

## Editorial introduction

Introducción editorial

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Welcome to Volume 6, Issue 2 of the *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning* (LACLIL). This issue offers reflections on areas related to the integration of content and language in a variety of contexts—including Colombia, Spain, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, and Iran—in which researchers provide us with opportunities to reflect on current teaching practices. Globalization is making the world interconnected in ways previously unseen (Mehisto, Marsh, & Frigols, 2008, p. 10); with this in mind, the current issue of LACLIL also shows how CLIL is becoming more globalized as well, rapidly becoming an “innovative methodology” that caters to the needs of the new generation at hand (Graddol, 2005, p. 2). Nowadays, language-learning and content-learning are increasingly driven by learners’ desires to be connected to this globalized world, in which boundaries cease to exist, to access opportunities that may not have been available beforehand.

The essence of a CLIL approach is integration, where the approach used in the classroom depends on a set of core variables—content, language, cognition, and culture—that are intertwined into the curriculum and expressed through classroom practice. All of this revolves around the type of subjects that are being taught and the extent of the cognitive demands, as well as the learners’ linguistic load. Nevertheless, these core variables all depend on the educational context. For example, in Taiwan, the notions of globalization and of English as an international *lingua franca* led the Ministry of Education to institute a new curriculum (Grade 1–9 Curriculum) in 2001 that made English as a compulsory subject for Taiwanese students beginning in elementary school at the third-grade level (Hsuan-Yau, 2008).

Meanwhile, in Colombia, a CLIL approach is sometimes used to achieve the added value of enhanced foreign language competence or may be seen as another model of bilingual education across the curriculum as part of a larger plan set



forth by policy. The Colombian Ministry of Education launched a National Program of Bilingualism (2004-2019) that is aimed at raising the level of English in every step of Colombian education and “contribuir a tener ciudadanos y ciudadanas capaces de comunicarse en inglés, con estándares internacionalmente comparables” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006, p. 3)

Turning to language-learning in Spain, while several decades ago French was the foreign language most commonly learnt by Spaniards (Luján-García, 2012), it is clear that English has now become the first foreign language in Spain, included at every level in the Spanish educational system. Indeed, although use of English is not a requirement, it has become the most popular choice of foreign language within the European educational systems. Once again, policy has given English great importance and a more prominent role in education—especially in higher education. Similarly, the still developing role of CLIL in Europe is “linked to learning and development outcomes relating to culture, environment, language, content and learning” (Marsh, 2002, p. 66). In the United Kingdom, according to the Content and Language Integration Project (CLIP), CLIL is being used to raise standards of attainment across the curriculum, improve students’ foreign language capability, develop a more integrated approach to curriculum delivery, and move forward a citizenship agenda (Eurydice, 2006).

With these on-going developments in CLIL and language-learning in mind, we are pleased to present in this issue of LACLIL six new research articles that provide a varied look at how CLIL is continuing to emerge as a successful alternative to “traditional” classroom practices as a way to bring language and content together. This issue starts with an article from David Lasagabaster (Spain), who discusses the different perspectives surrounding the use of the L1 in CLIL contexts. His paper looks at Colombian in-service CLIL teachers’ beliefs regarding the use of L1 in their Colombian classes, observing that they tend to believe that CLIL offers a way to scaffold language and content learning.

Andrés Canga Alonso (Spain) explores the receptive vocabulary size of learners involved in CLIL programs at the primary level. His article looks at how sixth-grade Spanish-speakers learn English through CLIL instruction and the relation between their receptive vocabulary size and their ability to understand written and spoken discourse in English using frequency band vocabulary tests.

Neil Hughes’ (United Kingdom) article strays away from the predominant English-language focus in much contemporary CLIL research by focusing on a



context in which Spanish is the vehicular language, analyzing student academic writing from a CLIL module in Contemporary Latin American Political Economy delivered through Spanish. He highlights the important roles played by regular reading, writing, and social interaction in the development of the students' academic writing proficiency in the CLIL language, as well as how discussion boards, debates, and themes from course module were used.

Hsiao-I Hou (Taiwan) discusses the result of a case study that looked at English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and the development and features of a CLIL program in a hospitality university. She highlights how development and implementation of the program using a CLIL approach supported participants' ability to express their differing opinions on topics such as material selection, content-based homework assignments, and academic knowledge.

Finally, Tahmasebi Gholum-Ali, Ghaedrahmat Mehdi, and Haqverdi Hamidreza (Iran) explore the relationship between language proficiency, vocabulary depth, and vocabulary breadth in Iranian EFL learners. They discuss the differences found between vocabulary size and vocabulary depth of the learners, using correlation coefficients to determine the results.

In conclusion, CLIL approaches vary considerably in their conception and implementation—but it is this very flexibility that helps them fit well in educational institutions and contexts. CLIL approaches also fit into a much wider notion of “just in time” learning, such that the English required for academic study is learned as and when it is needed (Graddol, 2005, p. 2). We hope this issue of LACLIL provides an expanded view on how additional languages are used for the learning and teaching of both content in the five different contexts in five different countries discussed in its articles. Yet while the reasons for introducing CLIL, and the means of implementing it, are diverse, its core values remain intact. We look forward to seeing with you how CLIL will continue to evolve and involve itself in mainstream educational systems around the world.

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