Book Review

Aprendre en una altra llengua / Learning through another language / Aprender en otra lengua, 2011, by Cristina Escobar Urmeneta and Luci Nussbaum (Eds.) / Bellaterra: Servei de Publicacions UAB
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Although far from being adapted in any systematic form throughout the educational system, the last two decades have seen great advances in the spread of Content and Language Integrated Learning programmes (henceforth CLIL; Marsh & Lang 1997) throughout Europe (Eurydice 2006; Escobar Urmeneta 2009; Cenoz in this volume). Besides the obvious benefit of increasing the contact time with the target language (Escobar Urmeneta 2009), the study of content *through* the medium of a non-habitual language adds a dimension of authenticity to the learning of a foreign language (FL) and increases the likeliness of true communicative exchanges between interlocutors (Escobar Urmeneta 2009; Moore & Nussbaum in this volume; Whittaker & Llinares in this volume). In Spain, for example, the use of a FL of instruction, particularly English, to teach curricular material, is viewed as a possible remedy for the low communicative capacity achieved by the majority of students despite years of compulsory FL study during their schooling (Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster 2010; Whittaker & Llinares in this volume).

Apart from the linguistic aim of developing students' communicative abilities in a FL, a second essential aim of CLIL programmes, as the acronym itself reveals, is the learning of *content*-related knowledge through an innovative teaching approach (Eurydice, 2006). Although the initial aim of parents or governments in promoting CLIL programmes is to improve the linguistic capacity of the students, from the moment a CLIL programme is implemented, it is the concern of the curricular teacher that the content knowledge acquired is the same in a second language (L2) as in a first (L1). Fortunately for the future of CLIL programmes, an extensive body of research

shows this to be the case (Escobar Urmeneta 2009; Gajo in this volume). Furthermore, research is revealing that the attention paid to linguistic issues when content is studied through another language may actually be beneficial for the learning of subject matter (Gajo in this volume).

However, as important as both the linguistic and content-related objectives of CLIL may be, they are only two of the four objectives enumerated by the European Council in its 2006 report on CLIL programmes in Europe (Eurydice 2006). Lesser known, though no less important goals of CLIL teaching deal with issues of a socio-cultural and socio-economic nature (ibid). In the former case, CLIL aims to promote plurilinguistic capacities among European citizens. Plurilinguism is both a cultural patrimony of humanity as well as a bridge to promote tolerance and respect vis-à-vis other cultures (Eurydice 2006; Cenoz in this volume). Promoting these values is all the more important given the obvious misgivings of many European societies to accept the mutlilinguistic nature of its citizens (Dalton-Puffer, 2007). In the latter case, CLIL plays a vital role in the democratisation of citizen access to multilingual acquisition (Escobar Urmeneta 2009; Escobar Urmeneta, in this volume; Eurydice 2006), which, in turn, has important consequences for their future job perspectives.

In *Learning Through Another Language*, a compilation of the latest trends in CLIL research, edited by Cristina Escobar Urmeneta and Luci Nussbaum, the socio-economic and socio-cultural aims of CLIL teaching are given front and centre attention through the selection, organization and multilingual (Catalan, Spanish and English) presentation of the content. CLIL content and language objectives are also treated from a particular angle- the less-widely studied *integration* of subject and linguistic learning in CLIL classrooms as opposed to the study of each as a separate entity. Based on conferences presented by researchers and docents in the international TRI-CLIL conferences organized by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Autonomous University of Barcelona, UAB) between the years 2007 and 2011, this latest and most-welcome addition to the growing catalogue of books dedicated to CLIL research is divided into three main sections which deal with the challenges involved in plurilinguistic education (chapters 1-4), the integration of content and language in the discourse of CLIL classrooms (chapters 5-7), and the importance of teacher education and collaboration among subject specialists and language experts on the one hand, and

investigators and practitioners on the other, in the successful implementation of CLIL programmes in the school system (chapters 8-10).

The scope of the topics covered ranges from the broadest of perspectives, such as the role of CLIL in plurilingual education (Cenoz), through the classroom perspective of collaboration between subject and linguistic specialists (Cots & Clemente; Arnau), down to the detailed analysis of multimodal classroom dialogue in a CLIL lesson (Moore & Nussbaum) or the systemic functional analysis of CLIL students' written and spoken texts (Whittaker & Llinares).

In the introduction, Escobar draws parallels between the teaching of subject knowledge in a foreign language in today's Catalonian classrooms to the teaching of curricular material in Catalan in the late eighties following decades in which the presence of the autonomous language of Catalonia in the classrooms was expressly prohibited. Although an internationalised and globalised economy has altered the motivations of students and teachers in their choice of languages to prioritise (Eurydice 2006; Cenoz in this volume), the point is made that modern-day CLIL programmes are rooted in their predecessors throughout Europe. CLIL methodologies, then, in the past as in the present, have been turned to in order to remedy what is perceived to be an insufficient linguistic capacity in a specific language among large sections of the population.

