Respond to things that students say by means of confirmations, rejections, repetitions, elaborations, or reformulations. The most common way of doing this is by confirming or repeating what students say. Teachers also paraphrase or reformulate students' remarks.

c) Asking questions

Elicit relevant knowledge from students by means of direct or cued elicitations. Direct elicitations are those questions for which teachers do not have the answers but students do. Cued elicitations are those questions for which teachers have the answers but want to check if students know them too.

As questions are one of the topics on which the present Master Dissertation focuses, it is important to mention what other authors say about them. Thus, Tsui (1995, p.23) states that

> "in most ESL classrooms a major part of the interaction is generated by the teacher asking questions. Questions are usually used to check students' comprehension, to see if they have acquired the knowledge imparted, to focus their attention and involve them in the lesson, to move the lesson forward and, for some teachers, to exercise disciplinary control".

Tsui (1995) also affirms that the type of questions that the teacher asks affects the response of the students. There are several categories of questions, according to factors such as their cognitive demand and their effect on students.

- Factual vs. reasoning questions: questions that begin with 'what', 'when', 'who' and 'where' are considered factual questions because they ask for specific facts. Those that begin with 'how' and 'why' are classified as

'reasoning questions' because they ask students to argument their opinions (Barnes, 1969, as quoted by Tsui, 1995).

- Closed vs. open questions: 'Closed' questions have only one correct answer. 'Open' questions have a range of acceptable answers (Barnes, 1969, as quoted by Tsui, 1995). Regarding the language output of students, 'closed' questions are more restrictive than 'open' ones.

- Display vs. referential questions: 'Display' questions are those which are knowledge-checking; the teacher wants to check if students know the answers. 'Referential' questions are those to which the teacher does not know the answer, they are genuine questions. The student answers the question to inform the teacher, rather than to have the answers evaluated as good or bad (Long and Sato, 1983, as quoted by Tsui, 1995).

"The distinction between 'display' and 'referential' questions is an important one given the emphasis on meaningful communication in the language classroom. 'Display' questions generate interactions that are typical of didactic discourse, whereas 'referential' questions generate interactions typical of social communication" (Tsui, 1995, p.27).

Nevertheless, other authors have expressed a less critical view of the role of display questions in the classroom. Dalton-Puffer (2007), for example, agrees with Wells (1993, as quoted by Dalton-Puffer, 2007) in saying that display questions allow students to contribute collaboratively to a construction of knowledge which they would not have reached individually. Moreover, display questions also help to establish an agreed series of events witnessed by the participants. Dalton-Puffer also considers that the known-answer question procedure is effective if the purpose of the interaction is pedagogical. Therefore, it is important to define the pedagogical objective of the class in order to design questions and tasks appropriate for this purpose.

As previously highlighted in Pallarès (2010) Johnson (1995) describes the optimal conditions for classroom learning and second language acquisition, which include:

- The importance of students having the need and desire to communicate

- Opportunities to initiate and/or control the topic of discussion, and self-select when to participate

- ▪ Opportunities for students to use the language for both meaning-focused communication and form-focused instruction

- ▪ Opportunities to use language both for planned and unplanned discourse, within a range of authentic contexts, and within the context of full performance

The idea of meaning-focused communication is crucial in second language acquisition and it has also been mentioned by other authors. Hence, Dalton-Puffer (2007, p.106) states that "CLIL classrooms are pretty 'good places' to be in terms of how subject matter is made personally relevant to the learners by means of engaging them in 'real' exchange of 'real' information".

<u>Code-switching</u>

Code switching is quite common in foreign language classrooms, but it is not always accepted by all teachers. This is why it is important to understand the reasons and the functions of switching between different codes.

Skiba (1997, as quoted by Sert, 2005) suggests that code switching is used to ensure continuity in speech. In this respect, it is a supporting element in communication and social interaction which serves for communicative purposes as a tool to transfer meaning. In the same way, teachers' code switching stands as a supportive tool to ensure students understand their explanations.

To conclude, the aforementioned points lead to the idea that the use of code switching somehow builds a bridge from known to unknown and may be considered an important element in language teaching when used efficiently. This view is also reinforced by Escobar (2000) who states that L1 is useful and productive as long as it is used to carry out communicative tasks.

5.2. ANALYSIS

Johnson (1995, p.18) states that "transcripts of language lessons can illustrate the ways in which teachers use language to control the patterns of communication in L2 classrooms". In order to understand better to what extent questions produced by the teacher can affect student's responses, a detailed analysis of a transcript showing a teacher-led interaction has been undertaken (see annex 8.3. for the whole

24

transcript). The analysis is divided into the following subsections in accordance with the concepts outlined in the previous section:

a) Educational talk vs. informal conversation
b) Control of the patterns of communication
c) Knowledge-building strategies

5.2.1. Educational talk vs. informal conversation

Regarding the underlying structure of classroom interaction, we will analyze an example found in lines 8 to 10 of the transcript:

008	Palmer:	so ↓ they could not eat (.) WHAT?	I
009	Adrian:	*jo* (2) *que no menja peix?*	R
010	Palmer:	yeah (.) they couldn't eat ↓ fish	F

In this example we see that the teacher initiates the topic (line 8), then the student responds (line 9), and finally the teacher confirms the student's response by giving him feedback (line 10).

