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PART I

CLIL: Moving On

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1 Understanding the CLIL Phenomenon: Developments and Directions

This chapter provides an overview of content and language integrated learning as a constantly evolving approach to learning and teaching in our multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Bilingual education was described by Cazden and Snow several decades ago (1990) as a 'simple label for a complex phenomenon'. This complexity is evidenced by the different models that bilingual education encompasses on a global scale – for example, Garcia (2009) identified at least thirty-three different designations. Moreover, given the unprecedented movement of peoples, classrooms as multilingual and multicultural spaces are changing rapidly, with resulting 'super-diversity', (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1024) impacting at all levels on learning practices.

> Classrooms the world over are full of people who, for different reasons, are learning additional languages and/or are studying through languages that are not their first. Gaining insights into such contexts is complicated for researcher and practitioners alike by the myriad of contextual variables that come with the different implementations and make comparison and generalisation a tricky business. (Dalton-Puffer et al., 2014)

It is against this backdrop that the CLIL phenomenon can be considered as part of the bilingual education movement. CLIL has become increasingly piloted and practised over the last decades across very different contexts and places of learning on a global scale (Doiz et al., 2014; Knapp & Aguado, 2015). The trend is heterogenous, and occurs due to a wide range of complex reasons – sometimes as a result of strong political priorities; sometimes to build educational opportunities as a means of addressing increasing social demands; sometimes to provide equitable pathways for diverse learners to access curricula; sometimes to grow economic capital; and sometimes to enhance national profiles, taking into account international comparators as well as social and cultural exigencies. As CLIL programmes have exponentially expanded, so too have different interpretations, models, frameworks, points of reference and theoretical underpinnings across national, regional and local boundaries. Whilst this diversity is inevitable – due to the nature of educational trends and cultural traditions inherent in formal schooling and tertiary education systems across the world – academic debates and practical discussions have contributed to some confusion and disagreement about the very nature of CLIL.

There has been particular emphasis on defining what is meant by CLIL and how it relates to other forms of learning, especially those that involve more than one

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language. Debates have encompassed the distribution of time spent in CLIL, the professional demands of adopting and adapting integrated approaches to learning, the linguistic competence required by both teachers and learners to maximise benefits, the associated pedagogic processes and assessments, and the constant plea for more research and classroom data. More recently, concerns have been expressed about the quality of learning in the subject or thematic discipline and the linguistic competence of learners in terms of the projected outcomes. Few longitudinal empirical research studies have been published to date.

It is timely, therefore, to take account of the development of the CLIL movement, to reiterate that the phenomenon is not in a static state – 'this is what you do if you do CLIL' – but is dynamic in terms of its potential for building an expansive yet rigorous theoretical basis and a fundamental value system reflecting social justice and equitable opportunities for all learners to experience their own successes. This is a 'big' statement, which requires careful and detailed analysis of different factors to understand in more nuanced terms how CLIL potential might become a reality in different classrooms and in different ways.

1.1 Unravelling Key Questions

Taking an overview of studies, documents, policies and debates over several decades relating to the development of bilingual education (Coyle, 2018), we observe a constant plea for greater emphasis on interpreting CLIL; more detailed understanding of the learning processes which lead to quality learning outcomes; and research evidence in terms of classroom data, especially of a longitudinal nature.

What is understood by Content and Language Integrated Learning has become increasingly debated, at times contentiously, as the global expansion of programmes and pedagogic approaches that use the term accrues. This is an inevitability – increasingly diverse interpretations of the phenomenon working with and across increasingly complex contextual variables lead to ambiguities and adaptations. Whilst Cenoz et al. (2014) believe that 'coherent evolution' is dependent on a common understanding of the nature of CLIL, the speed of socio-cultural and political change suggests that educational and pedagogic developments within education systems are dynamic and in a state of flux. Evolution is messy. It is a given that understanding and experiencing the affordances and constraints of new or alternative modes of working will lead to differences in (re)conceptualising, rationalising and realising the ways in which learners learn and teachers teach. CLIL is not and cannot be formulaic, with pre-defined procedures and learning outcomes, but is a multifaceted, theoretically sound, contextually embedded phenomenon, which has to address the complementary and at times conflicting pedagogies associated with language learning and subject or thematic learning. Integrating these practices,

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which are steeped in their own cultural discursive traditions, requires a different lens on learning based on 'organic pedagogic practices' (Sadovnik, 2001, p. 689).

