

Content and Language Integrated Learning in Argentina 2008 – 2011

Aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lenguas en la Argentina 2008 – 2011

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Abstract

The incorporation of content, whether it is L1-curriculum based or from general knowledge of the world, is not innovative in English Language Teaching. However, CLIL as an umbrella approach has spread the interest in learning English through non-language subject matter to non-European contexts. In this review article, I analyse the development of the Argentinean interest in CLIL from two conference proceedings from the years 2008 and 2009, and two provincial curriculum-based implementations conceived in 2010-2011. While CLIL in Argentina started as a bottom-up approach because teachers and learners wanted to integrate content and language, now CLIL may spread because official curricula determine so.

Key Words: CLIL; state education; bilingual education.

Resumen

La incorporación de contenidos, ya sea basado en el currículo en L1 o en un conocimiento general del mundo, no es innovador en la Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés. Sin embargo, AICLE como un enfoque general ha extendido el interés en aprender inglés a través contenidos curriculares no lingüísticos en contextos no europeos. En este artículo de reseña, analizo el desarrollo del interés argentino en AICLE a partir de dos actas de congresos de los años 2008 y 2009, y dos implementaciones provinciales basadas en sus diseños curriculares concebidos en 2010-2011. Mientras que AICLE en Argentina comenzó como un enfoque ascendente porque los docentes y alumnos querían integrar el contenido y el lenguaje, ahora AICLE puede extenderse debido a que los diseños curriculares oficiales así lo determinan.

Palabras Claves: AICLE; educación pública; educación bilingüe.

INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of content, whether it is L1-curriculum based or from general knowledge of the world, is not innovative in English Language Teaching (ELT). However, CLIL as an umbrella approach has spread the interest in learning English through non-language subject matter. According to Coyle, Hood, and Marsh (2010), CLIL models range from total immersion and bilingual education to lesson thematisation. Such an overarching scope, perhaps so wide that it may be criticised for its all encompassing nature (Costa & D'Angelo, 2011, p. 10), covers all possible combinations and varieties of content and language learning.

It goes without saying that CLIL has crossed its originally European borders and has landed in countries where educational settings and socio-economic conditions are different from

Spain or Finland to name a few. Nevertheless, teachers across all educational levels explore CLIL as a refreshing approach to combine meaning and form through motivating and cognitively engaging topics.

Because Latin America is not an exception in this worldwide trend, in this article I analyse the development of the Argentinean interest in CLIL chronologically. First, I review the conference proceedings from the 2008 FAAPI Conference which particularly focused on CLIL. Secondly, I review the 2009 FAAPI Conference Proceedings as there appeared further debates and experiences stemming from CLIL. Last, I present an overview of new trends in ELT curricula as their authors incorporate CLIL as a new approach to implement in secondary education.

FIRST EXPLORATIONS: 2008

In 2008, the English Teachers Federation of Argentina (FAAPI, in Spanish) organisation, which covers all the different English Teachers Associations of the country, organised the XXXIV FAAPI Conference around the integration of content and language in English Language Teaching in the Argentinean context. In the conference proceedings which I analyse below, it is stated that this integration could have two broad types:

- the inclusion of curricular content into the EFL class.
- the teaching of a curricular subject in English.

In addition, it is added that this process of integrating content and language is facilitated through the incorporation of pedagogical aspects which are both language as well as content-related. These aspects need to be necessarily grouped in categories or dimensions, some which the XXXIII FAAPI Conference Proceedings features to organise its contents:

1. Plenaries and semi-plenaries.
2. The Culture Dimension (CULTIX).
3. The Content Dimension (CONTIX).
4. The Learning Dimension (LEARNTIX).
5. Applications of CLIL.

Such an organisation is coherent with the CLIL dimensions identified by the CLIL Compendium (Majers et al., 2002). However, due to my aims and purposes of reviewing CLIL across Argentina's educational system, I analyse its contents from a different organisation. Therefore, I have arranged the contents according to whether findings or reflections come from the state or the private sector, bilingual education mainly, and the level of education they represent. After reading the papers and workshop reports, I offer the following organisation with the number of examples (see Table 1).

By looking at the number of articles presented, I may challenge Paran's (2010) view that CLIL in Argentina belongs to the elite. Although I should admit that there are several CLIL explorations in the bilingual sector (Banfi & Day, 2004), it is also true that it has spread all over the educational system regardless of sectors. Readers should be warned that most of the articles I review below, if not all, are descriptive accounts of classroom practices or the initial results of programme evaluation processes which include a word on materials development. I shall begin my review by looking into university education. It should be noted that most of the papers related to this level of education involve ESP.