In the whole transcript we find a total of 6 similar IRF sequences, and, therefore, we can confirm that the underlying structure of classroom interaction follows the traditional 3-turn sequence described by Sinclair and Coulthard (see subsection 5.1.1.).

Nevertheless, other sequences are also possible, as seen in the following example (lines 56-61):

056	Palmer:	ok Adrian can you read the last one?	I
057	Adrian:	they had to s: to shave their heads to ensure clean:	R
058		cleanliness	
059	Palmer:	who understands that one? (2) Henry?	I – repair sequence
060	Henry:	*es rapaven?*	R - repair sequence
061	Palmer:	uh huh (.) s'afeitaven el cap	F

In this example we see that the teacher initiates a topic with a question (line 56), then the student responds by reading what the teacher has asked him to read (line 57). Nevertheless, the teacher detects that the vocabulary used in the sentence is too difficult and students might need clarification of meaning. That is why she starts a side-sequence, in this case a repair sequence (line 59) which is in turn repaired by one of the students (line 60). Finally, the teacher produces a feedback turn (line 61).

The following two examples illustrate who initiates the repair sequences (lines 12-14 and 19-21):

```
012   John:    they could not wear wool because most animal products    R
013            were viewed as unclean
014   Palmer:  what does THAT mean?                                      I  repair sequence self-initiated


019   Palmer:  no podien portar llana very [well    ]                    F
020   John:                        [perquè ] són animals de              R
021            productes que ere:n (.) viewed què vol dir?               R-I repair sequence self-initiated
```

In the first example we see that the repair sequence is initiated by the teacher (line 14). However, in the second example it can be observed that the repair sequence is initiated by a student (line 21).

We can find a total of 7 repair sequences in the vignette. Out of these 7 sequences, only 2 are initiated by the teacher (lines 14 and 59). The remaining 5 repair sequences are initiated by students (lines 21, 32, 39, 45, 52).

It should also be taken into account who is the person that repairs these sequences, that is to say, who offers a solution to the problem. The following two examples illustrate this issue (lines 14-15 and 21-22):

```
014   Palmer:  what does THAT mean?                         I  repair sequence self-initiated
015   John:    well wool és llana (.)                       R other repaired


021            productes que ere:n (.) viewed què vol dir?  R-I repair sequence self-initiated
022   Palmer:  considerats                                  R other repaired
```

In the first example we see that the sequence is repaired by a student (line 15). In the second example it is the teacher who repairs the sequence (line 22).

Out of 7 repair sequences found in the transcription 4 are repaired by students (lines 15, 41, 53, 60). The remaining 3 sequences are repaired by the teacher (lines 22, 33, 47).

Therefore, it can be stated that in this vignette the main pattern of interaction is IRF, although it is often interrupted by repair sequences due to the ongoing process of the negotiation of meaning.

5.2.2. Control of the patterns of communication

There are a total of 48 turns in the vignette. The teacher produces a 48% of the turns and students produce the remaining 52% (Figure 4). Therefore we can infer that the number of turns produced by 30 students is nearly the same as those produced by a single teacher. This data seems to confirm the assumption that teachers do most of the talking during the class (Wells, 1986, as quoted by Tsui, 1997, p.7). Nevertheless, we could state that despite the controlled pattern of interaction led by the teacher, students do have the chance to participate quite often in the interaction.
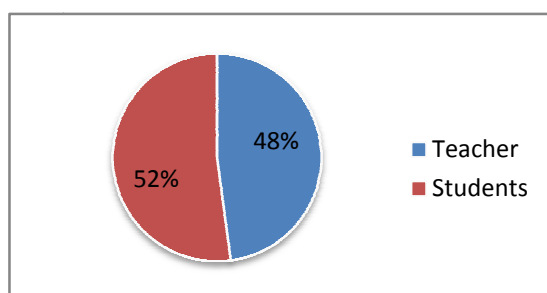

