

A literacy approach to language teaching: a proposal for FL teaching in CLIL contexts

Enseñanza de lenguas basada en el desarrollo de la literacidad: una propuesta para la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en el contexto de proyectos AICLE

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Abstract

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is becoming more and more widespread at all educational levels. Learners in this kind of approach show a different attitude as well as different needs towards the foreign language. The present article suggests that these changed needs and attitudes can be met by shifting the focus of foreign language teaching to literacy development. A model of how language teaching with a focus on literacy development could be organised is provided, and an example of a literacy unit is given. The model is both wide enough to allow for teachers to adapt it to their teaching style and understanding of what is important in language teaching, and clear enough to illustrate what is meant by a focus on literacy development in the context of foreign language teaching.

Keywords:

CLIL, foreign language teaching, literacy development

Resumen

Los proyectos de aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lengua extranjera (AICLE) van ganando cada vez más terreno en todos los niveles educativos. El alumnado que cursa este tipo de enseñanza presenta unas actitudes y necesidades diferentes hacia el aprendizaje de la lengua extranjera. El presente artículo propone una enseñanza basada en el desarrollo de la literacidad para dar respuesta a estas nuevas actitudes y necesidades en todos los niveles educativos. Se presenta un modelo que plasma este enfoque y se ilustra a partir de una unidad didáctica diseñada para su uso en el primer y/o segundo curso de enseñanza primaria. El modelo que se presenta es lo suficientemente amplio como para permitir a los docentes adaptarlo a su estilo y forma de entender la enseñanza, y al mismo tiempo lo suficientemente claro como para explicar qué se entiende bajo un enfoque de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras basado en el desarrollo de la literacidad.

Palabras clave:

AICLE, enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, desarrollo de la literacidad

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1. Introduction

The past few decades have seen the rise of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as a solution to the perceived inefficacy of language teaching in compulsory education. The idea was simple: if the foreign language becomes the language of instruction in a number of curricular areas, students' exposure to the language will increase, and their level improve (Eurydice, 2006). However, it did not take long for practitioners to realise that it was not enough to simply change the language of instruction; rather, it was necessary to change the approach to teaching the content subject in the foreign language to ensure concept-building and skill development at similar levels to those found in mother tongue teaching (Coyle, Marsh and Hood, 2010; Llinares and Pastrana, 2013). Furthermore, students' language development required more than simple exposure to the language, making it necessary to plan linguistic scaffolding, on the one hand, and expand the language students were able to use on the other (Ball, Kelly and Clegg, 2015). While content subject teaching was undergoing these changes in the context of bilingual education programs, the teaching of the foreign language as such remained largely unaffected, so that in more traditional educational contexts like Spain, students would be encouraged to use the foreign language and communicate about meaningful contents at a high level in their content subjects while at the same time following a grammar-based curriculum focused on learning about the language rather than using it (Cerezo García, 2007; Roldán Tapia, 2009; Morata and Coyle, 2012). In the following paragraphs I would like to present an alternative approach to teaching English that meets both the possibilities and the needs of students involved in CLIL programs, and thus constitutes a proposal that mirrors the methodological change that has taken place in the content subjects.

2. The changed possibilities and needs of students in CLIL contexts

The greater exposure to language and the fact that students use the language as a vehicle for communication and learning in CLIL contexts leads to a change in attitude, with students being happy to use the foreign language, at least "when there is no explicit focus on students' language skills" (Nikula, 2007, p. 221). Together with this, a number of studies have shown that being immersed in a CLIL-type program also has positive effects on students' motivation towards the foreign language (Merisuo-Storm, 2007; Doiz, Lagasabaster and Sierra, 2014; Lasagabaster and López Belóqui, 2015). Thus, generally speaking, the profile of learners that are coming into the "traditional" FL lessons in CLIL programs has

changed: where before there were learners with a low level of English who often could see little sense in learning English and were not prepared to use it, we now have learners with higher degrees of proficiency in most language areas (Admiraal et al., 2006; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015), who are willing and motivated to learn the language, and, above all, use it as a tool to communicate (Slyvén, 2017).

