Using language(s) to develop subject competences in CLIL-based practice

El uso del lenguaje para el desarrollo de las competencias de las materias en la práctica basada en AICLE

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Abstract

This article documents and analyses the shift in emphasis that has taken place in CLIL and other forms of multilingual educational practice, where priorities seem to be placing a welcome importance on the use of language as a transversal element in the development of the range of subject competences that constitute the school curriculum. CLIL has also changed from being a methodology to help teachers support learner development in the particular discourse field of an academic subject to a more inclusive paradigm which has attracted the attention of language-teaching practitioners. The elusive notion of what constitutes 'content' is therefore more important to clear up than ever, since both subject and language teachers are concerned with its shape and its characteristics, and of understanding its distinct types. This article offers the idea of content as three-dimensional, of which language is a crucial component, arriving at the inevitable conclusion that language is the only true transversal element which unites the diversity of subject competences, just as long as its use remains subservient to procedural (competence-based) aims. This is the new single focus of CLIL.

Key words:

Concepts, Procedure, Salient, Discourse, Dimensions.

Resumen

Este artículo documenta y analiza el cambio de énfasis que ha ocurrido dentro de la práctica del AICLE y de otras formas de prácticas pedagógicas basadas en el multilingüismo, donde las prioridades ahora parecen estar más enfocadas en la lengua como un elemento transversal, trabajando el desarrollo de las competencias que constituyen el currículo escolar. El AICLE ha cambiado también en su papel de apoyo lingüístico para los profesores de áreas - a volverse en un paradigma más inclusivo e incluyente de los profesores de lenguas, lo cual les va atrayendo hacía esta nueva orientación. Aclarar la noción ambigua del concepto de 'contenido' es por lo tanto más importante que nunca, puesto que tanto para profesores de áreas como de lenguas las nociones de la 'forma' del contenido, sus características y sus tipos distintos son muy importantes. Este artículo ofrece la idea del contenido en torno a tres dimensiones, de las cuales la lengua es un componente crucial – llegando a la conclusión inevitable de que la lengua es el único elemento transversal que une la diversidad de las áreas curriculares, siempre que su uso se quede subordinado a los objetivos procedimentales – que son los que más se acercan a los objetivos competenciales. Este es el nuevo enfoque singular del AICLE.

Palabras clave:

Conceptos, Procedimientos, Saliente, Discurso, Dimensiones.

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1. Introduction

The development of CLIL seems to have occurred in three phases since its creation in 1994 as a new branch of the pre-established content-based paradigm. In its earliest phase it was touted as a 'dual-focused' approach (Marsh 2002) by its early proponents, during which it also benefitted from the self-explanatory nature of its acronym. Since it offered the twin benefits of 'content' and 'language', allegedly killing two birds with one stone – potential stakeholders could hardly fail to be attracted by its learning potential. This led to a second phase which witnessed a dizzying expansion of CLIL-based practice, some of it resulting from top-down governmental legislation but most of it remaining in the shape of unilateral regional initiatives. The third phase, occurring now, seems to view CLIL as a conduit for competence-based education and plurilteracies (Meyer et al, 2014), with a broader remit to provide a coherent framework for the necessary multilingual skills demanded by post-modern society.

The problem with this new shift in emphasis for CLIL is that during its earlier phases, the terms 'content' and 'language' were never satisfactorily defined. The idea of CLIL as 'dual-focused' (Marsh 2002 ibid) was never challenged. Why, for example, do we require *content* (whatever it is) and why do we need *language*? The alleged dual focus was never handed an explicit purpose, as if the mere accommodation of these two notions were sufficient to drive the approach. However, with the gradual implementation of competence-based education into European curricula, and the expanding notion of content as a three-dimensional phenomenon (Ball et al, 2015) where it is viewed as *conceptual, procedural* and *linguistic,* it is becoming possible to view CLIL as the perfect means for developing subject competences. Instead of viewing CLIL as a dual-focused approach, it is developing into a *single-focused* methodology which uses conceptual and linguistic content as vehicles for procedural skills – aka subject competences.

This notion fits the current educational mood more appropriately. Language, seen from this perspective is 'content' in itself, but is closer to Cummins' (1979) and Gibbons' (2009) notion of *discourse*. In the academic sphere, language is a collection of distinct discourse fields (History, Biology, Mathematics…) with which learners are constantly assailed throughout their scholastic lives, and beyond. Coping with and learning to use these discourse types, along with the particular skills required of each, is the key to academic and professional success. Additionally, for the post-modern generation, learning to use a language other than the mother tongue has become a crucial skill in the set of competences required to survive in the workplace, exactly the area in which CLIL specialises.

2. What is 'content'?

It might seem curious to begin with this question, in an article purporting to discuss issues surrounding an acronym whose initial element represents this very word. The 'content' term itself was also prominent on the educational scene several years before the appearance of CLIL, particularly in the area of 'Content-Based Instruction' (CBI), an approach baptised in the USA and Canada by Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989). CBI interpreted the word 'content' as both conceptual and thematic, since up to that point in language teaching the 'instruction' (methodology) and the content – also the methodology (whether it was audio-lingual, communicative or based on grammar-translation) had been considered inseparable. CBI favoured more contextualised learning, based on the different discourse fields encountered by students in their everyday scholastic life. The different content areas which framed this discourse (academic subjects), which up to that point had been neglected by the language teaching paradigm, now became the vehicle for lessons. Like ESP (English for Special Purposes), the goal became more focused on the acquisition of language whilst using it within its particular thematic contexts.