Figure 4: Teacher's talk vs. students' talk

The 52% of the total amount of class interaction is performed by 8 students who participate in the interaction producing between 1 and 6 turns each (Figure 5).
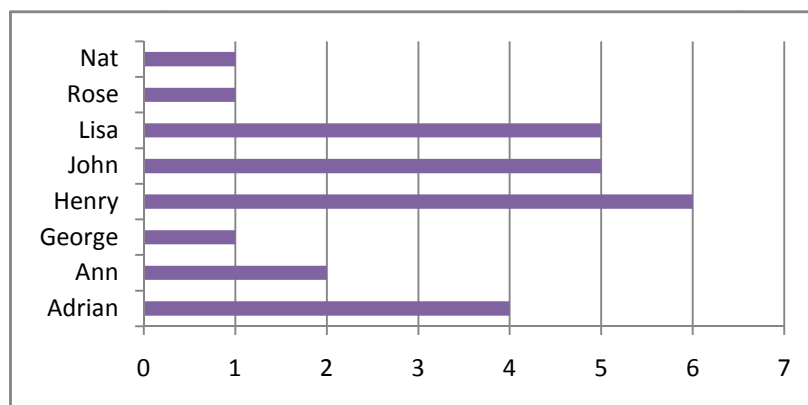
Figure 5: Students' turns

Turn allocation is a very important feature of class interaction, which can be viewed from two different positions: students and teachers. With regard to the former it means that students have the opportunity to either initiate turns voluntarily or take turns solicited by the teacher, whereas in respect to the latter it can be interpreted that teachers can either nominate one student or throw an open question to the class (Allwright, 1980 as quoted by Tsui, 1995). Moreover, as previously mentioned in the

27

literature review section, the allocation of turns is one of the mechanisms the teachers use to control the patterns of interaction in the classroom (Johnson, 1995).

The following two examples illustrate this topic (lines 10-13 and 59-61):

```
010    Palmer:   yeah (.) they couldn't eat ↓ fish              ((nods))
011              John (.) can you read the second one?          ((looks at John))
012    John:     they could not wear wool because most animal products
013              were viewed as unclean


059    Palmer:   who understands that one? (2) Henry?           ((looks at Henry))
060    Henry:    es rapaven?                                    ((has his hand up))
061    Palmer:   uh huh (.) s'afeitaven el cap
```

In the first example we see that the teacher starts a new topic by nominating a student (line 11), whereas in the second example we see that the teacher throws an open question to the class (line 59) which is answered by Henry, who volunteers to take this turn (line 60).

In the vignette we can observe that there are 6 nominations made by the teacher (lines 5, 11, 27, 38, 49, 56). There are two self-solicited turns (lines 9 and 60), as the students had their hands up to answer.

Moving on to interruptions, as explained in section 5.1.2., Brown *et al.* (1998) state that they are frequent in teacher-led interactions and need to be dealt with. They can either come from other teachers interrupting the class or from the students. The following two excerpts, which can be found in the vignette, clearly illustrate the point at stake:

Excerpt 1:

```
027    Palmer:   third ↓ one (.) Lisa (.) can you read the third      I
028              please?
029    Lisa:     yes but one thing (.) e::: why they cannot          R/I – student initiates
030              priest: can't eat fish?
031    Palmer:   because it was a ↓ rule they had (.)                R – repaired by the teacher
032    Lisa:     [que ?]                                             I – repair sequence - self-initiated
033    Palmer:   [why] you [can not go to the toilet e: during       R – repaired by the teacher
```

| 034 | Henry: | [perquè:: perquè ::: perquè diuen que:::   ] | R – student translates response |
| 035 | Palmer: | it was a RULE, yeah? | R/F |

Excerpt 2:

049	Palmer:	<u>yes</u>, very well (.) Adrian can you read the last one?	F/I
050	Adrian:	ah, no, no (.)	R Student refuses to answer
051	Palmer:	ah	F
052	Adrian:	*què has <u>dit</u> abans (.) dels* toilets? (2) *no?*	I- repair sequence - self
053	Ann:	*que és una [<u>norma</u> que no] pots anar al <u>lavabo</u> al mig de*	R - repaired by another student
054	Palmer:	[*és una norma*]	R – repaired by the teacher
055	Ann:	*la classe*	R – repaired by another student

In the first example, we see that the teacher initiates a topic (line 27) but one of the students, Lisa, does not respond what the teacher was expecting and starts a repair sequence instead (line 29). So, the teacher answers to what Lisa is asking (line 31) but the student initiates another repair sequence in her next turn, as she does not understand the teacher's response (line 32). The teacher repairs the new sequence (line 33) which is in turn repaired by Henry (line 34). Finally, the teacher offers a response and feedback in her last turn (line 35).

In the second example, we see that having given the feedback from the previous sequence the teacher initiates a new topic (line 49). Further on, Adrian starts a repair sequence because he did not understand something which was said earlier (line 52). This time, the sequence is repaired by Ann, another student (lines 53 and 55) as well as the teacher (line 54).

It can be seen from these two excerpts that the teacher gets interrupted in lines 29 and 52. The students refuse to do what the teacher has asked them to do, because there is something they do not understand and so they demand clarification from the teacher. Thus, in each of these two turns they start a repair sequence. As also explained in the previous section, Brown *et al.* (1998) recommend some tips to cope with interruptions. After analyzing the excerpts, it can be noticed that the teacher applied two of these tips successfully:

▪ The teacher accepts the interruptions and allows students to respond to the sequences initiated by other students, even if the patterns of interactions are highly controlled.