However, these learners also have new needs in relation to the language. Thus, even though their language level is generally higher than before, these gains do not equally apply to all areas of language, so that the following have been seen to benefit less from the increased exposure and use of the foreign language in CLIL contexts (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2011):

- Syntax
- Productive vocabulary
- Informal/non-technical language
- Pronunciation (degree of foreign accent)
- Pragmatics

And yet, in order to be successful in learning through a foreign language, and as language learners and users in general, students will need to develop a balanced level in the language.

Furthermore, despite the higher levels of proficiency they achieve, students' linguistic resources are still limited if compared to those in their mother tongue, and yet they are asked to fully participate in content classes taught in the foreign language. Of course, teachers are aware of these limitations and will adapt the language used in class accordingly (Gibbons, 2002), but learning through the medium of a foreign language implies that students will need to stretch their language abilities beyond their actual proficiency level to be able to fully benefit from and participate in their content learning. This will require them to be able to draw on communication strategies, as well as use learning strategies, to overcome the problems they may encounter. At the same time, students need to become more skilled learners through the development of metacognitive skills that will allow them to identify where communication becomes difficult and look for ways to overcome these problems. In addition, learning content in the foreign language locates much of the learning at levels beyond the sentence, which is often the level targeted in traditional language teaching (Mickan, 2013; Lorenzo, 2016), and works on more extended text, both orally and in writing, and both in comprehension and production. Thus, again, from the perspective of learners' needs, language teaching has to change to incorporate a focus on these elements, that are frequently not part of mainstream FL teaching, so as to allow learners to benefit fully from the potential advantages of increased exposure to and use of a foreign language.

Finally, if the integration of language and content teaching that lies at the heart of CLIL, is to be achieved, language teaching will also have to play a supporting role for content teaching in preparing the linguistic ground on which content teaching is to be built (Lyster, 2017, p. 29). In this sense, rather than follow a pre-designed grammatical syllabus, whose usefulness has been questioned widely anyway (Coyle et al. 2010), the organization and sequencing of aspects to be worked on could be derived from the needs of the content subjects (Halbach, 2014; Pavón Vázquez, 2014).

Thus, what we need in language teaching in CLIL contexts is an approach that is minimally characterised by:

- (1) Preparing students for the linguistic requirements of the content subjects
- (2) Offering students possibilities to use the language to communicate about meaningful content
- (3) Naturally integrating a focus on form so that students make progress in all areas, including those that do not necessarily profit from the increased exposure to the foreign language
- (4) Working on both cognitive and metacognitive strategies to allow students to meet the challenge of learning in a foreign language, as well as on communication strategies in order to overcome possible linguistic limitations.

This article contends that these requirements can be met when the focus of FL lessons turns to the development of literacy in the foreign language, thus, in a way, adopting an approach that is more typical of mother-tongue teaching, at least in the Anglo-Saxon tradition (Cambridge Assessment 2013).

3. What literacy development offers to foreign language teaching

Traditionally, in language teaching, even in the Communicative Approach, language has been seen – and taught – as an object of study, not acknowledging its role as social semiotic, or tool for making meaning (Mickan, 2013). This explains the focus of language teaching on the elements of the language - grammar and lexis -, which has led to these elements being removed from their natural contexts of use – texts. However, “[i]t is an irony that pedagogies dismantle texts, reduce discourse to a list of grammatical items and words extracted from texts, only for learners to have to learn how to reassemble the objects as texts for participation in communication” (Mickan, 2017, p. 21). Thus, it would

seem more reasonable to work on the language in its context of use which, more often than not, is text, whether oral or written. We live in / by / with texts, and thus texts form the natural form of language use.

Making text the organising principle in language teaching allows, on the other hand, for a natural integration of skills work (Kern, 2003; Mickan, 2013) as reading leads naturally into writing, and listening into speaking, by using both written and oral texts as a model for students' production. At the same time, texts will be discussed, and they trigger a reaction from the students, thus again making it possible for them to talk and write about what they have read or listened to.

This skills integration, which results from using texts as an overarching guiding principle, also allows for meaningful contextualisation of language work. Different genres or text-types typically require different types of organizational patterns, cohesive devices, language functions, etc. Students are able to experience these differentiated uses of language in context (Mickan, 2013) rather than having to figure out how and when to use the elements of language they have studied in isolation. Likewise, different text types on various topics require different kinds of lexis which are built around a common semantic field. As promoted in the Lexical Approach (Lewis, 1993), the fact that lexis is learnt and used in a context also fosters work with language chunks rather than vocabulary items in isolation. The same contextualized, and therefore meaningful, learning becomes possible in relation to pronunciation, with correct intonation and pronunciation becoming a tool for successful literacy practice, rather than an end in itself. Thus, literacy-based teaching needs direct instruction of language, but language that is contextualised and purpose-oriented.