1.1. The problem of the 4Cs

CLIL was obviously a derivative member of the broad set of practices encapsulated by CBI, but from the outset it marked new territory by emphasising the 'integration' of content and language – though whether its early proponents ever satisfactorily described the exact nature of this integration is a matter for debate. Indeed, one of the *leitmotifs* of the first two phases of CLIL, Coyle's '4Cs' framework of Content, Communication, Cognition and Culture, isolated the noun *content* as an individual member of a four-element amalgam. Content, always situated at the head of the amalgam, was described by Coyle as, 'Progression in knowledge, skills and understanding related to specific elements of a defined curriculum' (Coyle, 1999)

Coyle was careful to characterise content as scholastic/academic ('defined curriculum') since in a reductionist sense everything is 'content', down to the simple utterance 'My name is John'. Content, as it were, exists a *priori*, and of course, its connection to language is absolute. The existence of content is predicated on language, and the existence of language is predicated on content. The default understanding of 'content' in this sense is conceptual, as Coyle says, a 'Progression in knowledge', but the word 'skills' that she inserted into the second clause of her definition above, was an interesting addition. Clearly, a curriculum requires *skills* as much as it requires *knowledge*, and as a separate entity

skills can be identified, limited and ascribed to the particular academic areas to which they pertain. The set of skills required by a geographer are not the same as those required by a chemist, obviously. But as Coyle implies, it is 'content' nonetheless.

Up to this point, the leading 'c' of the amalgam seems perfectly valid, but when we move onto *communication*, in what sense is this *not* 'content'? If we use language(s) to learn, and we learn to use languages, then we are asking students to consciously reflect on the impact of language on their learning, and on cognition, as Bullock (1975) insisted at the outset of the movement loosely termed 'language across the curriculum' (LAC). Communication therefore, and its willing servant language, are clearly examples of *content*. In the same way, the third 'c', *cognition*, is also content, since by identifying the topics that in our CLIL lessons we consider to be worthy of labelling higher-order thinking skills (Bloom 1956), we are usefully isolating the elements that we consider to be the springboards for more significant learning. Similarly, the 4th 'c', *culture*, is content, whether it be intercultural, the culture of the classroom, the cultural possibilities of the topics or simply the intracultural awareness of otherness and self.

The word *content*, therefore, within the acronym CLIL, looks problematic when characterised by the conflation of the elements in the 4Cs package. The four elements themselves are all perfectly desirable as educational entities, but their fusion seems more problematic. Teachers practising CLIL need to know what 'content' really means. Why isolate the noun *content*, when all the subsequent elements in the list can be similarly described? And if in CLIL we are allegedly integrating content and language, then the notion of the 4Cs seems even more confusing. Why are we *integrating* content and language when language clearly is content (when seen from this perspective of learning) and why are we being exhorted to include *culture* (the orphan of the package) when it is clearly such a subjective concept that its obligatory presence in the CLIL package forces teachers to include it, whether this is feasible for them or not? Cultural content is surely an add-on, not a compulsory element? If a 'hard CLIL' Biology teacher is faced with teaching photosynthesis on a Monday morning, cultural concerns are unlikely to be the priority. . The concept, like 'hypotenuse' for the Maths teacher, is an academic notion entirely unconnected to *culture*, unless of course we choose to impregnate it with cultural significance – an entirely respectable choice but hardly a compulsory one.

1.1.1. *The missing 'c'*

However, the most serious flaw in the 4Cs amalgam is the absence of possibly the most important 'c' - that of *competences*. Indeed, it could be argued that all the elements of the 4Cs are in fact crucial constituents in the composition of what we understand by an educational competence – by no means a simple term (see Section 2 for a definition). Nevertheless, by viewing these four representations of content as components of compe-

tences, we find a more contemporary use for the 4Cs, and we simultaneously clarify the 'dual focus' (Marsh 2002, ibid) of CLIL, another term that has caused confusion as to the real nature of the word 'content'.

2.1.2. *Does CLIL have a 'dual focus'?*

CLIL would certainly seem to involve a dual focus, because it appears to involve two things, namely *content* and *language*. As Coyle, Hood, and Marsh claim in a later publication (2010, p3),

> CLIL is an educational approach in which various language-supportive methodologies are used which lead to a dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given to both the language and the content.

The notion that 'attention is given to both the language and the content' sounds feasible and laudable, but no further reason for this practice is offered. Why would we want to give attention to 'content' (as we have seen, itself a contentious and multifaceted term), and why would we want to give attention to 'language'? It is an interesting question, and one that lies at the heart of the CLIL paradigm. The dual focus does indeed exist in good CLIL practice, but what is the sum of its benefits? What is the aim behind this fusion, this synthesis of two elements which, as we have hitherto suggested, are both examples of content? The factual basis of a syllabus—its quantitative content—can be seen as the product to be learned, to warrant 'attention' as Coyle el al suggest. The same is true, presumably, of language. The CLIL teacher attends to it – probably in different ways according to whether he/she is a subject or a language teacher. But another view of conceptual curricular content, as with the language example, might be to see it as the vehicle for another type of learning, namely *subject competences*. Maybe it is better, and more useful given current societal demands, to see that both language and content are actually vehicles for the development of subject competences (geography, history, science, mathematics, etc.) and that language and content are never, as it were, aims in themselves.