Table 1. Number of XXXIII FAAPI Conference papers according to educational sector.

Sector	Level	Number of papers	Total
State Education	University Education	8	24
	Initial Language Teacher Education (tertiary and university)	8	
	Secondary Education	4	
	Primary Education	4	
Private Bilingual Education	University Education	0	5
	Initial Language Teacher Education (tertiary and university)	1	
	Secondary Education	3	
	Primary Education	1	

University CLIL

The first paper found in the proceedings (Fernández, 2008, pp. 20-39; also see Fernández, 2009) provides a descriptive account of a CLIL pedagogical experience of Business English at the School of Economics, Universidad Nacional del Litoral. This report is preceded by a chronological exploration of the relationship between content and foreign language learning and teaching which is followed by a comparison between content-based approaches and CLIL. As for the former, the author makes the point that in CBI (Content Based Instruction) the emphasis is placed on the content aspect, that is, on communicating information with explicit language instruction to learn the curricular content in focus. On the other hand, CLIL is basically a theme-based approach to language instruction. What the author puts forward is that while CBI is a broad umbrella concept, CLIL is a CBI-related methodology by which subject-matter content could be learnt through the medium of a foreign language or a foreign language could be learnt by studying subject-matter content.

Lastly, Fernández adds to Mohan's (1986) three combinations of language and content a fourth combination – language teaching *through* content teaching where the focus is on language, its multi-functionality and multi-exponentiality (also see Pavón Vázquez and Rubio, 2010, p. 49). In addition, this new combination aims to teach language, introduce new subsidiary

subject-matter related topics and exemplify or expand, from a communicational perspective subject-matter content students already know. All in all, it may be inferred that while Fernández sees CBI as solely the teaching of content through a foreign language, CLIL, on the other hand, incorporates a communicative dimension as a result of emphasising the linguistic aspect of the integration. The experience reported has a communicative dimension as each teaching module offers tasks which integrate reading, writing, listening and speaking. These tasks revolve around thematic content coming from the field of Economics.

To select and grade such contents the author mentions the following principles:

1. Avoid redundancy; do not teach in English what students already know in Spanish.
2. Avoid banality; do not oversimplify content issues.
3. Aim at enhancing or re-dimensioning topics dealt with in the subject-matter areas.
4. Input must be linguistically processable.

These principles seem to be sensible to follow. However, the sample plan put forward in the same article states that the theme framework of Business English is based on students' previous subject-matter content. Inevitably, the questions to ask would be how to select content. The most important aspect to highlight is the selection criteria this experience follows as regards input material and its manipulation:

1. Thematic relevance,
2. Skill restriction,
3. Lexical and functional selection, and
4. Content-language balance.

Fernández reports that the resources where teaching materials come from are flow charts, diagrams, conferences and web pages as Guerrini (2009) recommends. I may say that while these materials are authentic, they have been selected in order to cater for students' needs and language level. Even though the author attempts to make a clear distinction between CBI and CLIL, a problem may lie, at least in my view, in the term 'communication'. In my opinion, even when teachers teach content in a foreign language without specifically addressing the linguistic component as CLIL apparently does, teachers still communicate something, they communicate curricular content which may be broken down into classroom debates, teacher's explanations, reading, and writing summaries, all being examples of skills work as in a regular EFL class.

Whereas Fernández stresses CLIL features, other authors explicitly frame their contributions based on descriptive accounts of classroom experiences under English for Specific Purposes. Muñoz (2008, pp. 107-114), for instance, analyses research article abstracts in Agriculture through software used for corpus linguistics purposes. She implies that a genre analysis of the rhetorical organisation of abstracts could be useful to plan ESP courses mainly oriented towards reading and writing development. The use of authentic material, that is, the use of abstracts as teaching input could be useful for learners to achieve success in the academic field.

Mayol and Benassi (2008, pp. 242-248) also point out how reading could be improved if reading activities based on content are brought to the foreground in ESP/EAP courses at the School of Science at the National University of Misiones in north-eastern Argentina. These authors stress that in this experience minimum content of the language is taught. Although the course has proved to be effective, there is no account of how materials and contents are processed so as to make them pedagogically meaningful to suit the learners' level of English. From the same university, Flores et al. (2008, pp. 190-196) provide an example of an ESP class for Tourism. In general, the class described is an example of a topic-based lesson which is rooted in the contents of Tourism. In such a lesson learners do not learn new curricular content; they are exposed to a language lesson contextualised in a tourism-related topic. This shows an example of the language lesson thematisation since rather than teaching content per se teachers select content to ask students to talk about it from a simplistic point of view using certain grammatical structures.