CLIL can be described as:

> a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. That is, in the teaching and learning process, there is a focus not only on content and not only on language. Each is interwoven even if the emphasis is greater on one or the other at a given time. (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 1)

We would argue that whilst this has become known usefully as an umbrella term, the fact that in the last two decades CLIL experiences 'have burgeoned throughout Europe' (Merino and Lasagabaster's term, 2018, p. 17) has led to a wide variety of interpretations and pedagogic labelling, due to the contextual variables inherent in regional, national and international educational settings. Cenoz et al. concluded that:

> Our examination of the definition and the scope of the term CLIL both internally, as used by CLIL advocates in Europe, and externally, as compared with immersion education in and outside Europe, indicates that the core characteristics of CLIL are understood in different ways with respect to: the balance between language and content instruction, the nature of the target language involved, instructional goals, defining characteristics of student participants and pedagogic approaches to integrating language and content instruction. (2014, p. 255)

Distinctions and convergences concerning the definition of CLIL have been well argued in the literature (e.g. Garcia, 2009; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010; Cenoz et al., 2014; Dalton-Puffer et al., 2014). However, the challenges lie not in arriving at one definition of CLIL – labels are meaningless if the quality of the learning process is not fit for purpose – but in the positioning of a shared understanding of fundamental principles of plurilingual learning which inspire educators to define, design, enact and evaluate with their learners the conditions for learning that are of the highest possible quality and relevant to the communities they serve. Harrop's critique (2012) levelled at CLIL 'literature' as having an 'unmistakable evangelical tone' in our view describes the earlier phases of exploring alternative learning pathways, where an understanding of the potential of CLIL served to uncover the increasing intricacies of learning a language and subject content simultaneously. This stage has now been succeeded by a phase of rigorous investigations and critical reflections, which look into as well as beyond the immediacies of the classroom. Garcia (2009, p. 6) emphasised that bilingual programmes, including CLIL, need to provide experiences that guide learners to become 'global and responsible citizens as they learn to function across cultures and worlds, that is beyond the cultural borders in which traditional schooling often operates'.

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The need, therefore, to ensure that the CLIL phenomenon embraces the macro and micro, the broad values-driven educational agenda and the hybridity of classroom conditions for learning which will motivate, engage and prepare students, is an enormous task. As was argued in The Place of CLIL in (Bilingual) Education (Coyle, 2018), bridging the gap between political rhetoric and teacher discourse, between theoretical constructs and professional beliefs, does not depend on one established set of rules or pedagogic trends. Neither is it a case of adding thematic references in language lessons or translation in subject lessons – minor adjustments cannot equate with the enormity and pedagogic impact of the change processes required. The pedagogic and theoretical substance of CLIL needs to be clearly articulated and substantiated. It requires time. It requires critical reflection. And yet there is an increasing moral urgency – the rights for all learners to access a quality education are at the core of the global Millennium Development Goals (United Nations, 2000). Therefore, in order to provide a reliable contribution to those goals, the need to conceptualise the rigorous dynamic of the breadth and depth of CLIL is paramount.

Regardless of positive and negative rhetoric about the potential of CLIL, there is no single approach – one size does not fit all. However, the corollary that an 'anything goes' approach allows for flexibility and diversity is equally unacceptable. CLIL, as with all educational thinking, has to be carefully analysed, critiqued, experimented and evidenced. It has to evolve and grow whilst continually being scrutinised from different perspectives. Moreover, however challenging the task, arguments need to be substantiated by evidence. This growth – which is at times contentious and uncomfortable and at others reassuring and encouraging – depends on an openness to scientific and rigorous research, enquiry, exploration, analysis and evaluation. It also depends on a preparedness to activate stakeholders to support the necessary changes that will inevitably be required to optimise conditions for authentic learning. Emerging from such growth leads us towards what Hornberger describes as an 'ecological heuristic' (2002, p. 27) – an inclusive blueprint for integrated learning, which embraces the overarching goals of education; where there is 'a focus not only on content and not only on language'; and which constantly explores ways of engaging and enabling (preparing) all learners through high-quality, relevant, real-world experiences. There will be some readers who immediately raise questions: what do we understand by *quality* learning? What is meant by inclusive? What is integrated learning? How might overarching goals of education be defined? And how might these differ across cultures and nations? What about plurilingual and pluricultural classrooms? How does this attune with goals of education in existence? What about learner dispositions and abilities? And teacher support for constantly reflecting on learning? These are all good questions and ones which, in our view, can only be answered by bringing together a range of perspectives, to map out and clarify alternative pathways. Taking this

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stance, we understand it to be the responsibility of those who design and organise formal learning to involve school leaders, teachers and learners in identifying and making transparent the specificities of 'integrated learning' in their own contexts, including the theoretical and moral principles upon which it is built, alongside the pedagogic exigencies that guide classroom practices and student learning. This is not passing the buck! Throughout this volume we seek to raise and consider many of these questions in greater depth.