Maybe CLIL has a single focus after all, namely the more efficient development of subject competences, precisely because the methods it employs focus more intensely on the relationship between language and learning. Key language, particularly academic lexis and structures, are made more salient in good CLIL practice, often more so than in L1 teaching. As Clegg (2002) observed, teachers who deliver content to non-native speaker (NNS) learners are less 'assumptive' in their approaches, since they cannot *assume* that their audience understands with the same efficacy as a native speaker. Not only does this cause them to re-think and extend their methodological repertories, it also seems to

impact on the learners themselves, who, conscious that they do not possess the linguistic range and confidence of the native speaker begin to compensate with academic strategies that enable them to perform at the same level, and in some cases even surpass, the attainment level of native speakers, according to research carried out in the Netherlands and the Basque Country (Elorza, 2011).

2.2. The three dimensions of content:

However, before we can go on to develop this idea – that CLIL may have a single focus - we will need a working definition of the term *competence* and a clearer breakdown of the word *content*, with regard to academic context.

Firstly with regard to the notion of content, it seems reasonable to postulate the existence of four types – *conceptual, procedural, linguistic* and *attitudinal*. The latter (attitudinal), is closer to Coyle's conception of 'culture', but whereas its educational importance is undeniable, it remains an optional curricular component. In educationally philosophical terms, it does not enjoy a *de facto* existence, whereas the other three 'dimensions' - as we will come to call them – surely do. We may (or may not) foster attitudes among students that we feel are useful to our own culture and to the wider world, but those attitudes are not necessarily explicit aims of our curricula. We can choose to make them so, but the conceptual, procedural and linguistic content in our educational systems are indeed explicit, and cannot be considered optional. In the simplest of terms, we could describe the conceptual weight of a curriculum as the *what*, the procedural weight as the *how*, and the linguistic weight as the tools - as the *means* by which we learn the concepts chosen and by which we execute the procedures (subject-specific skills) that relate to them. The intention of this article is to suggest that although the interplay among these three dimensions defines the basis of a given curriculum, in successful CLIL the three dimensions are not necessarily equal partners. In fact, what seems to be emerging in regions or countries bold enough to introduce a more plurilingual orientation to their curricula is that the *conceptual* and *linguistic* dimensions begin to serve the *procedural* objectives and aims, because it is the procedural content (the *how*) which most closely resembles subject competences. This might be described as the 'single focus' of CLIL, and the role it is more likely to play in the competence-led future of Europe and beyond (see Figure 1).

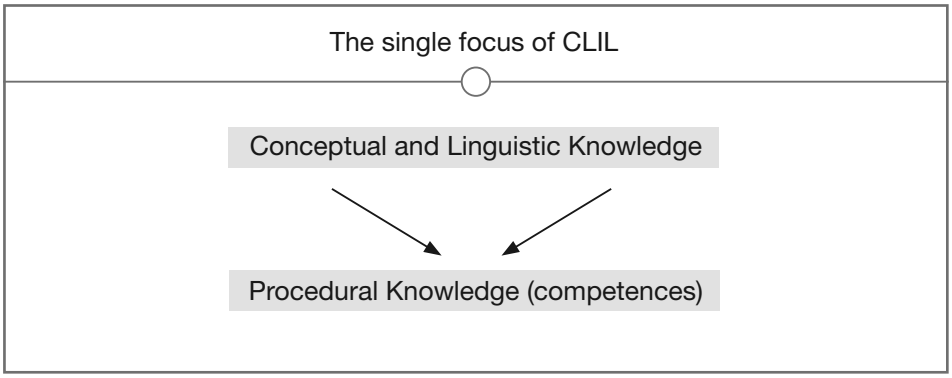

Figure 1: The single focus of CLIL

The single focus suggests that we employ conceptual content, using specific language derived from the particular discourse context to foster the procedural knowledge (cognitive skills) particular to each subject or academic area. It is the interplay amongst the dimensions that lies at the heart of CLIL practice, but the interplay now has a clearer purpose, namely the development of subject competences (geography, history, biology, etc).

In the example below (Figure 2), the objective describes a lesson in which 12 year-old NNS students must carry out a running-dictation, in order to acquaint themselves with the basic features of the planets in the solar system and eventually (as the principal scientific objective) differentiate amongst the planets with regard to their relative sizes, distance from the sun and inherent features. The objective is appropriate for the cognitive age of the students in terms of its conceptual weight, but of course, the lesson could have been-