This view that CLIL refers to topic-based lessons can also be found in Casco (2008, pp. 235-241) who integrates language and content by asking adult learners to propose a topic for

discussion. This topic serves as a starting point for materials selection which is taken from current course books in the market. Once again, we find that though attempts are made to imbue content into the language lesson, this only provides a context. What is more, the teacher does not need to modify or adapt the material selected as it has been pedagogically modified already.

While Muñoz (2008) looks at how reading and writing could be developed, Mayol and Villalba (2008, pp. 176-183) suggest how listening and speaking skills could be enhanced if teachers used more authentic materials. Their conclusion is based on an English for Occupational Purposes course for pilots in which materials from the USA and other sources facilitated by the pilots themselves produced higher language learning and motivation. Learners realised they could understand input which had not been pedagogically modified.

In addition to the descriptive accounts above, there appear a few articles which continue reporting on classroom experiences but are more materials development-oriented. For example, Gallina and Spataro (2008, pp. 184-189) describe materials designed for an ESP course on technology and tourism at the National University of Córdoba, the oldest university of Argentina. Even though the course is concerned with reading strategies mainly since it is carried out through distance learning, it claims to follow social constructivism as it encourages group work in order to encourage autonomy at a later stage. Basically, this ESP material design project uses Moodle to create a virtual space for learning. Each unit of work is divided into two parts: reading comprehension and language focus. Whereas the former includes strategies such as skimming, previewing, scanning, and work on vocabulary through matching activities and building a glossary among learners, the latter starts with activities which promote language awareness and noticing of discourse-grammatical features of the authentic texts students read. These noticing tasks are followed by explicit explanations of the language in focus, an aspect requested by the learners themselves, explanations which in turn are linked to further controlled practice. This is the only article which thoroughly describes how input has been broken down into a lesson.

Cardinali et al. (2008, pp. 197-204) offer another view of materials development by reporting on the design of ESP reading courses at the School of Engineering at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto. In their experience, using a lexico-grammatical compendium which shows recurring patterns of academic writing helps university learners understand how the target language works. They also claim that corpus linguistics is a valuable resource for material design. In their courses, learners are guided to understand sentence and phrase patterns by noticing how certain language items are structured by looking at the number of occurrences and concordance lines produced by special software. The corpus the compendium is made of has been built by collecting scientific articles and other publications related to engineering. The noticing activities prompted by the lexico-grammatical compendium are carried out in Spanish. This may lead to think that input is made comprehensible by suggesting activities and some explanations in Spanish while the input materials are in English.

CLIL in teacher education

Although initial language teacher education should be regarded as university education, I have decided to deal with it separately as teaching degrees in Argentina can be awarded by universities or teacher education institutions which are considered to belong to the tertiary level. I could initially claim that the integration of language and content is best evidenced in initial language teacher education programmes as subjects such as phonology, American history, geography of the British Isles, and English history, to name a few, have been taught in the target

language since these programmes started in this country (Barbeito and Placci, 2008, pp. 303-309). Although, content and language integrated approaches have been traditionally realised in these programmes, Pistorio (2008, pp. 312-320) argues that there is an urgent need to incorporate CLIL pedagogy in teacher education as trainees need to be trained in the selection, adaptation and scaffolding of authentic materials. This proposal may be supported by Mehisto (2008), Ruiz de Zarobe (2008, p. 62), and Vázquez (2007, pp. 102-103) who suggest the incorporation of CLIL modules in teacher education programmes.

