

CLIL Lesson Planning in Primary Education: a case study.

Abstract:

The lack of appropriate teaching materials and lesson planning guidelines in CLIL education has required the research on strategies to be implemented in multilingual classrooms. This study intends to analyze a lesson planning procedure of a CLIL Primary Science lesson and its consequences in the classroom in accordance with a CLIL planning tool offered by Do Coyle (2005): the 4Cs-Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION.

In recent years, many programmes and projects related to multilingualism have increased and have been implemented in educational centers all over Europe. Many of these programmes are already present in different educational areas in both compulsory and non-compulsory levels. This trend is motivated by the guidelines of the European Union (EU) that directs its work towards a multilingual society. According to the EU, one of the challenges of the current society is to train students to master different languages, to promote intercultural dialogue and a greater social cohesion and integration.

The present paper provides a sample of a CLIL unit planning procedure to give answer to some of the questions regarding methodology and materials design arising among the bilingual teaching community.

1.1. Multilingualism.

We can define the concept multilingualism as the ability to communicate in different languages. This concept has gained a tremendous success in the recent years.

In the teaching field it can be defined as the use of a foreign language as a teaching-learning tool to transmit content from different disciplines. The common denominator of all teaching centres performing a bilingual education programme is simply the fact that some of the content-based subjects are taught in a second language, which does not usually match the mother tongue of most students.

2. INTRODUCTION TO CLIL.

The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) initiative has experienced a considerable growth and it is being integrated into curricula all across Europe. The domain of at least three languages is regarded as one of the basic skills that everyone should acquire in European educational spaces during the course of their learning life (Council of Europe, 2001).

CLIL is a dual educational approach in which content and language must be combined. The language is used as a medium to communicate contents, but also as a subject to learn. CLIL is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language with the objective of promoting both content mastery and language to pre-defined levels (Maljers, et al, 2010).

CLIL has gained a tremendous success and its influence on practice is currently expanding quickly across the Spanish country (Lasagabaster and Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). The positive effects of CLIL demonstrated by recent research are highly notorious. (See Cenoz, 2009; Lorenzo et al, 2011; Dalton-Puffer and Smit, 2007; among others). CLIL offers students of all ages a natural context for language development. This naturalness seems to be one of the key factors for successful both of the subject contents and language learning. CLIL does not only pursue the development of language skills. There is evidence that students who learn different languages develop better cognitive processes. Content learning is beneficial if conducted in a foreign language. This is because, on the one hand, students have to strive to decode the information conveyed in the foreign language and, on the other hand, the professor must make an extra effort so that all students can reach the information and content in a language different from the native.

3. A NEW METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) requires a swift in methodologies used in traditional language and content teaching. However, there is still a lack of appropriate teaching materials, strategies and methodological resources. Consequently, a desperate demand of new methodological and teaching techniques has arisen among the bilingual teaching community (Salaberri and Sánchez, 2012), being imperiously necessary to foster a well-defined training plan for CLIL teachers (Salaberri, 2010).

In order to achieve successful CLIL results in primary classrooms, new methodological approaches and strategies are needed. For this purpose, teachers should encourage among their students:

- Activities to develop children's motor, emotional, social and intellectual capacities.
- Encourage oral skills in order to promote interaction.
- Focus on the importance of routine language.
- Adopt a concept-centered vs. grammar-centered approach
- Avoid fragmented and disperse treatment of content issues.

The intended purpose for the new language policies is to promote a multilingual education, consisting of assessing and developing linguistic repertoires of speakers from early learning stages and throughout a lifetime, and an education for multilingualism, which constitutes a condition of maintaining linguistic diversity. This approach involves learning different subjects such as science, art or history, among others, through a different language, which can be very successful in enhancing the learning of languages and other subjects, and developing in the youngsters a positive 'can do' attitude towards themselves as language learners (Marsh and Langé, 2000).

In order to implement learning instructions that meet these principles, there are no standards solutions, but multiple options that allow the creation of multilingual learning techniques. The success of this multilingual global project depends on the design of new curricular organizations and new organizational forms of teaching. Its progressive implementation requires the collective cooperation of the administrative field, in the syllabus and curricula determination and in the teaching practices.