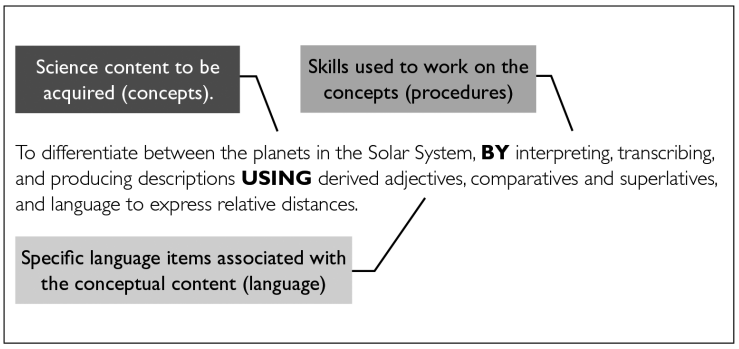

Figure 2: The 3 dimensions of content in CLIL

conducted in many different ways – by watching a video, by taking notes from a lecture by the teacher, by silently reading a text – methods of which we might approve or disapprove, but valid nevertheless. Here, however, the teacher has chosen a rather more interactive procedure, where groups of 3 or 4 students sit around a desk equipped with colour illustrations of the planets (to scale) and attempt to help the 'secretary' write down the part of the description of a planet that the 'runner' from the group has just memorised, from a text stuck to a wall on the other side of the classroom. The group is tasked with arriving at an eventual consensus over which (dictated) texts match the planets they have on the desk.

The three dimensions of CLIL show how the entire objective of the task described above could be represented. The description is a useful summary of what CLIL is attempting to do. The activity teaches *conceptual content*, by means of *procedural choices* (cognitive skills that derive from the teacher's decision to use this method), using *specific language* derived naturally from the discourse context. The concepts are ultimately understood by doing something, using a certain type of discourse. We could consider these three types of content as learning 'dimensions', and go on to suggest that teachers in CLIL-based contexts might use these three dimensions as both planning tools and priorities, according to how they see the demands of any particular objective.

2.2.1. *Two types of objective*

In this sense, we can talk about two types of objective: outcome objectives (the ones we can test – i.e. can the students now 'differentiate'?) and 'priority' objectives. When using priority objectives, CLIL teachers decide which of the three dimensions they wish to emphasize at any given point in a sequence of activities or tasks. The priority objectives continue to feed the outcomes, but in this lesson, we could ask if the procedural skills of *interpreting, transcribing* and *producing* (oral) descriptions (see Figure 2) are the vehicle to attain the conceptual knowledge of the solar system, or is the conceptual content of the solar system the vehicle to practise these valuable procedural skills? This will depend, of course, on the description of the syllabus objectives, but the question remains an interesting one. The language dimension of this lesson is easily identifiable, since the objective eventually requires the students to 'differentiate'. In order to do this, the language frames are obvious, but they occur naturally as a component of the (non-linguistic) objective. This rarely happens in conventional language teaching. In order to differentiate, one requires the language of differentiation, but here the associated structures are fairly straightforward. As the students will now know, 'Jupiter is bigger than Mars', it is 'further from the sun than Mercury', and it is the 'largest' in the solar system.

2.2.2. *Soft & hard CLIL*

The fact that comparative and superlative adjectives constitute part of the language of differentiation is hardly revolutionary, but the above lesson was actually a 'soft CLIL' English class in Spain. 'Soft' CLIL has traditionally been referred to in CLIL-based circles as 'language led' (Met, 1989) and the 'hard' or strong version as 'content' led, or determined by the subject syllabus – but notice that the three-dimensional objective as written in Figure 2 above prioritises the conceptual and procedural terrain. In this framework, the language (in a language syllabus) is no longer the objective but *the vehicle*. As Graddol (2006) remarked in his prescient book, English is no longer a language but a 'near-universal basic skill' (p17), learned by people in order to 'meet their needs' (p106). This instrumental view of language is more in accordance with post-modern professional and vocational requirements, which partly explains both the emergence and the sustained development of CLIL. CLIL's 'dual-focused exterior', underpinned by its single, competence-based aims, fits this post-millennial utilitarian view of the English language perfectly (Ball, Kelly, Clegg, 2015, ibid). In a crude sense, CLIL has clearly come to prioritise the 'how', the fact that we ultimately require language with which to 'do things'. It has spelt the death-knell of the more liberal view of language learning – the traditional perspective of language as a field of study, taken on for its own sake. This structural view of language remains perfectly respectable in academic circles, of course, but the instrumentalist-pragmatic view now predominates at scholastic level, at least where multilingual and CLIL-type practice has taken root.

2.2.3. *'Doing things' with language*

Why does CLIL fit this particular bill, as it were? Why do CLIL teachers 'do things' to a greater extent than in conventional L1 approaches, for example? Hard evidence remains thin on the ground, but CLIL seems to have succeeded (at least as regards its quantitative take-up and presence) in countries where the traditional educational paradigm was previously teacher-led, dominated by the 'magistral' notion of Spanish education, for example, where good teaching was akin to the display of knowledge, with the teacher as 'model'. This paradigm is by no means buried, and its more positive features we should be careful to retain (there is nothing wrong with good explanation and clear performance), but CLIL was never intended to be driven by a methodology that favoured the display of teacher knowledge and the perfection of model target-language enunciation. Why? Because a 'hard' CLIL teacher working on a school subject entirely through an additional language immediately realises that it is impossible (and inadvisable) to teach in the same way as in the L1, for all that he/she may be an enlightened practitioner. Consequently, teachers begin to talk less in the L2, because they realise that they may not be understood, and the pivotal centre of the lesson shifts inexorably from teacher to learner. It is often the first methodological step that a CLIL teacher takes. From thereon, all didactic considerations swivel on the axis of this truth. The less the teacher speaks, the more

the students intervene – as long as the conditions are right. Dalton-Puffer's research on Austrian schools (2007) has long been quoted as proof that CLIL teachers actually do very little of this so-called facilitating, and simply continue to be as 'magistral' as they ever were, but her research surely said far more about the undeveloped state of CLIL training at that time in Austria, and much less about the potential truth of healthy CLIL environments.