A good number of classroom accounts are concerned with the integration of language and content through the teaching of the target culture. For instance, Provencal, Cadario, and Gordon (2008, pp. 96-100) refer to the teaching of culture by means of authentic materials such as films, series, and proverbs and by the incorporation of a native speaker from the US in their experience in the teaching staff. According to their view of the matter, we may think that language is truly contextualised if a native speaker is in charge of teaching and if that speaker makes use of authentic material. This position could be seen as unsettling since no matter how teacher trainers teach the target language, culture permeates through the syllabus. A similar aspect is also explored in Cadario (2008, pp. 123-130) who believes that through the study of lexis and idiomaticity, trainees are invited to reflect on cultural awareness and learn cultural content simultaneously. In addition, we can also find reports which advance the integration of language and culture through Literature (Dichiera, 2008, pp. 321-326; Porto and Barboni, 2008, pp. 115-122). For these authors Literature offers a framework for the introduction of cultural models together with new literary studies such as eco-criticism. In applying these studies, teacher trainers will be fostering content and language integration, an experience which future teachers can transfer in their own teaching practices. Last, a paper on this level more anchored in systematic data collection is reported by Tuero and Gómez Laich (2008, pp. 154-160). In their study, trainees' personal process writing compositions were compared to their productions based on content-based instruction. Results suggested that these trainees made fewer mistakes when involved in CBI writing than in personal writing.

At the beginning of the paragraph above I deliberately used the phrase "through the teaching of the target culture" to voice the authors' perspective. However, the deeper I analyse the paper, the less convinced I find this target culture ideology. In fact, it seems to me that the authors equate target culture with the United States only and presumably with one particular layer of it. Unfortunately, none of the authors explain whether they look at the segmented perception they present through a critical view or they are (un)aware of their own dissemination of cultural imperialism. On the one hand, target culture is represented by an American tutor; on the other hand, all references to literature are in fact references to white male educated American writers.

So far, I may suggest that content and language integration endeavours are best exemplified in university and teacher education in Argentina through the design of ESP courses and seminars taught through the medium of English. In addition, initial language teacher education programmes seem to confirm what Rogers (2000) states, that the content of English is its grammar and its literature. Nonetheless, we should bear in mind that this is not new. In my view, these reports have started to appear now as there is a need to show that institutions are striving to keep up with the new trends in ELT. Although they are rather limited in terms of research methodologies, they provide insights from a contextual viewpoint as they share multiple classroom practices from all over Argentina. This, in turn, reveals that the great majority of

reports widely in circulation in Argentina are the product of practitioners exploring their own practices.

CLIL in secondary education

As regards secondary education, the number of experiences described is significant to some extent if we combine state and bilingual education. One of the features these reports share is that most of them make explicit reference to materials and curriculum design.

To begin with, López Barrio (2008, pp. 40-52) offers an enlightening view of content and language in state secondary education in one province of Argentina through a small-scale investigation which includes textbook evaluation and semi-structured interviews. The author acknowledges that content and language integration is relatively new in foreign language teaching and that course books which claim to adopt a theme/topic-based approach for the integration of content and language usually resort to topics which are not directly connected with the school curriculum. He suggests that publishers should include content which calls for reflection, motivation and even controversy instead of presenting a picture composed of bland reading material, a position I strongly endorse. Nevertheless, I contend that to expect such a relationship between a national curriculum and a one-size-fits-all course book is to deny the influence of the local context and to avoid agency. Furthermore, topics are usually chosen depending on learners' interests and language ability shifting CLIL experiences towards the language end of the continuum. Together with this choice, the author stresses the fact that there is virtual no communication between English and content teachers as the system does not offer hours devoted to systematic cross-curricular work among areas, leaving teachers of English with the option of merely reading adapted material which is barely connected with the core content present in geography, for example.

Both Orce and Llobeta (2008, pp. 86-95) and Schander and Balma (2008, pp. 264-271) describe classroom practices concerned with the use of film trailers and complete films to teach the target culture, whatever that is in the authors' eyes. In their view, similar to the one explored in teacher education programmes, the target culture is a powerful content to incorporate as core subject matter in learning English. Film watching, the authors suggest, could be followed by brainstorming cultural aspects which could be then broken down into subtopics learners may choose from to carry out an internet search and prepare oral group presentations. Throughout their articles, the authors put forward the belief that it is language that prevails, that is, the incorporation of cultural topics, as it were, fulfils the function of context for skills integration. In their view, they recommend that such a procedure should be explored with secondary school students whose level of English is not at an elementary stage.