Finally, students come to language classes with experience of texts, and this allows them to access language in a natural context from very early on - they transfer what they already know about the way meaning is made in texts to deal with texts in a foreign language (Mickan, 2017). This is both satisfactory for students who are exposed to meaningful communication from the very start, and necessary for them to expand their repertoires of texts to include those of the target culture as we focus "on providing learners with structured guidance in the thinking that goes into reading, writing and speaking appropriately in particular contexts" (Kern, 2003, p. 58). Thus, the focus is no longer on learning the language per se, but rather on understanding, and socializing into, language uses as characteristic of the foreign language culture. This, in turn, helps students understand their own culture and develop the intercultural skills needed in the 21st century.

Literacy development as the focus of foreign language teaching has taken various specific shapes, either as the literacy-based language teaching proposed by Kern (2000; 2003), Burns (2012) and Paesani et al. (2016) focused mainly on reading and writing, and developed with the specific aim of providing greater coherence between beginning and

advanced university language teaching programs the US, or as text-based or genre-based language teaching. In genre-based approaches, the focus is on the linguistic realization of genres, particularly the specific genres of schooling and of the disciplines (Flowerdew and Peacock, 2001; Hyland, 2007). This approach was developed mainly for L1 students, to enable them to successfully participate in the literacy activities specific to each academic subject, or for foreign language learners in university settings, particularly in courses for languages for specific purposes (Dudley-Evans, 2000). In a text-based approach, finally, the focus is on the social purpose of texts. This approach has been used mainly for curriculum development for second or additional language students, particularly recent immigrants (Mickan, 2013; Mickan, 2017). Common to all these approaches is the use of text as an organizing principle for language teaching, thus allowing for integrated skills work and a contextualized focus on language as used with a communicative purpose.

None of these approaches, however, addresses the specific needs of (sometimes young) learners across a range of language levels, with limited prior experience of text and who still need to develop their skills in critical thinking, typical of EFL learners in CLIL programs. Neither do they work on students' literacy development in a foreign language as a preparation for their encounters with texts in the content subjects or focus on the development of strategies to aid communication and learning. It is to address these students' needs that the approach to FL teaching was developed that is going to be the focus of the rest of this article. Notwithstanding these differences, the literacy approach described below is informed by the other literacy-based approaches to foreign language teaching discussed above.

4. A literacy approach to teaching the FL

The literacy approach presented here takes texts in its broadest sense as its central organising principle and follows a backward syllabus design as proposed by Wiggins and McTighe (2006). In this kind of syllabus design, the process of planning a course or unit of work can be divided into the following basic steps:

1. Identifying desired outcomes;
2. Determining acceptable assessment evidence;
3. Planning the learning experience

(adapted from Korotchenkoa, Matveenkoa, Strelnikovaa, and Phillips, 2015, p. 214)

The desired learning outcome in this approach is the development of students' literacy skills in the foreign language, i.e. their ability to deal with different text-types, both oral and

written, in both understanding and production as a preparation for the work they will have to do in the content subjects and as a site for the development communication and learning strategies. More specifically, within this approach, the desired outcome is students' ability to produce texts that adhere to the conventions specific to each text type or genre, to its social purpose and to its context of use. The nature of the text to be produced can be as simple or as complex as required, since the approach proposed is usable with learners of all levels and ages. At a basic level, the text could consist of a simple, three-sentence description of a monster created by the students, based on Julie Donaldson and Axel Sheffler's *The Gruffalo*, and at a more advanced level it could be a running commentary of a fashion show of the students' favourite designer. The actual choice of text, on the other hand,

is determined by the particular social practices we want students to join in and by the objectives of a course of study or programme. The aim is to target those texts directly related to the programme of instruction and chosen for the level of learners' proficiency, experience and expertise. (Mickan, 2017, p. 27)

This alignment to students' needs and possibilities, and to the objectives of a course of study allows us to choose texts that prepare students for the work done in the content subjects.