▪ The teacher also keeps track of where she was before the interruption: she answers to what students ask before going back to the initial point.

Nevertheless, the analysis of the excerpts reveals that the teacher fails to achieve one of the points mentioned by Brown *et al*. (1998), that is, to turn interruptions into positive learning experiences. This may be inferred from excerpt 1, where the answer of the teacher (line 31) does not meet the expectations of Lisa, one of the students, and the other way around, as previously highlighted in Santiago (2010).

The student was probably expecting an explanation like the one offered in the previous intervention (see annex 8.3., lines 19 to 23), but instead she received an example of what a rule is. In another situation, the student would have probably asked the question again, but the tone used by the teacher was too assertive and did not allow the student with the necessary interactional space. Likewise, as it was already explained in the context, this class used questions as a strategy to interrupt the teacher and waste time during the lessons, and therefore the teacher expected the intervention to be an interruption. That is why in this case she did not turn the interruption into a positive learning experience, because she misjudged the aim of the student's question.

5.2.3. Knowledge-building strategies

As developed in subsection 5.1.3., Mercer (1995) explained the strategies that teachers use to guide students' learning process: describe shared classroom experiences, give feedback and ask questions.

The following two examples show how the teacher uses Mercer's (1995) first strategy (lines 1-2 and 33):

001   Palmer: and then there were ↑ other <u>priests</u> who were in charge
002   of funerals (.) astrology as George was saying (.)

033   Palmer: [<u>why</u>] you [can not go to the toilet e: during the class?]

In the first example we see that the teacher uses information that George, a student, had previously mentioned during the session (line 2). In the second example, we see that the teacher uses an example which is familiar to students to describe what a rule is (line 33). Therefore, it can be seen that the teacher uses the Mercer's (1995) first strategy twice by means of reconstructive recaps.

Teachers have different ways to give feedback to their students: confirmations, rejections, repetitions, elaborations and reformulations. The following two examples illustrate the point at stake (lines 48-49 and 17-19):

| 048 | Henry: | *per mantenir-se purs?* |
| 049 | Palmer: | <u>yes</u>, very well (.) Adrian can you read the last one? |

017	John:	*i aleshores posa que no:::* (.) *no necess* (.) *es po no:::*
018		*es posen llana*
019	Palmer:	*no podien portar llana* <u>very</u> [well]

In the first example we can see that the teacher gives feedback to a student by confirming his response (line 49). In the second example we can see that the teacher also confirms what the student has said in his previous turn, but firstly reformulates the information given by the student (line 19).

In the vignette, there are a total of 10 feedback turns. They are all confirmations (lines 10, 16, 19, 25, 35, 42, 44, 49, 51, 61). Nevertheless, two of the confirmations also integrate a reformulation (lines 19 and 61).

In my opinion, confirmations are an effective strategy to let students know they are on the right track. Equally, reformulations are suitable strategies to say the same in different words, allowing students more time and opportunities to understand what is being said.

Moving on to Mercer's (1995) third strategy, questions, the following example is used to illustrate this point:

006	Rose:	they could not eat fish because it was seen as peasant
007		food
008	Palmer:	<u>so</u> ↓ they could not eat (.) WHAT?

In this example, we see that Rose, a student, reads a sentence (lines 6-7) and then the teacher asks a question about it (line 8). It can be inferred by the context that the teacher already knows the answer to this question, and therefore it is a cued elicitation, which is used for the teacher to check students' comprehension.

The teacher asks a total of 6 questions in the vignette (lines 8, 14, 33, 38, 40, 59). As in the last example, all the questions that the teacher asks are only cued elicitations. Nevertheless, as questions are one of the focuses of observation of this Dissertation, they will also be analyzed following the classifications presented by other authors and described in the literature section.

Thus, some studies, among which Chaudron (1988 as quoted in Tsui, 1995) can be mentioned, state that questions constitute 20 to 40 per cent of classroom talk. In our case, a total of 16 questions are asked in the analyzed vignette. Considering there are 48 turns in total, our data prove Chaudron's statement. The teacher asks 6 out of the 16 questions and students the 10 remaining ones. Therefore, in this vignette, students ask more questions than the teacher. The following figure illustrates the types of questions asked in the vignette according to the categories described by Tsui (1995).
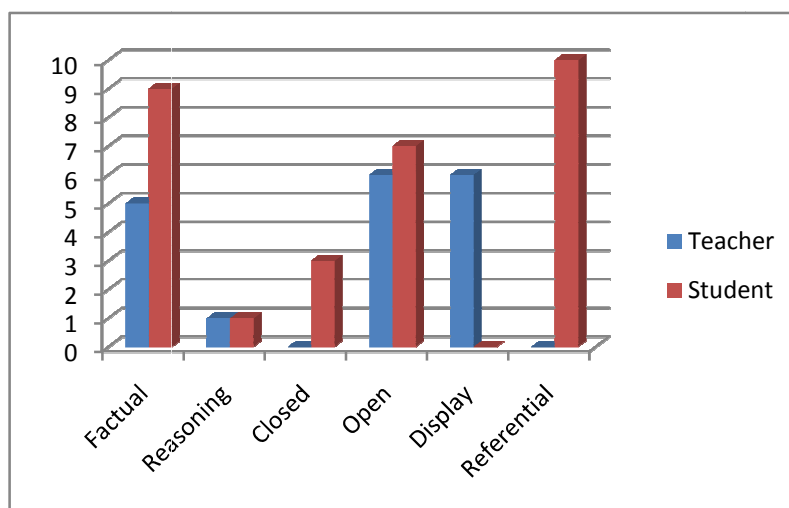