The increasingly extensive ramifications of globalisation, especially over the last decade, should not be underestimated in terms of their impact on classroom learning, which is in the process of irreversible change in terms of the linguistic profiles and cultural roots of learners and teachers. The plurilingual nature of learners grouped together in education settings, alongside advances in accessibility and use of digital technologies, have amplified two contradictory forces – uniformity (e.g. national norms, especially in terms of measurable and comparable outcomes) and diversity (reflecting what May (2014) refers to as the 'multilingual turn'); underpinned by ideological drives towards equality, inclusion and social justice.

> The ever-fast evolving cultural landscape is characterised by an intensified diversity of peoples, communities and individuals, who live more and more closely. The increasing diversity of cultures, which is fluid, dynamic and transformative, implies specific competences and capacities for individuals and societies to learn, re-learn and unlearn so as to meet personal fulfilment and social harmony. (UNESCO, 2013, p. 4)

A significant drawing together of the role of 'languages in schooling' (Schleppegrell, 2004) has, supported by Council of Europe initiatives over the past thirty years, brought into question the dominance of monolingual curricula, implicating not only language teachers but educators responsible for enabling all learners to access national curricula using different languages for different purposes (Commission of the European Communities, 1996). Discussions about the medium of instruction, literacies and the language of the classroom are starting to merge, creating the potential to bridge existing disciplinary divides, with (foreign) language teachers, language teachers, EAL teachers (English as an Additional Language) or equivalent teachers (e.g. in countries where acquiring the language of schooling is a priority for immigrant or mobile learners) and subject specialists all engaging in ways of understanding and enacting the broader yet crucial role of language for learning. However, this also raises the issue of what Dalton-Puffer notes as the 'overwhelming prevalence of English' as the vehicular language that effectively leads to Content and English Integrated Learning (CEIL) (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

> Despite the fact that CLIL's original objective was to spread multilingualism, there is little doubt that in the European context English is the predominant language. (Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018, p. 79)

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Whilst this is inevitable, given the role of 'global Englishes', it could be argued that it has led to the marginalising of LOTE (languages other than English) contexts, especially those where English is the national language and those which are predominantly trilingual, such as in the Basque Autonomous Community (Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018).

Uniting language and subject educators involves not only a shared understanding of known practices, but also a co-construction of new integrated pathways to guide meaning making through connecting language domains. Such integration, according to de Graaff, 'is more than just a combination of two elements: real fusion asks for an understanding of the characteristics and interplay of both' (Nikula et al., 2016a, p. xiii). De Graaff goes on to argue that whilst this may appear to suggest a reconceptualisation of learning, integrating content learning with language learning may not be 'new', and as such:

> We may just not have had the lens to understand (or the language to express) the full teaching, learning or research potential of an integrated perspective on content and language. (2016a, p. xiii)

De Graaff's position is very helpful in suggesting that an alternative lens may assist educators in the task ahead. An emphasis on alternative interpretations, and in particular an ecological perspective, is what has driven us to write this book. We wish to share our concerns and our vision to provide readers with alternative pathways for conceptualising learning – not as an answer to current CLIL challenges but rather as a means to identifying emergent 'invisible barriers' and unravelling possible ways of breaking through them, whether our readers are experienced CLIL educators or starting out on building learning partnerships and laying foundations for CLIL. There is clearly some way to go before such links are transparently connected and made visible and accessible for teachers and learners – the 'wider conversation has just begun' (May, 2014, p. 217).