Once this final product has been defined, the next step requires finding the "acceptable assessment evidence" (Korotchenkoa, Matveenkoa, Strelnikovaa, & Phillips, 2015, p. 214) which involves, above all, the identification of the particular text features - stylistic, cultural, structural and linguistic - that will be looked for in students' production. These can be of many different kinds, related to the genre moves, to the typical sequence of the elements of the text, to language functions or even grammatical structures, and to the lexis characteristic of the text type or its prosodic features. Since any text may show a great number of these different textual elements, it will quite probably become necessary to select a number of them that are of particular relevance to the students at any particular moment in their development. As in *Assessment for Learning* (Heitink et al., 2016), teachers have to clarify (and share) their "learning intentions or goals and success criteria" (51). While the overarching aim is still to produce a given text-type, it is vital that both teachers and students are aware of the text features that make their text production successful, and that they work towards practising these features so that they become part of their language repertoire (Hyland, 2007).

It is precisely this directed practice to prepare students' successful production which forms the third step in the planning process. Here, teachers will look at students' current ability, where they are in the learning process, and decide how they are going to support

students' learning and progress to make it possible for them to reach the learning outcome selected in the first step of the planning sequence. Thus, in this step, learning activities and materials are selected (Richards, 2013, p. 26), which, in the approach presented here always involve (mainly authentic) texts students work on to gain a feeling for the way language is used to make specific meanings, and for the nature of the text they will have to produce. As in other text-based approaches, "there is no dogmatic method associated with literacy-based teaching. Rather, learners' needs can be addressed using a wide variety of instructional activities" (Kern, 2003, p. 50) adapted to the learners' level and age. There is, nevertheless, a suggested sequence of different steps in the learning path towards achieving the final production goal, which will be explained in the next section.

Using a backward design to plan literacy development in the FL, as suggested in this article, according to Paesani (2017) has the advantage of helping to clarify and structure teaching, as teachers "are focused on what students should know and be able to do after completing a lesson, unit, course, or program" (3). Thus, the focus is on what students will be able to do at the end of the unit and what instruction is necessary for them to be able to reach this goal. This avoids the textbook being used as the curriculum, and stops teachers creating one-off activities that have no clear learning objective, or whose learning objective is not aligned with the aims of the unit or course as a whole. Finally, empirical evidence shows that this kind of planning can have a positive impact on students' learning and motivation (Paesani, 2017, p. 4).

5. Structuring the work with texts

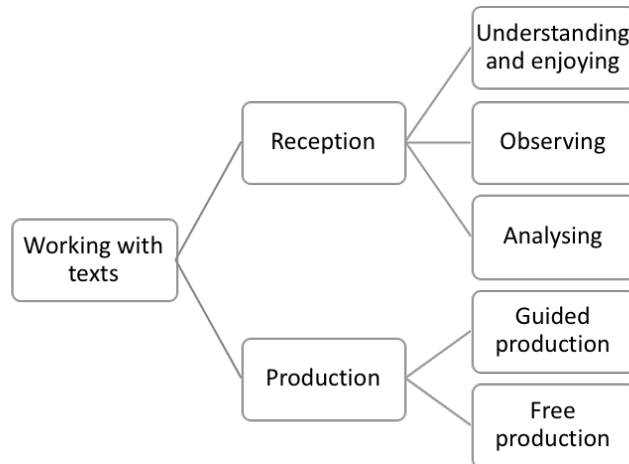


Figure 1. Steps in the learning sequence

As mentioned above, the actual learning sequence in the literacy approach to the FL proposed here, where students work with texts and where they develop awareness of text genres as well as an ability to produce own texts, can be divided into two main phases: reception and production (see figure 1). Thus, in the first of these phases, students are exposed to a text that either serves as a model of the text they will produce themselves in the last part of the unit or invites a response to it. In the latter case, it is the response text that is identified as the learning outcome of this specific unit. Since texts, both oral and written, are acts of meaning-making that are socially embedded, we first need to fulfil the purpose of the text by understanding and enjoying it (Mickan, 2017). Thus, the first step in the teaching sequence needs to be focused on the contents of the text and understanding what it is trying to communicate, as well as perceiving/enjoying its intended purpose. This process of understanding is structured and scaffolded by the teacher as necessary through activities to warm-up, create expectations or guide students' understanding.