Figure 6: Types of questions in the vignette

The following two examples illustrate this point (lines 36-41 and 21-22):

036	Lisa:	many priests took three or four baths a day in sacred
037		pools in order to keep themselves pure
038	Palmer:	Lisa, what does ↓ <u>that</u> mean?
039	Lisa:	*m:::: uns qua:nts sacerdots e:::: took?*
040	Palmer:	what <u>is</u> (.) to take a bath?
041	Henry:	*que prenien tres o quatre banys al dia*

| 021 | John: | *productes que ere:n* (.) viewed *què vol dir?* |
| 022 | Palmer: | *considerats* |

In the first example we see that Lisa reads a sentence from the PowerPoint presentation projected on the classroom screen (lines 36-37). Then the teacher asks her the meaning of the sentence (line 38). Lisa starts translating the sentence until she encounters an unknown word (line 39). The teacher answers by asking another question using the word that Lisa does not understand (line 40). Finally, Henry translates the whole sentence (line 41).

In the second example we see that John encounters an unknown word and asks the teacher for clarification (line 21).

From Figure number 6 and the last two examples it may be inferred that in this specific interaction, the teacher mainly asked factual, open and display questions. Whereas students also ask factual and open questions, they nevertheless opt for referential instead of display questions.

Regarding the distinction that Tsui (1995) highlights between 'display' and 'referential' questions, as explained in subsection 5.1.3., our analysis confirms the idea that students ask referential questions because, unlike the teacher, they only ask questions when they do not know the answer to them.

Moving on to the optimal conditions for classroom learning and second language acquisition as described by Johnson (1995), the following example illustrated this issue (lines 27-30):

027	Palmer:	third ↓ one (.) Lisa (.) can you read the third one
028		<u>please?</u>
029	Lisa:	yes <u>but</u> one thing (.) e::: why they can not *bueno* the
030		priest: can't eat fish?

The teacher asks the student to read a sentence (lines 27-28) but the student refuses to do so, and starts a new topic instead (lines 29-30). Therefore, after analyzing this example, we can state that the teacher achieved some of the optimal conditions described by Johnson (1995) which include:

- The importance of students having the need and desire to communicate

and

- Opportunities to initiate, to control the topic of discussion, and self-select when to participate

Moreover, according to both Johnson (1995) and Dalton-Puffer (2007), the CLIL classroom offers students:

- Opportunities to use the language for meaning-focused communication, as seen in the following example (lines 9-10):

> 009   Adrian: *jo* (2) *que no menja peix?*
> 010   Palmer: <u>yeah</u> (.) they couldn't eat ↓ fish

Nevertheless, one of the points mentioned by Johnson (1995) which was not achieved by the teacher and could thus be improved in her future teaching practice is the following:

- Opportunities to use language both for planned and unplanned discourse

As previously mentioned, the structure of classroom interaction follows quite a controlled pattern, and therefore, the teacher does not allow too much space for unplanned discourse.

Regarding code switching, the following examples illustrate this point (lines 17-19 and 40-41):

> 017   John: *i aleshores posa que no:::* (.) *no necess* (.) *es po no:::*
> 018   *es posen llana*
> 019   Palmer: *no podien portar llana* <u>very</u> [well   ]
>
> 040   Palmer: what <u>is</u> (.) to take a bath?

041   Henry: *que prenien tres o quatre banys al dia*

In the first example we see that the teacher reformulates what the student has said in L1 to make sure that all the students understand it but switches back to L2 to give the feedback to the student (line 19).

In the second example we see that the student knows the answer to the teacher's question (line 40) but verbalizes it in L1 (line 41). This code switch may be due to the student's lack of appropriate vocabulary in L2 or maybe he translates the sentence so that all the students in the class can understand its meaning. In any case, it looks like he is trying to avoid a communications breakdown with the teacher.

Throughout the vignette, the teacher verbalizes 5 turns in L1 out of the total of 23 that she produces (lines 19, 22, 47, 54, and 61). In some cases, just a few words and not the whole turn are produced in L1. All the code switched turns are related to the negotiation of meaning, that is, to clarify vocabulary to students.