3.1. Need for an integrated curriculum.

Some difficulties in combining the dual perspective language-content in bilingual classrooms have been detected among bilingual teachers. The multilingual school programmes demand a restructuration of the traditional curriculum models. The European Commission has noted the need to adapt language curricula to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR). This adaptation implies a big change in the in the teaching process of bilingual professionals.

The new curricular model must cover all of the languages that are studied at all educational stages (Lorenzo, et al 2005). School communities should be provided with an integrated language and non-language curriculum. Thus language must be integrated into the curriculum and it should be considered as the subject of all subjects and a special framework must be created for language teaching and learning. We should not forget that language is a tool which favours and makes possible the structure of knowledge, and at the same time, it aids in the discovery of another culture, another worldview and other ways of life. But it should also enable us to do things such as teaching how to learn, how to discover, how to be.

The language integrated curriculum intends to analyze the possibility of language training defragment. It must lead to language teachers to reflect and consider ways to:

- Allow a better command of written and spoken codes.
- Promote a reflection about communication, human language and foreign languages.
- Encourage a reflexive critic on the knowledge related to languages.
- Publicize the languages heritage in Europe.
- Develop verbal and non-verbal creativity.
- Enter an aesthetic of verbal creations and an approximation to literary texts.
- Know other societies.

This new curricular approach should focus on the student, who should be awarded the category of the person responsible for the learning process, an individual who communicates and develops his or her own learning strategies, and therefore learns to learn. Oral and written skills in the mother tongue and in the foreign language(s) should be taught and practiced in an integrated manner, attempting to simulate real-life communication processes. The development of communicative strategies which compensate the lack of competence in the foreign language should be encouraged, as should the transfer of those which have already been developed in the mother tongue. Oral communication in the classroom is seen as something common to everyone, as well as being the most authentic means of communication. For that very reason, foreign languages should be used as the essential medium of communication. With foreign languages, the classroom context should also be used to create simulations of situations related to the world outside.

4. LESSON PLANNING TOOLS.

4.1. The 4 Cs Framework.

In the present paper, we will focus on a lesson planning tool offered by Do Coyle (2006) namely the 4Cs-Framework (Coyle, 2006), which offers a sound theoretical and methodological foundation for planning CLIL lessons and constructing materials

because of its integrative nature. The 4Cs-Framework is built on the following principles:

1. **Content:** Content matter is not only about acquiring knowledge and skills; it is about the learners creating their own knowledge and understanding and developing skills (personalized learning). It is content which initially guides the overall planning along the learning route. At the heart of the learning process lies successful content or thematic learning and the related acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding. Content is the subject or the CLIL theme.
2. **Cognition:** Content is related to learning and thinking. To enable the learners to create their own interpretation of content, it must be analyzed for its linguistic demands; thinking processes need to be analyzed in terms of their linguistic demands. For CLIL to be effective, it must challenge learners to create new knowledge and develop new skills through reflection and engagement in higher-order as well as lower-order thinking. CLIL is not about the transfer of knowledge from an expert to a novice. CLIL is about allowing individuals to construct their own understandings and be challenged.
3. **Communication:** Language needs to be learned, which is related to the learning context, learning through that language, reconstructing the content and its related cognitive processes. This language needs to be transparent and accessible; interaction in the learning context is fundamental to learning. This has implications when the learning context operates through the medium of a foreign language; Language is a conduit for communication and for learning which can be described as: *learning to use language and using language to learn*. Communication in this sense goes beyond the grammar system. For this purpose, three different types of language learning should be considered:
 - **Language of learning:** which consists of the essential lexicon/grammar associated to the topic.
 - **Language for learning:** which is the language needed to operate in the lesson, in contexts real for the learners.
 - **Language through learning:** related to the language needed to engage learners cognitively and to generate new language use.
4. **Culture:** Studying through a different language is fundamental to fostering international understanding. If learners understand the concept of ‘otherness’ then this is likely to lead to a deeper understanding of ‘self’ (Byram, 2008). This aspect includes intercultural elements in project planning: setting the context of the content in different cultures.