3. Competences

Graddol's observations coincided with the publication in 2006 of the European Parliament's Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, the emergence of which was a necessary reaction to changing times. These eight competences remain a rather awkward mix of subject-specific areas, ranging from 'mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology' to the more general 'sense of initiative and entrepreneurship'. The former clearly relates to a certain set of academic disciplines, whereas the latter is a transversal or meta-disciplinary competence which can be applied to, or across, the entire curriculum. The problem arises, however, when we come to define the word 'competence', primarily because the noun is used in a variety of areas other than education. The most cursory glance at the internet easily illustrates the problem, right down to the spelling of the noun. On a website which proposes six key 'competencies' for effective managers (Blum, 2014), the first one is entitled 'Proficient communication skills' [my italics], immediately conflating the notion of skills and competences. More helpfully, on a website offering an online business dictionary (Business Dictionary.com), a competence is described as "a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge and skills that enable a person (or an organisation) to act effectively in a job or situation". The description is useful because it construes 'abilities', 'knowledge', and 'skills' as elements subordinate to a competence. In effect, they are its components (see Figure 3). The second key factor is that a competence, as described here, can only exist within a situation (Roegiers, 2000). In other words, a situation – preferably authentic - is required in order for a person to demonstrate (through an action or a series of actions) a given competence, and in assessment terms, to demonstrate the characteristics of the competence required. In other words, a competence is only observable through performance. Students have to 'do something', exhibiting a set of actions which prove that they are competent in the given situation, whether it is a performance in a summative test, a performance in front of class peers or a performance which enables a teacher to supply helpful formative feedback to move the student forward on in his/her journey towards the eventual summative (certified) performance.

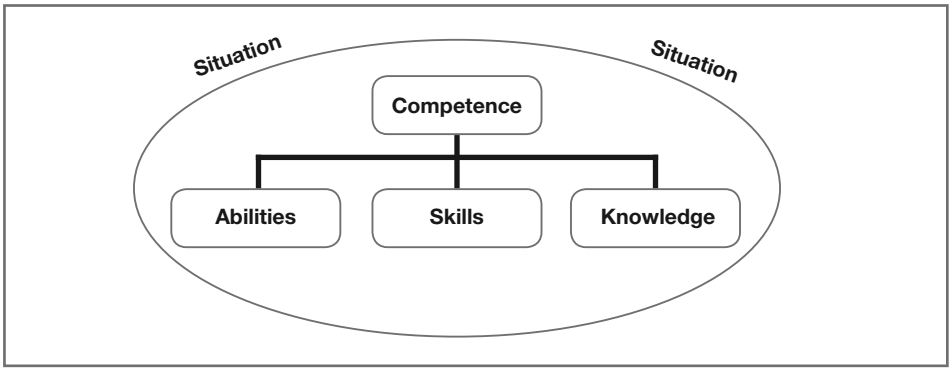

Figure 3: Situational competences

This notion of performance is extremely significant in CLIL-based practice because it suits the process-oriented learning that seems to predominate in successful CLIL circles. If teachers are speaking less, if classes are less teacher-fronted and more task-driven because of the need to involve the NNS learners (as opposed to lecturing them), then subject-based competences – the basis of education – can be more engagingly taught and assimilated. They also have important implications for language.

In the school context, situations in which students can demonstrate competences in an authentic way can be difficult to come by. However, even within the relatively limited parameters of the classroom, we can provide valid frameworks for competence-based action. The internet has generated a variety of possibilities for teachers, enabling genuine communication not simply with other schools but with public and private institutions, who can be persuaded to respond authentically. Students can make real suggestions, real complaints, and provide real data. There is much less need now for students to feel that school is a place where hypothetical actions are undertaken, for a hypothetical future.

For example, in the Basque competence-led curriculum 'EKI' (Figure 4), Secondary students (12-16) follow an English-language syllabus which borrows heavily from the other subject areas of the curriculum and which requires the learners to engage with material whose didactic objectives contribute to exactly the same (or very similar) subject competences demanded by the wider curriculum. This is what we might baptise, 'hard' soft CLIL, or a hard version of soft CLIL. But to describe it as 'language-led', as did Met (ibid.), seems inaccurate. The material is led by its conceptual and procedural content, supported by the language that occurs. This language, as we shall see in the examples below, illustrates Cummins celebrated notion of 'CALP' (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) where the learners are confronted by the discourse reality of the thematic contexts (often called 'domain-specific').