The opening chapter by Cenoz situates CLIL as one of many different possible forms of teaching plurilinguism. Cenoz begins by describing the precarious situation of a large number of minority languages on the verge of extinction, comparable, according to Krauss (1992), to that of the loss of biodiversity currently decimating our planet. Cenoz goes on to describe the multilinguistic facet of schools all over the world, whether as an accidental consequence of socio-cultural circumstances or as the intended result of a clear educational linguistic policy whose aim is to promote plurilingual competence among its pupils in two or more foreign languages other than the mother tongue in concordance with the European's Commission's 2008 stated policy goal (European Commission 2008. Key Data on Teaching Languages at School in Europe). According to Cenoz, plurilingual competence is not the sum of individual monolingual competencies, but rather the ability of individuals to adapt to the cultural and social specificities of interlocutors as needed in the ebb and flow of the conversation.

To facilitate a comparison of plurilingual educational programmes, Cenoz proposes a 'Continua of Multilingual Education' (Cenoz 2009). Using three distinct continuous scales to characterize a specific programme, the 'continua' identifies the linguistic distance between the languages studied, the sociolinguistic context of the region, and the context of the school. By determining the degree of institutional implication with plurilinguistic realities, the process of evaluating and comparing programmes is made more effective, contributing in this manner to the promotion of plurilinguism throughout the educational system.

In chapter 2, Pekarek Doehler tackles one of the most contentious issues of FL teaching –that of evaluation. The institutionalised and selective nature of the evaluation process which 'certifies' a FL learner's progress has important socio-economic and socio-cultural consequences for the individual in question, making it essential to critically examine the fundaments upon which these evaluation criteria are established– those being the very nature of the concepts of language, cognition and linguistic competencies. Pekarek Doehler argues that a precondition to the advancement of an adequate system of FL evaluation based on the ontological communicative practices of speakers is the deconstruction of long-held, cognitively-inspired postulates of second-language acquisition, such as the use of native language competence as an idealized benchmark for determining FL learners' capacities or the image of a 'lonely speaker' producing monologic utterances outside the context of a social network. These preconceptions enter into conflict with an interactive, dynamic and socio-culturally-embedded understanding of dialogue among pluri-competent speakers and extract the evaluation process from the social and cultural situation in which it takes form.

Given the complex, heterogenic and dynamic nature of language, language speakers and the evaluation process, the author proposes the *ecological* evaluation of discursive *microcosms of action* (Fasel, Pekarek Doehler y Pochon-Berger 2009)–such as the introduction of a narration or a disagreement– in order to determine the quality of linguistic, discursive and interactive production in specific social and practical situations. An ecological perspective would also permit a recalibration of global scales of evaluation to account for individual and group necessities. However, as the author herself states, studies on the use of microcosms of action as interactional markers are still in a preliminary state and more investigation is needed before this proposal can become a reality.

In chapter 3, Gajo's concern with the integration of content and linguistic content in bi/plurlingual classes leads him to propose a renaming of the field itself, the acronym KLIL- *knowledge and language integrated learning-* being a more accurate description of the teacher's building up of the knowledge paradigm through the organized and progressive treatment of curricular content. A second misnomer treated in this chapter is that of *non-linguistic subjects* (Gajo proposes *non-linguistic named subjects)* given the impossibility of conceiving subject knowledge acquisition outside of the linguistic framework in which it is encased and developed. The fact that linguistic difficulties are treated more frequently in second language (L2) than in first language (L1) curricular classes can prove beneficial for students' subject-based acquisition in that a more detained and detailed treatment of the lexis can contribute to the *dedensification* of conceptually-challenging content. Gajo argues that teacher formation, besides providing training in the FL and in the content of study, must also prepare teachers in the specific exolingual, bilingual didactics employed in plurilingual classrooms which distinguish them from an L2 language or an L1 subject class.

In chapter 4, Sanmarti and Oliveras turn their attention to the development of critical reading skills among students in science classrooms. Too often a student's interaction with a scientific text is limited to the search for factual information or the summarizing of content from textbooks which do not portray the social relevance of current scientific issues to the extent that numerous other sources –editorials, Internet, documentaries– may. In this sense, it appears that the CLIL teacher's reliance on non-textbook sources due to the dearth of specially-prepared material is actually an advantage if students are subsequently required to critically analyse the content, integrate prior and new knowledge, and apply what they have learned in reasoned opinions. Sanmarti and Oliveras provide a detailed theoretical outline and an activity-based case-study to assist teachers in developing critical reading skills in their students through the use of thought-provoking questions, collaborative student work, and reflexive metacognition about the reading process and its analysis.