Lastly, in Bello et al.'s (2008, pp. 327-334) classroom-based experience, content was selected according to students' linguistic knowledge, motivation and interests. In general, once again, cultural contents were selected as teachers felt more comfortable with these aspects of the curriculum. A reason for this choice may be anchored in the type of humanistic curriculum teacher education programmes feature in Argentina. In addition to content selection criteria, the article claims that contents were manipulated so as to integrate skills and learning strategies, yet, there are no accounts of how this was achieved in practice. As regards recommendations, the authors also mention that team teaching, even though of a challenging nature in the Argentinean context, should be sought in order to combine language and curriculum content. While this experience could be fruitful, it is not clear how much negotiation took place towards the agreement of contents since the authors first state that these were selected according to learners'

needs and teachers' own knowledge on some subjects. One of the dangers I see in this is the false assumptions caused by poor needs analysis. Were students really asked about contents? How was this survey carried out? To what extent did teachers respect those suggestions? How was culture addressed? Although this democratic and more negotiated curriculum is often positive, it may defy systematicity as learners will be presented with small chunks, bits and pieces of possibly unrelated topics.

If we look at bilingual secondary education, there are two articles related to CLIL. First, Banegas (2008, pp. 208-214) reports the results of a quasi-experiment in which two groups of learners with similar linguistic performance were taught English following partially different syllabi at a bilingual school in Patagonia for one school year. While one group was instructed following course books towards the well-known First Certificate Exam, another group was instructed likewise with the addition of English Literature. Results showed that the latter group performed better in the exam mentioned than the former, whose syllabi did not offer a content-based component. The study, however, was not concerned with how the literature material was pedagogically manipulated as it was only interested in looking at programme evaluation in particular.

The second article (Kandel, 2008, pp. 286-294) describes a student exchange programme between American and Argentinean students. The main aim of this programme was to organise an informal student press conference held in Buenos Aires. This conference, a part of the school curriculum, is said to exemplify CLIL as its agenda dealt with topics such as the educational system, socio-historical aspects, geographical regions, food, leisure, sports, holidays and entertainment in both countries.

So far, I may point out that CLIL attempts in secondary education do not offer the same span featured in universities. The mainly descriptive articles briefly outlined agree on two facts: first, that the integration of content and language depends on the knowledge of English students have incorporated already through non-CLIL EFL classes, and second, that content usually comes from cultural issues which need to be interesting in the students' eyes. In addition, it should be remarked that though some attempts have been made in order to introduce CLIL in state secondary schools, the truth is that this approach is second nature in bilingual education in Argentina mostly. Banfi and Rettaroli (2008) indicate that content and language integration has been introduced in the following bilingual programmes:

- Intercultural Bilingual Education Programmes for Indigenous Children.
- Bilingual Education Programmes for Deaf Children.
- Bilingual Education Programmes in State Schools.
- Bilingual Education Programmes in Language Contact Schools, and
- Bilingual Education Programmes in so-called Elite Schools.

Rettaroli (2008, pp. 272-279) emphasises the fact that though CLIL has arrived as the new methodology to embrace, it was introduced in bilingual schools in Buenos Aires in the 19th century (Banfi and Day, 2004, pp. 402), that is, before it was widely adopted in the European Union. Rettaroli (2008) also problematises the integration of content and language in bilingual secondary education in Argentina by focusing on the danger of adopting a textbook since books produced in and for Europe have a very dissimilar target audience in mind. Furthermore, I contend that if teachers solely adapt materials pre-modifying input, they will run the risk of presenting lessons devoid of content and room for misunderstanding and meaning negotiation. This type of input modification may impinge negatively on the idea that what students are

presented with should be highly meaningful and functional in terms of both content and language.

Primary CLIL

Moving on to primary education we first find the issue of teacher education posited by Cadwallader (2008, pp. 60-67) who argues that one of the challenges of introducing CLIL in infant education is the training of teachers. Cadwallader states that it is better to train EFL teachers for pre-primary education. EFL teachers in general have a good knowledge of infant psychology and how very young learners learn best. In my understanding, what they may need is more field experience and collaborative work between them and kindergarten teachers.

It is only one article authored by Braun and Cheme Arriaga (2008, pp. 295-302) which gives an over-generalising descriptive account of CLIL at state schools in the province of La Pampa. According to these teachers, one of the advantages of integrating language and content is the transfer of literacy development of L1 to L2. Although they do not provide a well grounded explanation, they suggest that this development occurs more naturally as young learners are more inclined to understand how meaning can be put in black and white. The authentic use of English is perceived as another advantage as it is used in relation to the school curriculum. This aspect is more noticeable in the last years of primary education since learners feel the need to talk about other topics besides themselves. In classes where students are always the same or they have been together for around three or four years, I have personally experienced that it is seen as pointless to continue talking about their families or other personalised topics over and over again.