Euskal Curriculuma	(Basque Curriculum)
Konpetentzietan oinarrituta	(Basic competences)
Integrazioaren Pedagogiaz	(Pedagogy of integhration)

Figure 4: Competence-led curriculum design

3.1. Discourse

Unlike traditional language-teaching approaches, with their tendency to grade language to the alleged needs of their customers (the students), a CLIL unit may require a student to use not only the complex low-frequency vocabulary inherent to the subject when it appears *(hypotenuse, photosynthesis, viscosity)* but also the general academic vocabulary that occurs in parallel *(thus, whereas, appropriate)* and the grammatical characteristics of the particular domain *(Marx's basic philosophy derives from dialectical materialism, itself a variety of economic determinism).* Whether this is 'easy or 'difficult' will depend on the tasks the teacher applies and the language support provided, but it is very different language from the type that occupies English-language programmes, even those tied to prestigious examinations such as Cambridge Proficiency. It is very different but occurs in its natural place, at a natural time (cognitively speaking) and is necessary to develop the competences required by the curriculum.

Let us not forget that in L1 academic contexts, in mother-tongue learning, a 12 year-old student may begin the school morning with the language of dissection (for example) in Biology, move on at 10 o'clock to the codified language of mathematics, go for break at 11 o´clock and revert to BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills – Cummins, ibid.) in the playground *'Did you see the match last night? What a goal by Messi eh?'* resume at 11.30 with the technical language of Physics, and then round off the morning with a lesson on the Roman settlements of Hispania. Such a variety of discourse – both understanding and producing it - is too often taken for granted, as is its assimilation by the student. Each subject is, in a sense, a foreign language. As Lee remarked (2006, p.12): "For many pupils, learning to use language to express mathematical ideas will be similar to learning to speak a foreign language".

3.1.1. *Employing language*

CLIL simply institutionalises this reality within different socio-linguistic contexts, employing a set of appropriate methodological parameters, most of which involve language support.

In the Basque Country's interpretation of this paradigm, a good example is that of 'Healthy U' (Figure 5), for 13-14 year-olds (Ball et al, 2014).

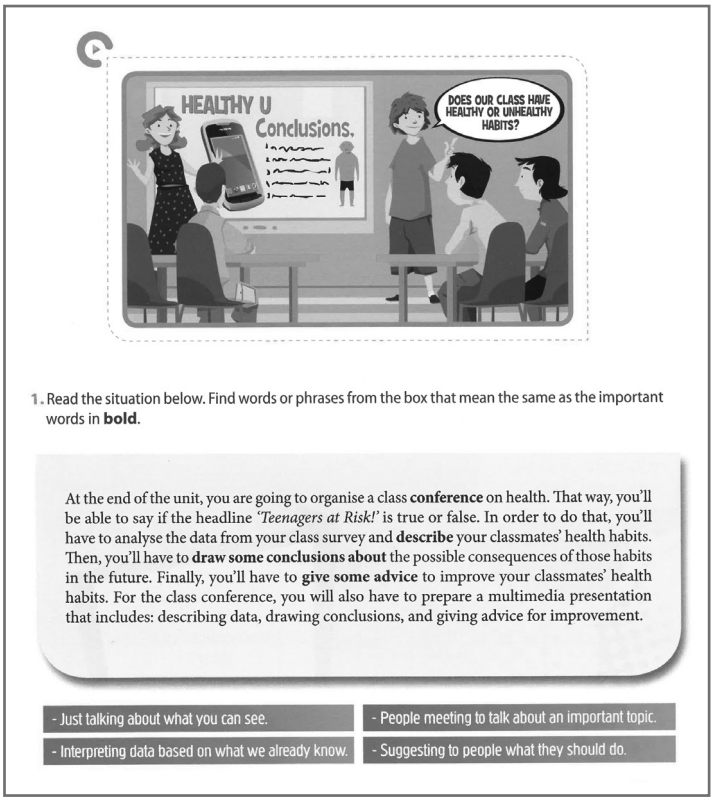

Figure 5: The Complex Integration Task

The students study this unit for approximately 10 weeks of class time (40 hours). The activity above (Activity 7) belongs to the 'Initial Phase' in which the conceptual basis of the unit is established (the science of health) and the procedural requirement – stated in the 'situation' in Figure 5, is made evident to the students through a matching activity. The students are seeing, for the first time in the unit, exactly what they will be required to do at the end of the unit, in what is called a 'complex integration task', integrating the specific concepts, cognitive/operational skills and language into a competence-based *performance*. As the text explains, they must formulate answers to the headline 'Teenagers at Risk!' by the following means:

– Conducting a digital survey on their classmates' health habits

– Describing those habits (the data gathered)

– Drawing conclusions regarding the consequences of those habits

– Giving/suggesting advice on the basis of the results and of the science learned

In strictly scientific terms, they will be required to:

– Gather data

– Describe the data

– Draw conclusions

– Give advice

They do this (in groups) by presenting different aspects of the data gathered, through a multi-media presentation format. This is the 'class conference' mentioned at the beginning of the text in Figure 5. The following link is a video simulation, for the students, of the *complex integration task*. http://www.ekigunea.eus/eu/edukia/dbh2/english/eng-2-2/U/7?lang=en

There is no explicit mention of language, but the discourse frames are obvious. In order to gather data, survey questions are required. The description of that data (once gathered) requires a particular genre of scientific description (see Figure 6). The subsequent language and structural requirements of drawing conclusions are discourse-specific and the proffering of advice also needs a particular type of language, with functional gambits, discourse markers and careful register. There is hardly any need to mention the obvious lexical set (vocabulary) that is inherent to the topic of health, but that is a minor concern here. The students will pass or fail on their ability to display the following competence:

"The student describes data about health habits, presents his or her conclusions regarding the consequences of such habits and makes suggestions for improvement."

