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Chapter 8 Challenges in English as a foreign Language Teaching in the Basque Country: Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers' Perspectives

Abstract: The introduction of innovative English as a Foreign language programmes has revealed a change in the role of the foreign language teacher as well as the need of continuous teacher training (Enever, 2011). Regarding the development of primary English as a foreign language teachers two competencies have been identified as key throughout the teachers' career (Wilden and Porsch, 2017): language proficiency and subject specific teaching methodologies. Thus, this study examines the perceptions in-service English foreign language (EFL) teachers encounter in their daily practice in the Basque Autonomous Community (Spain). A total of 15 school foreign language expert and novice teachers in primary education were interviewed. Data were collected from semi-structured interviews with the English as a foreign language teachers focusing on teacher training to teach subject-specific content, language competence required to teach primary children and teachers' concerns regarding the implementation of innovative English as a foreign language programmes in primary education. The analysis of the data showed that teachers shared their views and concerns regarding the criteria examined in the interviews. Foreign language teachers' concerns were enhanced in schools implementing innovative programmes suggesting the need for reinforcing teacher training in new pedagogical trends. Findings also revealed a need for reflection on the understanding of how current language policies understand language competence for foreign language teachers. In addition, a deeper reflection on the English as a foreign language teacher's role in primary education is requested.

Keywords: EFL, Pre-service teachers, in-service teachers

1. Introduction

Recent research in the educational field has highlighted the need to address the problems identified by teachers and researchers in the practice of such interaction (Breidbach and Viebrock 2012; Bruton 2013; Laurent & Corey 2017; Llinares, Morton, and Whittaker, 2012; Pérez Cañado 2016). These works have revealed the conceptual and pedagogical limitations that show the previous approaches (CLIL, CBL, etc.). In a similar vein, the introduction of innovative English as a foreign language programmes has revealed a change in the role of

the foreign language teacher as well as the need of continuous teacher training (Enever, 2011).

In the last decade, the teaching of foreign languages is spreading throughout Europe and the age of introduction at school is extending to younger age groups (De Bot, 2014). Taking this tendency into consideration, researchers are calling for a specific training of foreign language teachers. However, research into the challenges of foreign language teachers is still in its infancy. In pursuit of this goal, the purpose of this research work will be to gather evidence on the training needs and challenges of foreign language teachers. Specifically, to meet the training needs that identify students receiving initial training as well as in-service teacher voices.

2. Theoretical Background

The current educational context of the Basque Autonomous Community has a significant feature: multilingualism. Two official languages, Basque, the minority language, and Spanish, the majority language, co-exist with English, the predominant foreign language at school. Concerning minority language at this stage, around 18,7 % of children's mother tongue is only Basque, whereas near 10 % of children are bilingual from their homes (Basque Government, 2016). So on average 70 % of children entering pre-primary school do not know the official minority language. So the goal at this early age is to introduce the language to those who do not know it through immersion programs before English (third language) is introduced. This fact influences the introduction of English in pre-primary, which very often starts at the age of three.

As the teaching of foreign languages has widespread in almost all European countries, the reflection on foreign language teaching has also emerged. In recent years, several lines of research have been launched focusing on the foreign language teaching (Lorenzo & Trujillo, 2018). In this vein, research has shown two main issues emerge when the teaching of the foreign language comes to the floor: the methodology used to introduce the foreign language and creating good quality spaces for communication to occur.

There have been many and extensive discussions on methodologies for teaching a foreign language in different fields of research. Also, several approaches have been used to make the teaching a foreign language more meaningful or successful in the last decade. However, research on these approaches has shown mixed results so far. Even though several studies have explored the advantages of CLIL (Cenoz, Genesee & Gorter, 2013; Lasagabaster, 2011; Dalton-Puffer, Llinares, Lorenzo & Nikula, 2014) some other studies have revealed that CLIL

may not be reaching its full potential (Dalton-Puffer, 2013, 2016; Meyer, Coyle, Halbach, Schuck & Ting, 2015).

The emerging critical research agenda around CLIL points out the conceptual and practical shortcomings such as deficits in academic language use, in the knowledge and in the mastery of writing and oral communication as well as an absence of cognitive discourse functions (Dalton-Puffer, 2013; Meyer et al., 2015). Moreover, several studies (Arum & Roska, 2014; Meyer, Imhof, Coyle & Banerjee, 2018) have shown concerns on students' learning approach and have emphasised the need to encourage deeper learning by developing the subject specific literacies.

The Pluriliteracies Teaching for Learning (PTL) (Meyer & Coyle, 2017) model attempts to address the conceptual shortcomings of CLIL by focusing on the development of specific literacies and offering pathways for deeper learning across disciplines, languages and cultures. The PTL approach addresses the development of 21st century skills cognitive, linguistic and emotional dimensions of learning. The PTL approach "allows for the design of deeper learning ecologies where mentors and mentees are engaged in the processes of constructing and communicating of knowledge" (Meyer et al., 2018: 241). Moreover, emotional and cognitive engagement are socially constructed and reconstructed in daily and school interactions, emphasising the social nature of the education.