The arguments presented thus far are not meant to confuse readers, nor are they intended to complicate an already multi-faceted phenomenon. Rather they are intended to problematise in a realistic way the range of factors stakeholders have to take into account when considering, planning, developing and evaluating bilingual integrated approaches to learning in their schools and universities (Merino & Lasagabaster, 2018). This is summarised by Garcia when she states:

> What recent European investigations have taught us is to move away from the unilingual frame of reference in bilingual programs by underlining that bilingualism is never an all-or-nothing phenomenon, that the outcome of bilingual education is not a reduplication of monolingualism, but a 'more or less' proficiency in more than one language. (2009, p. 212)

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Garcia argues that this positions Content and Language Integrated Learning within the broad field of bilingual education, illustrated by a particularly strong visual image of an 'all-terrain vehicle in its heteroglossic potential' rather than a 'bicycle with two balanced wheels' (2009, p. 17):

> We believe that monolingual education is no longer adequate in the twenty-first century, and that every society needs some form of bilingual education. Our view of bilingual education is complex, like the banyan tree, allowing for growth in different directions at the same time and grounded in the diverse social realities from which it merges. (Garcia, 2009, p. 17)

1.2 Developmental Stages towards Integrated Learning

Three broad stages in the growth of CLIL have emerged over the last few decades, which position the related arguments and concerns, as well as claims for success and achievement, in a wider international agenda. The stages can be described as follows: first, the content and language stage; second, the integration of content and language; and third, the focus on inclusive learning and the quality of learning experiences. Of course, it could be argued undisputedly that quality learning, for example, has always been at the core of CLIL and that the different focusses involving CLIL merge with no clear distinction. Yet what is understood as 'quality learning' differs considerably across cultural and social boundaries. However, we believe it is useful to loosely identify the ways in which CLIL has developed in rapidly changing educational contexts in order to understand the ebbs and flows, the important milestones and reiterations that change processes bring. This will essentially enable us to look forwards, and to interpret constantly emergent thinking – again an inevitability in trying to capture optimal conditions for human learning.

1.2.1 Content and Language

It is now well documented how, in the 1990s, a pioneering European group, supported by and in line with fundamental principles for developing skills and experiences for European citizens, set out to establish an alternative way of developing linguistic competence across school systems. It is not our intention to revisit in detail the early stages of CLIL in Europe – readers can find these summarised in the literature (e.g. Coyle, 2007; Coyle et al., 2010; Harrop, 2012; Pérez Cañado, 2016) – but to reflect on how the concept of CLIL has developed, deepened and transformed over significant periods of time. The teaching and learning of subjects through a language other than the learner's first was certainly not new, and can be traced back for centuries. However, the key principle promoted by CLIL suggested that the learning of a language at the same time as learning new knowledge and

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skills associated with 'non-language' subject disciplines or thematic studies in the school curriculum had the potential to raise linguistic competence and subject discipline knowledge, skills and understanding. This approach also suggested economies of time spent on learning, moving towards a multilingual, multicultural Europe, whilst significantly contributing to raising national linguistic capital. It was also an attempt to offer an appropriate alternative that built on the shared experiences of other models of bilingual learning which had been pioneered and were well established in other parts of the world.

Throughout this mainly European-oriented period, concerns emerged regarding the relative balance of importance between the subject and the language, and the significant impact on teacher professionalism and teacher education. This resulted in perceived threats to teacher identity, teacher confidence and learner and teacher linguistic competence, as well as questions about where CLIL might be positioned within the curriculum. The big questions focussed on issues such as: was the subject or the language more important? Was the planning of the learning driven by language learning principles or subject learning principles, or both? Who was best suited to teach CLIL – language specialists or subject experts? These questions are examples of concerns raised about CLIL, and improvements in the provision of professional development and teacher education were often identified as being key to wider adoption.

Of course, throughout CLIL's development there have always been examples of outstanding practice, mainly due to specific variables that have enabled, encouraged and supported CLIL classroom practices. However, such practices were often not replicable on a larger scale: few teachers had an in-depth understanding of how an additional language functions as a learning tool as well as a communicative tool in specific subject areas, or had the confidence in creating tasks and activities which targeted progression in subject disciplines. These did not lie in the pedagogic repertoires of the majority of subject teachers. Equally, language teachers whose clear goal was to increase linguistic proficiency in their learners had traditionally been tasked with ensuring learners could communicate effectively and accurately in a particular language, and in some contexts with expanding learner skills into accessing literature and other cultural references associated with target language and cultures. Language teachers were not usually required to teach non-language subject disciplines and skills. The notion, therefore, of learning both a subject discipline and a language at the same time had by its very definition to evolve over time. It had to develop its own transdisciplinary discourse.

Early pedagogic frameworks began to emerge, with the 4 Cs Framework considered to be one of the most useful in terms of large-scale adoption. There was an urgent need to look at ways of ensuring that subject discipline was not a re-enactment of what would have happened in the first-language classroom, but in a different language, with both teachers and learners resorting to translation

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