The language required to fulfil this competence is the vehicle, and is both introduced and worked on by embedding the salient features of the discourse functions into the 70-page unit and gradually scaffolding the structures necessary for *describing, drawing conclusions* and *giving advice*. As Kelly (2009) maintained, CLIL is basically about: "guiding input and supporting output".

4. The four elements of a competence

However, there are further specific parameters which support the development of competences through language. The *situation* forms the context for the performance of the ESO 2 students in the class conference, but Roegiere's model (2000, ibid.) also specifies four elements to a situational competence. These are *actor, recipient, objective*, and *medium*. These four elements are very useful for both curricular planning and for CLIL teachers. They enable both 'soft' and 'hard' CLIL teachers to build a coherent framework for any didactic unit they need to teach. If the summatively assessed end-product is a subject-specific competence (or set of competences), then the four elements make the planning of a truly communicative task (as in 'Healthy U') much clearer.

In this case, the *actor* is the group informing the *recipient* (class peers) about specific aspects of the data (for example, phone habits and sleeping routines), with the *objective* of offering scientifically-backed advice using the *medium* of a Power-Point presentation. As Ball, Kelly and Clegg (2015, ibid, p.236) maintain, "the actor–recipient–objective–medium relationship is indivisible. The student must understand that the combination of these elements conditions both the language and the manner of presentation".

In other words, if the students were to present this information to members of the adult public, or to their parents *(recipients)*, they might do it in a different way *(medium)* with arguably a different objective – perhaps to merely inform so that the parents can then advise their children more empirically – for example. But the point remains that the situation – the 'why' of the venture - underpinned by the four elements, makes for a powerful communicative framework with which to drive a syllabus and underline the link between competences and language.

4.1. Making key language salient

In the same unit in Figure 6 (Ball et al, Ibid), the student is guided by a simple gap-fill into using the specific type of language necessary for basic data description. This is Activity 11 in the sequence. The learner uses the graph to transfer the data to the incomplete text, which not only embeds the lexis and grammar inherent to data description, but also demonstrates the structural requirements of such a text, for example the opening structure, 'The chart shows……..It compares the following types of food….' This is CALP, and it is not learned in the playground either in the L1 or in the L2. It needs to be demonstrated and practised.

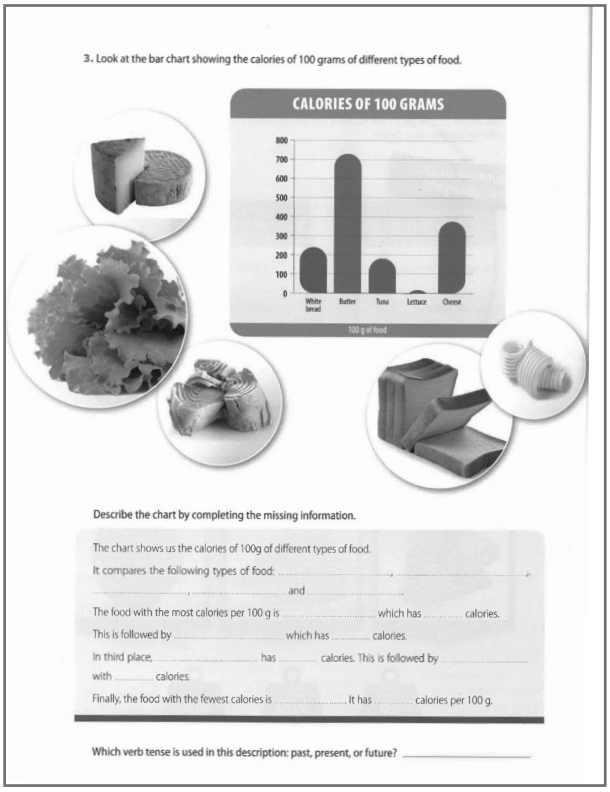

Figure 6: Exploring academic language in the L2

However, when the students arrive at Activity 21, they are expected to apply this new knowledge to a separate concept within the field of health, this time Plastic Surgery (Figure 7). Having been working for the past few activities on the concepts surrounding body image and its attendant psychology, they must describe the data in the manner of the activity in Figure 6, but this time without the scaffolding. The inherent vocabulary is embedded within the graph's key. All the students have to do is rehearse this scientific description by checking back on the working model in Activity 11 – if they need to. This is a good demonstration of language in context, for a real purpose (the eventual situation). If the students want to advise their peers, they need to be able to describe the results they've gathered. But notice that 'describe' is just one linguistic demand. Later in the sequence they will also work on how to advise, and will need the register to do this both, diplomatically and coherently. The grammar, as they say, comes along for the ride.