This interest in being able to use English to talk about the school curriculum entails the development of thinking skills as concept formation occurs in both languages even if it is achieved with the same knowledge load. As regards this issue, Braun and Cheme Arriaga believe that project works and science experiments, for example, help build up concepts in both languages creating at the same time learning opportunities for different styles. However, the authors fear that CLIL could be hard to implement and sustain as team teaching cannot be easily achieved. I should clarify that Argentinian teachers do not usually have full-time positions. What is more, they do not have extra hours devoted to meeting for the development of joint projects which could amalgamate EFL together with curriculum subject-matter. Due to this drawback, EFL teachers are usually suggested to design a topic-based syllabus whose themes reflect somehow contents which are covered in the school curriculum.

Concerning bilingual primary education, we can find a CLIL experience report through a language project which combined three dimensions: analogical, digital, and media literacy (Barboni et al., 2008, pp. 160-167). The aim of this project was to develop multiliteracies in the second and third grades of two bilingual schools in the city of La Plata. Children were exposed to different written and multimedia texts which revolved around topics derived from areas of knowledge such as natural science, social studies, and communication among others. Although data collection instruments and methodological procedures are not discussed, results showed that young learners were able to develop analogical, virtual and media literacies in an integrated way when English was taught through the planning of a single-theme teaching unit based on curricular content.

In general terms and judging by the descriptive reports in this national conference, I may conclude that CLIL in Argentina can be mostly found at higher education. In this level, courses are not taught in English. On the contrary, English as a seminar which future professionals need to take in their university courses takes contents from these to organise and contextualise

instruction. This may lead us to think that CLIL and ESP/EAP could be taken as synonyms since most EFL classes focus on reading or the type of English needed by different university students. On the other hand, regardless of the education level, the majority of the CLIL experiences reported above are concerned with intercultural awareness, a concept I may take as an umbrella term here, since literature, idiomatic expressions, films, TV, among other forms of cultural representation, are used as content and input material. Nevertheless, it is unclear to me what the underlying scope and rationale are. To put it crudely, I do not know whether some authors take a more critical view of the matter or whether they reinforce stereotypes or reproduce romanticised versions of the USA and the UK.

FURTHER EXPLORATIONS: 2009

A year later, FAAPI organised its annual conference in the city of Bahía Blanca. This time the structuring theme was “Teachers in Action. Making the latest trends work in the classroom”. Surprisingly, even after a 2008 conference around CLIL, only four presentations out of a total of fifty-four had the integration of content and language as a “trend” to be looked at. What follows is a brief examination of these four articles.

A controversial plenary

A highly controversial talk, one of the plenaries in fact, presented a critical view of the latest trends in ELT. I felt it was controversial as it criticised, from a very personal and pedestrian stance, all the trends that other presenters promoted as effective. The aim, undoubtedly, was to encourage reflection towards a more critical pedagogy since Paz and Quintero (2009, pp. 25-32) hoped to question the ELT agenda in the Argentinean context. In their publication, readers can find the following questions:

Who decides what is best for Argentina in connection with language education? Why is it that we welcome with open arms what experts concoct behind closed doors far away from our realities? What mechanisms are used to convince us that any given “latest trend” is the epitome of effective language teaching? How do local experts and authors contribute to the spread and implementation of these new fashionable methodologies? (p.27)

From those rhetorical questions which the authors do not intend to elucidate, they move on to refer to CLIL by saying that even though it has been a trend for many decades, it has “landed recently” in Argentina. One of the dangers they perceive is that teachers may run the risk of providing superficial content only. I share with them their asserting view that Argentinian EFL teachers do not have the necessary subject-matter knowledge to teach Mathematics or Biology to name a few. What they propose instead is collaborative work where the English teacher helps the non-language teacher. Also, Paz and Quintero firmly believe that learners need to acquire conceptual knowledge in their first language. That is their second concern. The authors underline that when a subject is taught in English, learners are being deprived of contact with the academic side of Spanish. This rather unsettling view is not true. Even bilingual schools in Argentina are regulated by norms which force them to offer students the same curriculum in both languages. This means that students are not deprived of academic exposure in Spanish for the sake of English improvement. Furthermore, most CLIL reports from Argentina do not propose a whole or even a portion of the school curriculum taught in English; they advance the idea of thematising the English class by resorting to curriculum content since it is a fact that teachers, whether language or content teachers, are not qualified to teach subjects such as chemistry or

history. Furthermore, I regard Paz and Quintero's suggestion towards content and language teachers working together as an illusion given the evidence I have offered in this chapter.

