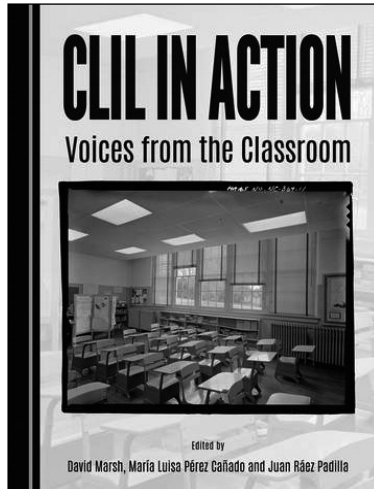


CLIL in Action: Voices from the classroom

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Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a language teaching approach chiefly associated with positive transformation within the foreign language learning arena and predominantly implemented to counter challenges in Europe regarding deficient standards, made an appearance approximately a decade ago. Amidst copious success stories, this in vogue phenomenon of teaching curriculum subjects through a vehicular language has spread through the continent like wildfire and has recently been under inspection, resulting in confusion as to how the construct is interpreted. In line with the foregoing, the volume herein reviewed provides a valuable synopsis of where CLIL is currently at and the direction in which it needs to go

in order to clarify any existing false suppositions and assist in pushing CLIL forward to its furthestmost destination.

This praiseworthy contribution, edited by David Marsh, María Luisa Pérez Cañado and Juan Ráez Padilla, is an indispensable aid for any CLIL researcher, practitioner or stakeholder who wishes to gain an accurate insight into the latest developments of this avant-garde form of education. The pivotal issues regarding CLIL in the current climate are meticulously outlined by means of a well-devised monograph in which a broad array of topics are considered and examined according to three essential domains of CLIL methodology: implementation, research and teacher training. Referring back to the title of the volume, we are reminded that the preeminent objective in question serves to enlighten the reader as to how CLIL is functioning in action. In this respect, we are extensively made aware of the evidence concerning national and international research projects, governmentally-funded pedagogical initiatives, grassroots experiences and innovations, and inter-institutional training programmes.

The book comprises twelve chapters, ten of which are conscientiously clustered to canvass the aspects of CLIL under scrutiny on the three intrinsically linked aforementioned fronts to accommodate the audience with a clear vision of present-day CLIL. With respect to the first grouping, we are presented with a section highlighting CLIL implementation at grassroots level, an undoubtedly fundamental element stemming from the late controversy encompassing its application from conceptual and pedagogical viewpoints. The implicated chapters centre on a needs analysis with respect to assisting CLIL professionals by virtue of a practical reference and bank of materials for schools, an account of CLIL in terms of internet technologies whereby webquests are promoted as tools for task-based learning, and the relationship between CLIL and extramural English prevailing as parallel paths.

A focus on substantial research-based evidence is furnished as a second block of relevant information. Although the vast majority of studies on CLIL programmes are considered to be positive, it is also revealed how the tables have turned pertaining to research in the CLIL dimension with methodological flaws and compromised validity of outcomes taking centre stage, having been disseminated with a new wave of critical voices. Exploitation of variables, research design and statistical methodology are some of the components underscored as problematic, giving rise to five main niches in need of improvement: heterogeneity, effects of CLIL (L1, L2, content), CLIL as a truly responsible factor in optimistic results, individual learner variables and stakeholder perspectives. This second part delves into research areas which should be continually explored in the future to grant CLIL with the status that it deserves. The research showcased unveils conclusions of investigations examining the development of L3 English written competence, the effects of CLIL on lexical phrases in written competence, and written production in CLIL, with a spotlight on accuracy and fluency.

The final theme in the publication puts forward practical proposals in the field of teacher training. This latter facet in the CLIL formula has been defined as a key ingredient to inspire success. It is evinced that considerable funding has been allocated to the preparation of teachers in the way of linguistic and methodological instruction through distinctive initiatives offered by various institutions entailing observation, immersion programmes and university conferences. There is burgeoning action for teachers to thrive within this educational approach with a stepping up of CLIL training on all accounts. Nevertheless, the chapters in this interlinking subdivision expound on high priority inadequacies, which need to be rectified. The crystal-clear layout of insightful sections with opportunely progressive parts is a commendable feature to be recognised.

An irrefutable attribute is evident in the form of an introductory chapter, which establishes an overview of this in-depth volume of contemporary CLIL and acts as a backdrop against which to frame subsequent material. The governing structure of the remit is brought back

to our attention as the three burning issues of how CLIL is implemented, what research has been carried out and in what way teachers have been guided in the CLIL scenario are accentuated. The postscript, in order to conclude the main body of the book, emphasizes CLIL as an innovative practice of the 21st century and stresses remaining obstacles which must be quelled for CLIL to reach its full potential. There is a reference to the publication as 'one milestone' in relation to the interpretation of the concept in an evidence-based context, which is precisely what this comprehensive book can be regarded as in all its glory.