4.2. The CLIL Pyramid.

According to the above mentioned principles, Meyer (2010) designed the CLIL-Pyramid to visually represent the idea that quality CLIL based on the principles of the 4Cs-Framework can only be achieved when all of the four Cs are considered in lesson planning and materials construction [Picture 1. The CLIL Pyramid © Oliver Meyer, 2010].

The CLIL-Pyramid suggests a systematical sequence for planning CLIL units and materials, starting with topic selection and ending with a review of key content and language elements that we have come to call the CLIL workout. The stages composing the CLIL Pyramid can be described as follows:

1. Planning a CLIL unit starts with content selection. The specific needs of the content subject are at the heart of every CLIL lesson and the starting point for material construction.
2. Providing multimodal input and distributing it evenly across the new CLIL unit produces highly differentiated materials which accommodate different learning styles and activate various language skills. Such multimodal input can facilitate the development of new literacies.
3. The nature of the selected input (i.e. texts, charts, maps, videoclips, etc.) determines how much and what kind of input-scaffolding is needed. It also indicates which subject specific study skills need to be practiced with the students so they can successfully cope with that input.
4. Tasks need to be designed to trigger both higher order thinking skills and lead to authentic communication/interaction in different interactive formats (solo work, pair work, groupwork, etc.).
5. The nature of the desired output (poster, interview, presentation, map, etc.) determines how much and what kind of output-scaffolding is necessary.

This model have a series of advantages that can be summarized as follows:

- It enables multifocal lesson planning: 4 Cs are inextricably linked.
- Higher order thinking skills become an integral part of CLIL lessons.
- Scaffolding, study skills and learning strategies are essential parts of the planning and teaching process.
- The model arises awareness for multi-modal input. It accommodates individual learning styles, multiple intelligences and leads to highly differentiated lessons and materials.
- It is very flexible regarding various models of interaction/cooperation (individual/pair/group work).
- Intercultural communication is taken seriously.

4.3. Aspects to take into account when planning CLIL lessons.

In Coyle, Marsh and Hood (2010), several characteristics or principles, on which the CLIL education should be based on, are presented. Some of those principles are:

- Constructing knowledge that excludes teacher-centred approaches and learning based on memorizing data
- Language develops in social interactions and its use in practice
- Teaching should be learner-centred
- Active role of students in classroom activities
- Co-operative learning should be introduced
- Developing learner autonomy
- Co-operation of foreign language teachers with subject teachers
- Task-based approach, process-approach
- Variety of teaching techniques with a variety of materials, including computer-assisted learning
- Learning should always be context-based, placed in natural contexts

- Developing different language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing), not restricted to grammar and vocabulary
- Possibly well-balanced approach to teaching content and language
- Language redundancy (repetition of content with the use of various language means and materials)

All these principles should be taken into account in order to correctly apply CLIL methodology to plurilingual lessons. This means that we should develop different kind of activities and materials in order to promote the CLIL teaching.

5. PLURILINGUALISM PROMOTION PLAN IN ANDALUSIA

In Andalusia (Spain's southernmost region), things have changed drastically concerning bilingual education since the introduction of the Plurilingualism Promotion Plan by the autonomous government (Junta de Andalucía, 2006). The plan was born as the realization for the Andalusian territory of the European language policies regarding the teaching and learning of languages. With special strength in the past ten years bilingual education has worked at most elementary schools.

In addition to this new European scene, the Scheme for the Promotion of Plurilingualism has learned a lot from the first experimental bilingual sections set up in some schools by the Andalusian government in 1998. Following the content-based approach, French and German were used to partly teach other subjects. This successful experience, as show the international tests that the students have been given, is the starting point for a more ambitious scene, where 400 schools will be involved in the next four years, more languages, especially English, will take part, and a lot of investigation and implementation of the Integrated Curriculum of languages must be carried out (Lorenzo, 2010).