Once the input text has been understood, enjoyed and meaningfully communicated about with regard to its topic, in the next step the focus will be on the way the text creates an effect and communicates meaning. While the former – creating an effect – depends more on rhetorical strategies, stylistic devices and the ordering of elements in the text, the latter is related to the actual linguistic elements used. To distinguish between these two aspects of the study of text, they have been called “observing” and “analysing” respectively. Here students may work on language functions, identify the structure of the input text, and thus of the text type they are working on, or create word webs with lexis from the text, to name but a few possibilities. The aim at this stage is to guarantee that students have the necessary textual awareness and linguistic means to be successful when it comes to producing their own text – oral or written. It goes without saying that although this phase in the teaching sequence is described as direct instruction, this does not imply that it needs to be based on teacher-fronted or individual work. Rather, a variety of activity types and interaction modes can and should be used to make sure students have enough opportunities to experiment and play with the language and the text before they are asked to produce their own.

Once the reception phase has been completed, attention can turn to the second one, focused on the production of students' own texts. This phase can, in turn, be divided into two steps, guided and free production, since before they are asked to produce their own texts, students should be given an opportunity to put the newly gained, and practised, knowledge into use in guided writing activities. In this guided production stage, text production is still heavily scaffolded by means of focusing on different phases of the writing process, drawing on peers' strengths and abilities through pair- and group-work, or by providing writing frames to ease part of the strain of writing, for example. This should give students greater confidence as well as strategic knowledge to produce the final texts. Again, how

exactly this guided writing phase is designed allows for many different options, but what is important is that students are given this further opportunity for scaffolded practice before they are asked to produce their own oral or written texts.

With this the process comes to its final stage: the students' production. Needless to say, we are dealing with written as much as oral text, and the production need not be individual, and even less solitary. Once again, the exact shape this writing / speaking activity takes is not defined, but it should be embedded in a process approach, in which students plan, draft and revise their texts, and where the revision particularly focuses on the textual features, linguistic, functional, discursive and stylistic, that had previously been identified as characteristic of successful texts of the type worked on.

6. A sample literacy unit

In order to make the proposed approach to foreign language teaching come alive, I will present an example aimed at young learners (see Appendix for full lesson description). The aim of the lesson, as was briefly mentioned above, is for students to produce a simple, three-sentence description of a monster they have designed, based on *The Gruffalo*. This aim thus constitutes the starting point for the unit plan, and at the same time its end point and result.

The input in this case takes the form of the well-known story book, and starts with a traditional warm-up exercise, where children guess what the story is about and who the characters are, based on the title of the story and on the cover of the book. Then the story is read out in whatever way the teacher considers most suitable for this particular group of children. They may predict what is going to happen next after each page, there may be some questions to check understanding, students may act out the story or the teacher may accompany the reading with pointing. What is important here is that the children understand and enjoy the story. This understanding is then worked on in the last part of the reading phase where the teacher and the students revise and correct their predictions about the story, and then complete a short summary of the plot. This summary-writing is heavily scaffolded through a writing frame, as the aim of this part of the exercise is still the understanding of the story, and not production. The exact shape and interactional pattern in each of these sub-tasks is flexible and can be adapted to the context where the lesson is developed.

From this point on, the rest of the lesson is geared towards enabling students to be successful in their final production. In a first step, students are asked to identify relevant vocabulary items by labelling a picture of the Gruffalo, not with single words, but with the adjective + noun combinations that appear in the original text (*terrible tusks, poisonous wart, etc.*). Once the lexical building blocks have been identified, children will use them

to describe the Gruffalo. As an additional help, a few of the typical sentence structures have been collected in the form of a table students can refer to, both in this and in the final production exercise. These structures could be considered prototypical of very simple descriptions, thus working with language that is relevant to this particular text-type. This genre-specific work could be complemented by looking at features of text-organisation, although in the case of *The Gruffalo* there is no identifiable order in which the different features of the monster are mentioned.

The next move in this unit involves children collaboratively drawing their own monsters through a game. Finally, in the last part of this form-focussed work, the attention shifts, once again, to lexis by asking children to brainstorm interesting descriptive words to describe their monsters, or to look them up in a dictionary. These words are then collected and grouped on a class poster, so that they become part of a shared resource for all students. Once the students have worked on both lexis and structures, they are ready to produce their own little texts.