Regarding students, it can be observed that, out of the 25 turns they produce, 19 are verbalized in L1. This data is significant and the reasons for this high use of L1 in this CLIL lesson should be considered. On the one side, as previously mentioned in the general context, this experience was the first time that these students were exposed to a whole CLIL unit, so they are not used to communicating in L2. Nevertheless, it can be assumed from the transcript that students can follow the teacher's instructions, since they react accordingly. Maybe what they do not understand is the content of the slides, which might not have been designed taking into account Vigotsky's ZPD theory. However, it is important to mention that students use L1 to translate and to understand the meaning of what is being said in the class, and not to talk about other things (Escobar, 2000).

Finally, to sum up this section, we can say that the transcript of the vignette has been analyzed according to the categories described in the section "A brief literature review on the topic" which include educational talk vs. informal conversation, control of the patterns of communication and knowledge-building strategies. These same categories will be used in the next section "Conclusions" in which the author will draw conclusions derived from the data analyzed taking into account the relevant research literature on the topic.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This section summarizes the major findings derived from the section dedicated to the reflections on my process of professionalization as a teacher as well as from the empirical study. It also comprises some areas for future professional development and in-depth study.

6.1. ON THE PROCESS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION

Even though at the beginning of the course I dreaded the Practicum subject, now I feel that these two months in the Practicum school have provided me with a great learning experience as well as with many useful tools that I will need in the future.

Working in a CLIL project has also been a very enjoyable experience, not only because it was something totally new to me, but also to see that learning English language through content is a very challenging practice. I liked seeing that students did get involved in the prepared activities and tried to communicate in English with us as well as among them. In fact, I was surprised to find out that they were less aware of the language and the mistakes they committed in that language if they used it as the means to learn something else than if they were actually studying the language.

To sum up all what has been said in the overall reflection section, I would like to go back to the metaphor with which I initiated this topic: the ladder. In my opinion, these 8 months at university and the 2 months in Lluís de Requesens have proven useful to start climbing this ladder, also called one's own process of professionalization, with the help of those who have been around me throughout all this process. As I previously said, I am only half-way and there are still many steps which lie ahead of me. These steps embrace the areas for future professional development and in-depth study on which I will comment hereunder.

6.2. ON THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

As I stated in the very first pages of this Master Dissertation, I was interested in answering two questions:

> • **Which strategies does the teacher use to elicit knowledge from students in the CLIL classroom?**
>
> • **What type of questions does the teacher ask? Are they good for the purposes of controlled patterns of teacher-student interaction?**

In this subsection, I will try to find answers to them based on the analysis of the transcript carried out in the previous section and in the light of what research literature says about these topics.

a) Educational talk vs. informal conversation

Regarding this issue, it can be concluded that:

- The underlying structure of the interaction in the analyzed vignette follows the IRF pattern of acts, as described by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) as 6 of these sequences were found in a just 2'37" long vignette.

- Nevertheless, this pattern is often interrupted by side-sequences as described by Schwartz (1980), which are more typical in interactions found in informal conversation, but can also be used in the class in the process of meaning negotiation as explained by Dalton-Puffer (2007). A total of 7 repair sequences were found in this vignette. Two of them were initiated by the teacher and 5 by students. It is also important to mention that 4 of these 7 sequences were repaired by students.

b) Control of the patterns of communication

After analyzing this section it can be inferred that:

- There are a total of 48 turns in the vignette. The teacher produced 48% of the turns and the students produced the remaining 52%. This data confirms the assumption that teachers do most of the talking during the class (Wells, 1986, as quoted by Tsui, 1997, p.7). Nevertheless, it could be stated that students did have the chance to participate quite often in the interaction.

- According to Johnson (1995) in this vignette we could see that the patterns of interaction were quite controlled, as the teacher oversaw what was said and done during the lesson. The way of carrying out the lesson in this way was tightly related to the characteristics of the students in this class, as it was already explained in the global context.

- Johnson (1995) also states that the allocation of turns is one of the mechanisms the teachers use to control the interaction in the classroom. In the analyzed vignette it could be seen that the teacher made 6 nominations and the students self-solicited 2 turns.

- Interruptions are frequent in teacher-led interactions and need to be dealt with, according to Brown et al. (1998). This statement was confirmed by the analysis of the vignette, where we could observe several interruptions carried out by students. In this case, the teacher accepted the interruptions and keept track of where she was before the interruption. Nevertheless, she failed to turn one of the interruptions into a positive learning experience because she misjudged the aim of the student's question and did not allow the student with the necessary interactional space.

c) Knowledge-building strategies

- Mercer (1995) defined three different strategies that teachers use to guide their students' learning process: describing classroom experiences, giving feedback, and asking questions. After analyzing the vignette it can be stated that the teacher used all the strategies described by Mercer (1995) but did not use them all with the same frequency: the description of classroom experiences was used once in the vignette, while there were 10 feedback turns and 6 questions asked by the teacher.