The second section of the book entitled 'The Discourse of CLIL Classrooms' focuses on the linguistic and curricular aims of CLIL education. This section begins with a chapter by Moore and Nussbaum about the utility of applying ethnomethodological, multimodal conversation analysis (CA), focussing on the non-linguistic and para-linguistic forms of communication as well as the speech act itself, to

the understanding of learning processes and knowledge acquisition in the CLIL classroom. Although CA has played a major role in the description of social interactions, it has been used to a much lesser degree to explore cognition and learning on account of the presumed individualized nature of these processes. Situated cognition, nonetheless, describes learning as taking place through interaction in specific social contexts. From this perspective, CA provides both a theoretical framework and methodological tool for understanding the development of mutual understanding, and ultimately, learning, in the interaction of classroom dialogue. Moore and Nussbaum demonstrate in a number of empirical analysis how CA notions, such as the sequential nature of the dialogue or the participants' varying focus of attention, are essential for understanding the integration of content and language matter. Despite the difficulties entailed in preparing meticulous transcripts and maintaining an emic perspective –i.e that pertaining only to the participants– the methodology described in this chapter is a powerful tool for advancing our understanding of cognition and learning in CLIL settings.

In chapter 6, Dalton-Puffer uses data from a corpus of CLIL secondary school lessons to identify the recurrent linguistic characteristics of explanations. Pedagogical explanations, i.e. those which connect new information with familiar objects or facts (Smit, 2010), are at the core of most lessons and represent a specific type of discourse function. Based on Zydatiss' (2007) model, the latter takes shape in the overlapping domains of the communication, content, and cognition paradigms. The difficulty of students and teachers (in many cases) to employ L2 discourse functions with comfort leads to much of the difficulty in CLIL classrooms. Identifying the *internal structures* of explanations is a first step in understanding the process of their formation, a necessary condition for teaching and learning this structure. Despite the large data base, few examples of extended explanations were found, possibly due, in the author's opinion, to the use of translation equivalents in their stead. This result alone seems to indicate that CLIL lessons differ in a significant manner from content classes.

After studying the corpus of data, Dalton-Puffer hypothesizes that elaborations, such as expositions, exemplifications and clarifications, are at the heart of any explanation, though this must be confirmed with a broader database. Writers or speakers employ a wide variety of grammatical and lexical structures to express the semantic relations of explanations. The complexity of this structure could, in some cases, be

beyond the L2 linguistic capacity of the students, although the author also believes that the decontextualized situation in which formal explanations must be produced combined with a lack of linguistic knowledge on behalf of the students and the difficulty of teachers in teaching the art of explaining result in the limited use of this structure by CLIL students.

Whittaker and Llinares use Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to investigate CLIL students' spoken and written production. The authors analyse the form in which students communicate subject content, their use of discipline-specific discourse modality structures, and their awareness of audience in a corpus of CLIL geography and history lessons carried out over a four-year period in two secondary schools in the autonomous community of Madrid. SFL is based on the work of Michael Halliday who developed a detailed functional grammatics of modern English showing how interpersonal, ideational and textual meanings are expressed through linguistic features (Halliday 2004). Whittaken and Llinares find that the emphasis SFL places on identifying these features in genres and registers makes it a particularly useful tool for studying content and language integration in CLIL classrooms. Comparing different classes and age groups, the authors found evidence of student discourse adapting features of the discipline-specific register over time and of older students taking on the role of evaluator which, in this case, required students to assume a historian's perspective. They also found that the correct use of modality is problematic among CLIL students compared with their L1 counterparts studying the same discipline. The authors applied this analysis to teacher discourse as well, providing examples of teacher focus on form and the scaffolding of subject content.

In the last section of the book comprising chapters 8-10, the focus is on the role of the teacher and, in particular, on the conditions which must be established in order for a subject or language teacher to successfully take the jump to become CLIL practitioners. For this jump not to turn into a blind leap, opportunities for specific CLIL teacher preparation comprising in-service training and further education need to be made available. Additionally, administrative conditions must favour these types of programmes, and most importantly, a collaborative environment must be established between linguistic and subject teachers.