In addition, Paz and Quintero (2009) remind us that language teaching does not need content from other areas to become meaningful as it already has inherent content such as grammar, pronunciation and skills development. Therefore, what these authors conclude is that teachers should structure language around grammatical and skills content or, as Mohan (1986, p.1) states, linguistic content. In my view, this should not be seen as a fallacious either-or situation for programmes could simultaneously combine lessons which offer linguistic content with lessons in which this linguistic content is embedded in curricular-content based lessons. As regards this position, Banegas (2009, pp. 77-84) views CLIL as an opportunity to incorporate content which requires more cognitive effort and development (Lyster, 2007, p. 2) from teenage learners. Based on a literature review paper, Banegas suggests that if CLIL ways of teaching are to be incorporated into state and bilingual secondary education in Argentina, teachers need to take control of this trend by designing a context-responsive implementation which caters for Argentinian learners' needs. This locally-thought implementation entails the development of materials designed in Argentina by Argentinian teachers which, albeit based on principles originated in European CLIL, could be adapted to local aims, expectations and resources.

New classroom experiences

In an article founded on the author's own beliefs and perhaps less than rigorous personal observations, Cruz (2009, pp. 195-203) acknowledges the fact that CLIL is a European solution to a very specific socioeconomic need. Still, Argentina or any Latin American country can benefit from this experience as bilingual schools currently do in Buenos Aires or Santiago for example. Although the author states that CLIL could help teachers balance the language and content components of their practices, we need to remember that rather than considering it as a fixed set of principles, it embraces shades along a continuum. While secondary education may move towards the language end through the addressing of literature, culture, socio-political issues and parts of academic subjects, further education may feel more inclined to focus on the content side.

Cruz also has a word on materials. In her view, teachers should see textbooks with sections which are marketed as CLIL components with suspicious eyes. These sections rarely meet students' needs and interests and do not follow a coherent pattern throughout a book, hence reducing themselves to topic-based lessons that some teachers may ignore completely. In her conclusions, the author offers some ideas that could be taken on board by EFL teachers or subject teachers. For the former, they could "just read on the subject" (Cruz, 2009, p.201) and meet with the subject teacher periodically. As for content teachers, Cruz recommended that these obtain teacher certifications such as Cambridge TKT or start a four-year language teacher education programme. As far as I am concerned, the first recommendation for language teachers may be seen as in detriment of content thus perhaps supporting the criticisms against CLIL advanced by Paz and Quintero (2009, pp. 25-32). On the other hand, expecting non-language teachers to actually study another four-year teaching course to improve their language in addition to methodological skills seems to be highly unlikely since most teachers do not have the time to embark on such a project, a project which is not directly concerned with their subject-matter specialisation.

Lastly, Castellani, Dabove, and Colucci (2009, pp. 272-275) report an experience being carried out in the first year of secondary education which students who attend an Arts-oriented

school in La Plata are taught Arts in the EFL class thus combining content and language. The authors highlight the need to develop materials targeted to future art and music specialists from a local point of view. It is vital that for this type of experience materials and activities should reflect students' interests and needs. To achieve this, it is the teachers involved who need to become active in materials design as the market does not offer suitable materials for learners involved in these types of school projects. Together with this emphasis on context-responsive materials development, the authors acknowledge the fact that this experience takes the CLIL framework as a guide despite the fact that the aim is to introduce content in the English class, consequently placing themselves at the language end of the continuum. Furthermore, this experience does not seem to be a collection of topic-based classes since all the materials have been carefully sequenced and follow a cohesive pattern having one same subject-matter, the Arts, as core. To my knowledge and position, this is the most suitable content and language integration experience as it features the following aspects: collaborative team work among EFL teachers, materials development in the hands of those teachers and, above all, systematicity in terms of didactic procedures and contents selection and management for materials purposes.

Based on the two conference proceedings reviewed in the sections, I may say that Argentinian interest in CLIL was first translated into studies and research-like projects, as it were, which were methodologically inconsistent yet rich in presenting a picture of classroom experiences across Argentina. In other words, the years 2008 and 2009 saw CLIL rising at an exploratory stage. Nevertheless, the years 2010 and 2011 may see it from a more educational policy framework through the introduction of new EFL curricula in some of the largest provinces of Argentina.