- The feedback turns were mainly expressed by confirmations and reformulations. In my opinion, it is important to note that no rejections were used by the teacher as this strategy can make students lose self-confidence and desire to participate. This feature could be related to the amount of questions that students asked: a total of 10.

- All the questions the teacher asked were cued elicitations, which means that, the teacher already knew the answers to them.

- Following Tsui's classification (1995) it can be observed that in this interaction the teacher mainly asked factual, open and display questions, whereas students preferred factual, open and referential questions. The difference between the display and referential type is important here, as we see that the teacher only asked questions for which she already knew the answers, unlike students, who only asked questions for which they did not have the answers. It might seem that no real communication took place in the analyzed vignette, but it is important to take into account that the known-answer question procedure is effective if the purpose of the interaction is pedagogical, as stated by Dalton-Puffer (2007).

- Regarding the optimal conditions for classroom learning and second language acquisition described by Johnson (1995) it was observed that most of them were closely related to the specific conditions found in the CLIL classroom. Nevertheless, the teacher played an important role in achieving some of these conditions. In this vignette, we saw that the teacher fostered some of them, such as giving students the opportunity to initiate topics of discussion and self-select when to participate, but she should still improve others, such as giving students the opportunity to use language for unplanned discourse.

- Finally, we should mention the amount of L1 used in the vignette. The teacher verbalized in L1 5 turns out of the total 23 she produced, while students verbalized 19 of their 25 turns in L1. It can be inferred from the analysis of the vignette that students did understand English because they followed the teacher's instructions, but the possible reasons for this elevated amount of L1 usage are suggested hereunder:

  o It was the first time students worked on a whole CLIL unit

  o The content of the slides might not have been designed according to Vigotsky's ZDP theory and was therefore too difficult for students to understand and follow

Therefore, we should agree with Skiba (1997, as quoted by Sert, 2005) in saying that in this case code switching was used to ensure continuity in speech between the teacher and the students as well as with Escobar (2000) who states that L1 is useful and productive as long as it is used to carry out effectively a communicative task.

Having listed the main findings derived from the analysis of the transcript of the vignette chosen for the present Dissertation following the main ideas and concepts stated in the research literature review, I can now answer the two research questions raised in the beginning of this Dissertation:

> **Which strategies does the teacher use to elicit knowledge from students in the CLIL classroom?**

The teacher used all the strategies proposed by Mercer (1995) to guide students' learning process:

- She described classroom experiences shared with students

- She often gave feedback to students

- She repeatedly used questions to elicit knowledge from students

> **What type of questions does the teacher ask? Are they good for the purposes of controlled patterns of teacher-student interaction?**

Following the categories defined by Mercer (1995):

- The teacher only used cued elicitations

Following the categories defined by Tsui (1995):

- The teacher mainly used factual, open and display questions

The purpose of that specific part of the lesson was for students to understand the different types of rules followed by priests in Ancient Egypt and, as we have already seen, the pattern of teacher-student interaction in the analyzed vignette was quite controlled, due to the age and personal characteristics of that specific stream. Altogether, by looking at the whole transcript, it can be concluded that the purpose of the interaction was attained and therefore the type of questions asked by the teacher to meet the goals of the lesson was indeed good and appropriate.

6.3. AREAS FOR FUTURE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Having analyzed the transcript, I see three main areas that I as the teacher could improve in my future classroom practises:

- Taking the time to consider if the interruptions produced by students in the class are just a way to waste time or a real demand for information, which could be turned into a positive learning experience for the rest of students.

- Prepare the class materials according to Vigotsky's ZDP theory in order to make them more accessible to students and foster the use of L2, instead of having to constantly use L1 to build bridges and ensure communication.

- Losing up a little bit the pattern of interaction to give students opportunities to control the topic of discussion and to use language both for planned and unplanned discourse.

6.4. AREAS FOR FUTURE IN-DEPTH STUDY

In Pallarès, Planas and Santiago (2010) one of the focus of observation was group work. Through the aforementioned paper I read and learnt about the importance of giving students the opportunity to work among peers to promote communication and improve their learning process. In my opinion, this topic is very interesting and I would like to analyze some of the interactions carried out by students during my CLIL classes to learn more about this topic and analyze it in depth.

7. REFERENCES

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8. ANNEXES

8.1. TEACHING MATERIALS USED IN THE VIGNETTE

Hereunder you can find the slide used in the vignette to talk about the rules of Ancient Egypt's priests:

8.2. VIGNETTE RECORDING

Attached at the end of this Master Dissertation in an additional CD you can find the video of the vignette recording used for the empirical study.