Cots and Clemente situate their contribution to this volume in this last point – specifically, in the collaboration between a subject and language teacher in the

preparation and implementation of a CLIL pilot unit on the university level. This chapter is of great utility to teachers of all levels who desire to put a CLIL programme into practice but do not know how to go about beginning such an endeavour. Planning a class in CLIL is not just a question of translating material from L1 to L2. CLIL use of learner-centred methodologies may represent a new way of organizing a classroom for content teachers with a more traditional background. The flexibility and willingness to learn new techniques are essential for the success of CLIL collaboration. Cots and Clemente describe three different phases of the planning stage: in the first place, the general and specific goals of the programme are defined– both the linguistic and the curricular; in the second place, these goals are translated into a didactic plan and the specific aims of each activity are defined; in the third place, the teacher-student interaction is planned for on a broad scale in that the roles that the content and the language teacher will play during each activity are defined. In the last part of the chapter the authors analyse the interaction in the classroom, with a special focus on that between the content and language teacher and how this collaboration reinforces their student-perceived roles as experts in their own field.

Arnau's contribution in chapter 9 exemplifies another type of teacher collaboration– that between a social studies teacher, a Catalan specialist for newly-arrived immigrants and an in-service advisor. The aim of this collaboration was to provide the content teacher with the strategies and methodologies necessary to attend to the new reality of immigrant diversity in ordinary classrooms in which the language of instruction is Catalan. The inclusion of this chapter in a book dedicated to CLIL experiences is not by any means an oversight; rather, it is an example of the definition of CLIL programmes proposed by Escobar Urmeneta (2009 and in this volume): the teaching and learning of curricular matter in a vehicular language in which students are in the process of developing communicative competence.

Arnau describes the application of *sheltered subject matter instruction* in an action research case-study carried out in a state-supported high school near Barcelona. This type of instruction consists of a number of techniques, such as the use of audiovisual material or the modulation of L2 use by the teacher, whose overall goal is to ensure the inclusion of students with weak linguistic skills in the teaching and learning of content in that language. Arnau gives a detailed description of the planning, implementation and evaluation of a specific social studies unit in the classroom with

specific recommendations to improve the practice in the future. The parallels between this chapter and its predecessor make it clear that CLIL instruction can benefit from methodologies designed to assist the inclusion of the immigrant population in ordinary classrooms and vice-versa.

The book ends with a chapter on CLIL teacher training by Escobar Urmeneta which describes three axes around which this preparation ought to take place: collaboration between linguistic and subject specialists, partnership between universities and schools, and an internship period in a Professional Development School (PDS) in which the theory learned is put into practice. As mentioned previously, Escobar Urmeneta has proposed a new and more specific definition of CLIL. This learner-centred definition requires that CLIL programmes include positive appraisal of the L1, integration of content and language, and explicit support of the students in their effort to function in another language (Escobar Urmenta 2009).

Once the quality parameters of a CLIL programme have been defined, it is possible to train teachers in these methodologies. The author goes on to describe an innovative programme in teacher training and a case study in a Catalan secondary school which became a PDS for future CLIL practitioners. In the first case, she describes the partnership established between the UAB and public secondary schools in order to offer tandem teaching practicum in CLIL experiences to student teachers enrolled in this university's MA programme in foreign language teacher training. The cooperation and collaboration established between all involved– the student teachers, their university *tutors* and their secondary school *mentors*– in the planning, design and implementation of a CLIL unit make this programme unique, especially given the fact that specific training in CLIL methodologies is not included in teacher training at any level despite Spain's official backing of these programmes in its educational law of 2006. In the case-study, subject specialists, language teachers and student teachers deal with the logistical, formative and administrative problems in putting a CLIL program into practice. The study shows through a number of conversational reflections among the different actors about how a positive working collaboration on all levels needs to be established to overcome these difficulties.

To conclude, if the European Commission's socio-economic objective of "preparing pupils for life in a more internationalised society and offering them better job prospects on the labour market" (Eurodyce 2006: 23) is to be met, then it is essential

that CLIL teaching lose any inkling of elitism attached to it as being a technique available largely to students whose families have the socio-economic means to pay for private schooling. CLIL programmes, if made available *inclusively* to all students notwithstanding their prior linguistic abilities (Escobar Urmeneta in this volume), have an enormous potential in providing equal opportunities for students from all social stratums to acquire multilingual competence. The type of investigation presented in *Learning Through Another Language,* an excellent collection of contributions by some of the finest researchers in the CLIL realm, is a significant contribution in this direction. Besides the quality of the articles themselves, this book is highly recommended because of its triple emphasis on 1) the positioning of CLIL as a promoter of the values associated with plurilingualism 2) the importance of integrating language and content in CLIL lessons, and 3) the emphasis put on collaboration in the planning and implementing of CLIL programmes and in teacher training. A possible drawback is the trilingual format of the book, though, if taken in the right spirit, this may be an advantage for those wishing to expand their linguistic horizons. The contributions in the book advance the theory sustaining CLIL practices and provide numerous examples of applications of CLIL learning and teaching in the classroom. Researchers as well as teachers interested in the rapidly growing field of CLIL would do well to find the time to read this highly recommended book.

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