This is an example of the planning model at its simplest, but the sequence reading – observing – analysing – guided production – free production can have as many iterations as necessary, and be as complex as needed, with different aspects becoming the focus of class work through different means. There may well be more than one input text, with, for example, students reading a narrative description of an experiment in one of the Harry Potter books (input 1) and turning it into a lab report with the help of a model (input 2). The possibilities are manifold, and will essentially depend on the level of students, their needs, including those stemming from the content subjects, and the specific characteristics of the text to be produced. This flexibility also characterises the way in which the actual tasks are set up, both in terms of interactional patterns and of teaching approach, allowing for a greater or lesser degree of creativity, including a greater or lesser focus on learning strategies, etc.

7. Old wine in new bottles?

The flexibility that characterizes the literacy approach to language teaching, and the fact that it is open to integrating well-known activity types has its dangers. It often reminds language teachers of the approach to language found in textbooks, whose written and oral texts tend to exemplify the use of the grammatical structure(s) the specific unit of work focuses on. However, the differences between the typical textbook approach and the literacy approach are manifold.

First of all, the starting point of the unit design in a literacy approach is never a grammatical structure, or any linguistic element for that matter. Rather, the starting point is

a text-type that students should be able to produce at the end of the unit. This text-type may be characterized by the use of a specific language function, rather than grammatical structure, but its production will never be the main aim of a unit of work, unless as part of a text which typically requires its use. Secondly, together with more linguistic elements such as language functions, lexis or aspects of pronunciation, students will need to identify and become able to use the rhetorical elements typical of a specific text-type, thus moving the focus of lessons beyond the language as element of study to the use of that language for communication in specific text types. True enough, the work on both aspects, linguistic and rhetorical, requires a certain degree of study and practice, thus resembling a traditional PPP sequence, but always from the perspective of helping students produce a certain type of text.

It is this production aim that also distinguishes this approach from the more traditional language teaching prevalent in Spanish classrooms. Students are guided through the whole teaching sequence towards this final aim, starting from their present level and from the identification of the characteristics of the texts they will have to produce, both in terms of the language it uses and the way it is constructed. Thus, the scaffolding designed to accompany the production exercise, which is conspicuously absent in many textbooks, is not limited to aspects such as grammatical accuracy or the structure of paragraphs but includes other text-features such as creating tension or making descriptions vivid. Students are thus guided into becoming skilled users of language for meaning-making through oral and written texts.

Finally, it is precisely this way of looking at text, and the preparation given to students to become able to create these texts, that establishes a natural link to the content subjects, and thus makes this approach especially suitable for CLIL programs. Each subject deals with a specific area of understanding that, in turn, is characterized by communicating through specific text types (Llinares et al. 2012). However, the ability to create and understand these subject-specific text types is grounded on the skill to deal with other, more general, text-types. Thus, in order to be able to describe a scientific experiment in the science class, students will first need to develop the ability to describe processes in general in the shape of cooking recipes, instructions or reports, for example. By working on these less specialized text types with their attendant rhetorical and linguistic features in the English language lessons, we are clearing the ground for the development of the subject specific text types in the content lessons, provided, of course, there is coordination between content teachers and language teachers. To make their text-selection relevant to the needs of the content subjects, EFL teachers will first need to know what kind of texts students will face in these subjects. If this is guaranteed, EFL lessons can directly support the teaching of the content subjects through English, hence its suitability for CLIL contexts, even though the literacy approach as such is not limited to use in these contexts only.

8. Conclusion

Students participating in CLIL-type programs come to their foreign language classes with different needs and attitudes than regular FL learners in schools. They are exposed to much more language, which is likely to impact positively on their language levels and willingness to use the language for communication, but they also need more tools to deal with their limited language skills in a context where the language grants them access to knowledge and learning. These students will, therefore, be looking for an approach to language teaching that moves well beyond the study of language elements to the use of this language for communication and learning. An approach focussing on the development of literacy skills includes this focus on learning, allows for a greater cognitive challenge in language teaching and also creates the necessary space to include a focus on strategy development.