CLIL IN EFL CURRICULA: 2010-2011 AND BEYOND

As a result of curriculum innovation and changes in Argentina's secondary education, new EFL curricula started to be developed. The first province to adopt CLIL as a new teaching methodology was the province of Buenos Aires, whose secondary school students represent almost 40% of the total teenage population of Argentina. When different provinces began introducing new curricular reforms into their renovated educational systems, Buenos Aires proposed CLIL (AICLE in Spanish) as an approach which was a continuation of Task-Based Learning. The authors of the EFL Curriculum for Secondary Education, Paz and Suárez Rotger (2010), established that the first three years of the new six-year secondary education would follow TBL, whereas the remaining three years would move from tasks to the integration of content and language with the aim of providing students with more natural contexts to learn, study, and revise English. I should point out that Paz is one of the authors who, in the conference proceedings from 2009, criticised CLIL in Argentina though suggesting that team teaching could be an option in our context. In the EFL curriculum, however, Paz and Suárez Rotger suggest that team teaching is not an option in our state educational system thus encouraging EFL teachers to exercise CLIL through a model with some of the following characteristics and reasons:

- CLIL allows students to revise what they learnt in their first three years of secondary education in more specific contexts and school orientations.
- CLIL is equated with problem solving in curricular contexts.
- CLIL is more natural and motivating in itself.
- CLIL acts as a bridge which help students boost their knowledge of English through the study of contents already or simultaneously covered in Spanish.

The implementation of a CLIL syllabus in the province of Buenos Aires has been recently reported in Rafael (2011). In this classroom experience account, the author-teacher remarks that this new curriculum design proved rewarding for her and her students. She claims that it increased both student and teacher motivation for tasks were accomplished successfully and they could learn topics of their interest despite their heterogeneous levels of English.

Some months later, the province of Chubut launched the drafting of a new educational reform for their secondary education which was gradually introduced from 2011. Each subject has a new curriculum throughout the six years of secondary education. Coincidentally with Paz and Suárez Rotger (2010), Banegas and Pésico (2011) also suggest that the first two years follow a weak version of the communicative approach (Howatt, 1984) proceeded by other two years of a more eclectic position which would combine CLT with TBL. Finally, the last two years will adopt a CLIL approach, a possible development of the communicative approach (Pérez-Vidal, 2009, p.8), though without following the statements argued by their counterparts from Buenos Aires. In the Chubut EFL curriculum, the content of integration and language is seen as an opportunity to be explored by school teachers whose students already know English due to private lessons outside the state system, by schools with a more technical orientation, and by teachers and students who are interested in learning through English. The model adopted may show these features:

- EFL teachers work collaboratively to develop class materials based on authentic sources.
- Teachers continue introducing and recycling grammar structures, vocabulary and functions though contextualised in curricular content partly negotiated with their students.
- Language-awareness and skills development are core in this model.
- Testing is mostly carried out through oral presentations and round-up projects.
- The model is placed towards the language end of the CLIL-CBI continuum.
- Though teachers could still plan lessons following CLT and TBL, CLIL lessons are to be systematic and follow one specific curricular area every month or school term.

Despite clear differences and intended models, these two curricula exemplify how CLIL models are moving from experiential and rather parochial practices to ELT pedagogies and ministerial policies implemented on a larger scale based on fruitful pilot experiences and the need to reinvigorate ELT in state education. Would this new approach be introduced as its predecessors? Would it be only the product of top-down policies or a process signalled by the incorporation of teachers' voices?

CONCLUSION

Unlike most implementations across Europe, the gradual implementation of CLIL in Argentina responds to an approach which combines the problem-solving and social-interaction models (Waters, 2009, p. 434). On the one hand, the integration of content and language has been started by teachers at different levels in the educational system. Thus, it is fair to say that it is an example of a bottom-up process started by practitioners. In addition, some implementations have been the result of teachers meeting at national conferences or in-service workshops in which teacher-research findings, as conceived by Ellis (2010, pp. 188-189), are shared.

Some teachers, then, may start their own experiences and in so doing are replicating or exploring new models within the CLIL continuum. I should emphasise that the integration of

content and language is chosen by teachers themselves from their own basic research or exploratory practice outcomes supported by theory and practice in the field. These outcomes have been so successful that they have changed the ELT landscape since those CLIL experiences in the field have reached curriculum policies and implementations thus initiating a top-down dissemination of CLIL. While, initially CLIL spread because teachers and learners wanted to integrate content and language, now CLIL will spread because official curricula may determine so. How these views might be met, negotiated and realised in the educational system remain uncertain.

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