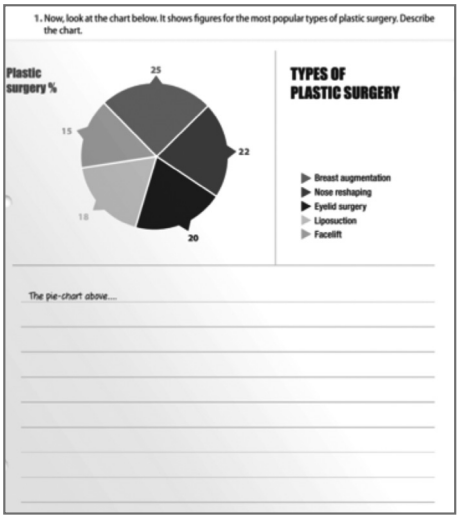

Figure 7: Producing appropriate academic language

Again, this can be achieved by *embedding*, a technique in CLIL materials writing which makes the key language features salient and enables them to be reflected on and subsequently used. For example, in Figure 8, now: on Activity 35 of the unit, the students must read and judge the appropriacy (in terms of language, register and content) of a series of 'Agony Aunt' replies to letters from desperate teenagers. The students have to agree on which the more appropriate ones are, then justify their decisions on linguistic/pragmatic grounds. They then practise this 'advising' by responding to a further set of problem letters.

Dear Steven

Thank yoy for you letter.

You have got a serious problem! Of course exercise is good for you, and if you spend all your time sitting at a computer screen you are going to get very fat, and your eyes will turn square.

You say that you are not very good at sport. Well I´m not surprised - because your never do any! Buy football and practise first on your own. Football is very important! Then you should run a marathon. You´ll love it!

Why don´t you buy a bike, and get out in the cold? It will be good for you. And you must tell your father that he´s stupid to drive you everywhere.

Computers? Well, of course they´re important, but if you die young, beccause of no exercise, you´ll never be a programmer. If I werw, I would get real. Oh - and try not to be so stupid!

Yours sincerely
Hattie Helper

Dear Ivor

Thank you for you letter.
The problem you have is quite rare, but it can be solved. But the most important thing is you. You must want to solve this. You need solve this.
Why not begin by thinking of some brown foods that are healthier than the ones you eat? Steak is ok, for example, but not all the time. How about tryng some lentils, or jacket potatoes? Brown bread is good for you, and another food you could try is brown rice.
Then, little by little, you will be able to eat a better balance of food types.

Yours sincerely
Susan Solver

Figura 8: *Producing appropriate academic language*

4.1.1. *LEST*

We might call this type of teaching LEST - Language Enhanced Subject Teaching (Ball & Lindsay, 2012), and add here another complimentary acronym for language teachers - 'CELT', namely Content Enhanced Language Teaching'. In some ways, these convey a clearer message than the CLIL acronym, because they emphasize the supporting role language plays in the content–language partnership. It is possible that the 'dual focus' of the CLIL acronym has muddied the waters, because teachers are never quite sure which of the two components they are supposed to be emphasising. Furthermore, with regard to the crucial role of assessment in this curricular context, language is assessed in its role as the tool of expression, as the conduit of academic discourse. This can also be true of 'soft' CLIL, whether or not we persist in associating it with the phrase 'language led'—which is a phrase we have questioned. This is a counter-intuitive point for language teachers, but it may represent the future. As seems to be the case, the more students 'do' with language, the more it seems to make sense to them.

We might suggest the following diagram (Figure 9), to summarise the main message of this article:

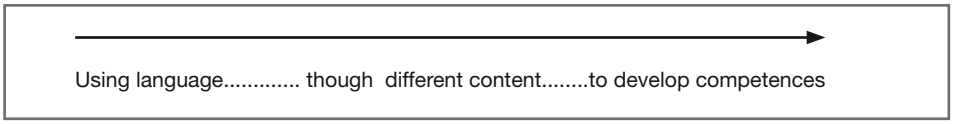

Figure 9: The route to competences

The most interesting aspect of this approach is the unarguable fact that the language inherent to a given competence – if we consider that competence to be a situationally valid one – is that it occurs naturally and it is seen as useful by the learners. CLIL students do not learn the 3rd Conditional by virtue of its artificially graded occurrence after the 2nd Conditional, but rather because the discourse context, at any given moment, might require it. This suits Swain's output hypothesis (1985) perfectly and puts learners into situations that are much more realistic, in terms of the truly pragmatic demands of language, as opposed to those that are graded and carefully filtered into a conventional language-learning textbook.

5. Conclusion

In this article I have suggested that the word 'content' has, up to now, been insufficiently analysed and defined in CLIL circles, and that it might be useful to view the notion of content in three dimensions. The CLIL paradigm represents a movement where language is viewed instrumentally as the vehicle of learning, and we might further suggest that it is an instrumental approach sine qua non. CLIL seems to be attracting the attention of the language teaching world much more than before, and so it is important to train language teachers in both the notion and the shape of content, since their practice will inevitably gain in both conceptual and procedural weight. I have also suggested that language teachers might begin to see their pedagogic objectives in more multi-dimensional terms – not in mere linguistic ones. More importantly, like subject teachers who work with explicit competence-based aims, languaje teachers may come to see procedural content as the main element of their curricular statements and planning, using the linguistic and conceptual dimensions as the willing servants of our changing educational landscape.

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