The approach has so far been tried out by a small number of teachers in bilingual schools at both primary and secondary level (Froilán, 2015; Jechimer, 2015). Results are encouraging, showing a boost in students' motivation, as well as a greater willingness to take risks and make a more creative use of the foreign language than in textbook-guided lessons. Students seem to be perceiving form focussed work as more relevant, and thus remember the linguistic functions and lexis more easily over time. Research is currently being conducted to move beyond these first impressions. However, even more important than improved learning outcomes may be that, through this approach, teachers feel they have found a more empowering and creative way to teach, they have found their own place in the context of CLIL where everything seemed to revolve around content teaching and teachers of all subjects had suddenly become language teachers.

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1 In my understanding of text, I adhere to Paesani, Allen and Dupuy's 2016 definition: "we define texts to include written, oral, visual, audiovisual and digital documents, or documents that combine one or more of these modalities" (Paesani, Allen and Dupuy, 2016, p. 14).

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Appendix: Sample lesson plan

READING	<p>(1) Show children the cover of the book and read out the title. Ask them prediction questions about the story (Who is the story about? Is he kind or bad?...)</p> <p>(2) Read <i>The Gruffalo</i>. Make sure children are able to see the illustrations. Talk about different animals as you go, look at what kinds of animals they are, etc.</p> <p>(3) Review children’s predictions with the whole class: Were they right? If not, can they correct them?</p> <p>(4) Using model sentences, ask children to summarize the story: <i>This story is about a _____ and some _____. It tells us how the _____ invents _____ that in the end turns out to be _____.</i></p>																		
ANALYZING	<p>(1) Give students the appropriate pages from <i>The Gruffalo</i> (project on whiteboard). What does the Gruffalo look like? Label the picture.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>(2) Ask students to form sentences to describe the Gruffalo using the following table to help:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Article/pronoun</th> <th>Noun</th> <th>Verb</th> <th>Adjective</th> <th>Noun</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Its</td> <td>eyes tongue</td> <td>are is</td> <td>orange black</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>The</td> <td>It Gruffalo</td> <td>has</td> <td>terrible purple turned-out</td> <td>tusks prickles toes</td> <td>all over its back</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Article/pronoun	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Noun		Its	eyes tongue	are is	orange black			The	It Gruffalo	has	terrible purple turned-out	tusks prickles toes	all over its back
Article/pronoun	Noun	Verb	Adjective	Noun															
Its	eyes tongue	are is	orange black																
The	It Gruffalo	has	terrible purple turned-out	tusks prickles toes	all over its back														

(3) Game:

Each child will get a pencil and an A3 piece of paper folded into thirds. Firstly they should write their name on the back of the piece of paper! They should draw a monster head in the top section of the paper, making sure that the lines of the neck extend down into the next section. Then they should fold their head over so it is no longer visible.

Each sheet will be passed to the right and children should then draw a monster middle (including arms and belly) in the middle section, making sure the lines of the middle extend into the lower section. Then they should fold their middle over so it is no longer visible.

Each sheet will again be passed to the right and children should then draw monster legs in the bottom section (two legs, or more!?). Then each sheet will be passed back to the person who it began with, and that person can unfold the sheet to reveal their monster. Tell them to write a name for their monster at the top of the sheet!

Monster description!

Make sure you use some of these wow words!

What does your monster look like?

think of?	gangly	skinny	fat	scaly	Any other words you can
	tall	thin	stocky	athletic	
	lanky	scraggy	beefy	hairy	
	short	scrawny	chubby		

Skin colour

apricot	caramel	nut-brown
black	cream	olive
bronze	ivory	brown

Skin appearance

flushed	pasty	ruddy
freckled	pale	spotchy
glowing	rosy	

Skin texture

spotty	leathery	scarred
craggy	peeling	wrinkled
greasy	sunburnt	soft

(adapted from <http://www.te.com/teaching-resources/where-the-wild-things-are>)

(4) Each child should now annotate their monster with interesting descriptive words. Try to use as much detail as possible!

(5) Words are then collected on a common poster (see model) and children complete their descriptive words.

GUIDED PRODUCTION

FREE PRODUCTIONN	<ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Children write a short description of their monster using the sentence structures from exercise C.2 and the words from exercise C.4.(2) As a fun way of checking, collect and redistribute the writings. Children have to read another student's description and find the correct monster. They then correct the description paying attention to sentence structure and spelling.
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