8.3. VIGNETTE TRANSCRIPT

Class/age: 1st of ESO
Event: CLIL class on Ancient Egypt's society
Date of recording: 09/04/2010
Length: 2'37''
Participants: student-teacher: Palmer. Students: Rose, Adrian, John, George, Lisa, Henry, Ann, Nat.
School: Collserola

LINE	SPEAKER	TURN	NON-VERBAL ACTIONS
001	Palmer:	and then there were ↑ other <u>priests </u>who were in charge	((points at the screen))
002		of funerals (.) astrology as George was saying (.)	((looks at George))
003		architecture or medicine (5) but they <u>ALL</u> had a number	((gesticulates))
004		of ↑ rules i don't <u>know</u> if you ↓ know about this (3)	((gesticulates))
005		Rose (.) huh can you <u>read</u> the first one?	((looks at Rose))
006	Rose:	they could not eat fish because it was seen as peasant	
007		food	
008	Palmer:	<u>so</u> ↓ they could not eat (.) WHAT?	((gesticulates and points at Adrian))
009	Adrian:	*jo* (2) *que no menja peix?*	((has his hand up))
010	Palmer:	<u>yeah</u> (.) they couldn't eat ↓ fish	((nods))
011		John (.) can you read the second one?	((looks at John))
012	John:	they could not wear wool because most animal products	
013		were viewed as unclean	
014	Palmer:	what does <u>THAT</u> mean?	((points at the screen))
015	John:	well wool *és <u>llana</u> * (.)	
016	Palmer:	uh huh	
017	John:	*i aleshores posa que no*::: (.) *no necess* (.) *es po no*:::	
018		*es posen llana*	
019	Palmer:	*no podien portar llana* <u>very</u> [well]	((looks at John))
020	John:	[*perquè*] *són animals de*	
021		*productes que ere:n* (.) viewed *què vol dir?*	
022	Palmer:	*considerats*	((looks at John))
023	John:	[*considerats impurs*]	
024	George:	[*són productes d'animals*] *que*::: *diu que e:s que no es*	
025	Palmer:	very ↓ [well]	((looks at George and nods))
026	Lisa:	[one] thing	
027	Palmer:	third ↓ one (.) Lisa (.) can you read the third one	((looks at Lisa))
028		<u>please?</u>	
029	Lisa:	yes <u>but</u> one thing (.) e::: why they can not *bueno* the	
030		priest: can't eat fish?	
031	Palmer:	because it was a ↓ <u>rule</u> they had (.)	((looks at Lisa))
032	Lisa:	[*que ?*]	
033	Palmer:	[<u>why</u>] you [can not go to the toilet e: during the class?]	
034	Henry:	[*perquè:: perquè ::: perquè diuen que:::*]	
035	Palmer:	it was a <u>RULE</u>, yeah?	
036	Lisa:	many priests took three or four baths a day in sacred	
037		pools in order to keep themselves pure	
038	Palmer:	Lisa, what does ↓ <u>that</u> mean?	

039	Lisa:	*m::: uns qua:nts sacerdots e::: took?*	
040	Palmer:	what <u>is</u> (.) to take a bath?	((points at Henry))
041	Henry:	*que prenien tres o quatre banys al dia*	
042	Palmer:	VERY WELL	
043	Henry:	*en: en piscines sagrades*	
044	Palmer:	uh hum	
045	Henry:	*en [ordre]* ?	
046	Nat:	[*ordre*]	
047	Palmer:	in order to *és <u>PER</u>*	
048	Henry:	*per mantenir-se purs?*	
049	Palmer:	<u>yes</u>, very well (.) Adrian can you read the last one?	((looks at Adrian))
050	Adrian:	ah, no, no (.)	
051	Palmer:	ah	
052	Adrian:	*què has <u>dit</u> abans (.) dels* toilets? (2) *no?*	
053	Ann:	*que és una [<u>norma</u> que no] pots anar al <u>lavabo</u> al mig de*	
054	Palmer:	[*és una norma*]	
055	Ann:	*la classe*	
056	Palmer:	ok Adrian can you read the last one?	
057	Adrian:	they had to s: to shave their heads to ensure clean:	
058		cleanliness	
059	Palmer:	who understands that one? (2) Henry?	((looks at Henry))
060	Henry:	*es rapaven?*	((has his hand up))
061	Palmer:	uh huh (.) s'afeitaven el cap	

<u>KEY</u>

[	indicates the point of overlap onset
]	indicates the point of overlap termination
(1)	an interval between utterances (1 second in this case)
(.)	a very short untimed pause
<u>word</u>	underlining indicates speaker emphasis
?	rising intonation, not necessarily a question
,	a comma indicates low-rising intonation, suggesting continuation
.	a full stop indicates falling (final) intonation
CAPITALS	especially loud sounds relative to surrounding talk
↑ ↓	onset of a rising or falling intonation shift
( )	a stretch of unclear or unintelligible speech

(( ))   non-verbal actions

word   italics indicate words in other languages (not English)

:   indicates lengthening of the preceding sound

8.4. VIDEO WITH FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

Attached at the end of this Master Dissertation in the aforementioned additional CD you can also find the video with feedback from students.