Being aware of the necessity of the Andalusian people to adapt to the new scenario, a major government plan, called "strategies for the second modernization of Andalusia", was designed in 2003. The document also underlined language diversity as a source of richness and a valuable heritage of humankind which needs to be looked after. It was then clear that a scheme was needed to carry out this new language policy in our territory, especially affecting education, with clear goals, timing and funding.

6. SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY.

The teaching sequence under study belongs to a primary Science lesson of a state school of the region of Andalusia, a Spanish monolingual community. In order to analyze the lesson planning procedure, a series of interviews with the teacher, recordings and materials analysis were carried out.

The session corresponds to the first year of the third cycle of Primary Education (5th Primary) and to the non-linguistic area "Knowledge Environment", and we will show the lesson planning steps of Unit 8: the Landscape. Students have an exposure to the English content classroom of 3 hours per week.

It is worth mentioning that the teacher plays the role of Science teacher and foreign language teacher, which definitely facilitates the purpose of teaching both content and language at the same time.

7. RESULTS.

We will now show the lesson planning procedure developed in the setting under study in accordance with the parameters offered by Coyle (2005, 2006). In order to plan the unit, the following steps were defined:

- **STEP 1. FIXING THE CONTENT.**
- **STEP 2. CONECTING CONTENT AND COGNITION**
- **STEP 3. COMMUNICATION: DEFINING LANGUAGE LEARNING.**
- **STEP 4. DEVELOPING CULTURAL AWARENESS.**

For the correct development of this procedure and the proper selection of activities and materials, the following planning template was defined [Picture 2. CLIL Planning template.].

7.1. Tasks design.

In order to achieve the outcomes established in the CLIL planning template, the teacher defined a series of tasks to be developed throughout the unit. He differentiated between pre-tasks, aimed at allowing student to get familiar with the main contents of the unit, a main task which would allow students to show their understanding of the contents, and a series of post-task that would serve to reinforce the knowledge acquired within the unit.

For pre-tasks, the teacher engaged the students in the creation of word clouds related to the contents of the unit through a brainstorming session. This activity allowed students to use their previous knowledge on the matter and to get familiar with the lexicon in the second language. He also created a series of flashcards to facilitate the acquisition of new vocabulary through this type of multimodal resource and prepared material for reading to reinforce the reading comprehension of the students. [Picture 3. Pre-task - Flashcards.], [Picture 4. Pre-task - Reading materials].

As for the main task, the teacher asked the students to develop a work in groups, by which they had to complete an empty Spanish relief map in accordance with different aspects (some groups were asked to complete the map with the mountains and mountain ranges, other with the rivers, other with the coasts and seas, etc.). After their completion they had to show their completed map to the rest of the class and elaborate a global map with all the elements included. [Picture 5. Main task.].

Once finished the completion of the main task, the teacher asked the students to complete as series of post-task to reinforce their knowledge acquired within the unit. These consisted of the creation of a mind map [Picture 6. Post-task – Mind map] and a glossary of the new terms learnt during the completion of the previous tasks [Picture 7. Post-task – Glossary].

8. CONCLUSIONS.

In this paper we have shown a lesson planning procedure to be used in a CLIL primary setting. We have tried to offer a different methodological approach to give answer to some of the main questions arising in current bilingual classrooms. We have provided a tried and tested planning tool for unit planning for content and language integrated learning as well as a series of strategies aimed at achieving the necessary objectives for successful bilingual teaching.

The development of this unit planning procedure allowed the teacher to anticipate to the demands of the students in the necessary tools to develop the tasks assigned for a proper acquisition of content knowledge and language skills. The results obtained were very positive and the tasks developed facilitated students a proper content-knowledge acquisition as well as foreign language skills development. It also promoted a positive interdependence and personal responsibility, allowed students to get social skills at work through the interaction.

The purpose of this paper is to provide CLIL teachers with some tips that facilitate their work and that can be reinforced by further contributions so that a major methodological plan that meets the needs of the increasing number of bilingual learners can be established.

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