However, apart from the methodological issues, foreign language teaching has a remarkable feature that makes it comparable to second language teaching: having fewer real contexts for using the same language outside educational contexts. This has a direct impact on foreign language teaching. In fact, it tends to create contexts for meaningful and effective communication for the purposes of professionals engaged in the teaching of a foreign language. To this end, a number of research studies have shown that teacher communication skills are of utmost importance in foreign language teaching.

In this respect, as Enever (2011) mentions, the profile of the foreign language teacher for young learners should consider the development of the child's language and combine them with expertise in the foreign language, which is appropriate for each age. Furthermore, Mourão and Ferreirinha (2016) claim that "both pedagogical and language skills are essential" (p. 10) for foreign language teachers to work with primary and pre-primary young learners. Furthermore, teachers "require an understanding of the principles of pedagogy and child development as well as being sufficiently confident to speak fluently and spontaneously to children in the second language using language considered appropriate for this age group" (p. 10).

Table 1. Description of the Participants

	Pre-service teachers	In-service teachers
Number of participants	21	19
Years of experience	None	15 (sd:2.53)

3. The Study

As noted in the previous section, the spread out of foreign language programs to early ages has raised a need of researching teachers' voices. Furthermore, the changes in education in recent years have led to a profound reflection on the profile of the foreign language teacher. However, very few research studies have considered foreign language teachers' voices in this context. In order to achieve this aim, the purpose of this research work will be to gather evidence on foreign language teachers' training needs and challenges. More specifically, to meet the training needs that identify students receiving initial in-service training as well as in-service teacher voices. Considering this gap in research, the following research question was entertained:

- i. what challenges do pre-service and in-service English as a foreign language teachers encounter in Primary Education?

- a. Participants

A total of 40 English as a foreign language pre-service and in-service teachers in Primary Education were interviewed for this study. On the one hand, 19 pre-service teachers participated in the study. All the participants were in the fourth and last year of Primary Education with a minor in foreign language teaching. At the moment of the interview, student teachers were finishing their school internship in the English as a foreign language classroom. On the other hand, 21 teachers were in-service teachers. All teachers were highly experienced English as a foreign language teachers in Primary education ranging from 11 years until almost 20 years of experience. At the time of the interview, they were working at public or charter schools with a permanent position. Regarding their teaching experience, all teachers acknowledged having left the textbooks aside and they were trying to introduce different approaches or methodologies to teach the foreign language.

- b. Data collection instrument

For the present study, semi-structured interviews were employed due to their flexible approach that allows the interviewee to establish areas of interest

(Birmingham & Wilkinson, 2003; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Following the requirements and criteria mentioned earlier, individual semi-structured interviews were designed, carried out, transcribed and coded to gather qualitative data and get a holistic view of the phenomenon. Attention in the interviews was specifically paid to three criteria: teachers' training, methodological aspects and the use of the language. In fact, the questions were open-ended and flexible because the content, the flow of information and the choice of themes vary according to what the interviewer feels, shares and answers in order to approach the real meaning of the answers. The semi-structured interviews lasted on average 45 minutes and interviews were conducted either in Basque or in English. Moreover, it should be noted that all the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed with the consent of the participants, but their names were replaced by pseudonyms in order to keep their anonymity and ensure the accuracy of the study.

c. Data collection procedure and data analysis

All the data gathered from the interviews were transcribed and coded by the researchers. The units of analysis of this study were the turns of interactions identified in the transcription of each interview. Regarding the procedure followed to analyse the data, first, two blind researchers examined the transcriptions independently and coded 15 % of the data with a success rate of 95 %. The analysis was carried out considering four main categories: teacher training, teaching methodologies, communication in the foreign language and challenges as foreign language teachers. The rest of the data were coded with a success rate of 95 % by blind researchers. Consistent discussions were carried out when disagreements were found. A few turns of interaction in our data set were left uncoded due to the lack of relation with the main theme. After coding the main categories, the percentages of categories were calculated to allow a descriptive comparison. The groupings and percentages are shown below in the results section.

4. Results

The main objective in this study was to examine the challenges encountered by pre-service and in-service English as a foreign language teachers in Primary Education. A total of four main criteria were used to codify the data: teacher training, the methodological approaches adopted, the use of the foreign language and the future challenges. Table 2 describes the occurrences and percentages calculated from the codification of the interviews by in-service teachers.

Table 2. Descriptive Data of the Interviews

	Pre-service teachers	In-service teachers
Teacher training	79 (34.34 %)	63 (22.82 %)
Methodological approaches	59 (25.65 %)	87 (31.52 %)
Use of the FL	60 (26.08 %)	79 (28.26 %)
Future challenges	32 (13.91 %)	47 (17.02 %)
TOTAL	230	276

Table 2 shows clear trends in terms of the criteria identified by pre-service and in-service teachers. Pre-service teachers focus mainly on teacher training, even though they highlighted methodological aspects and the use of the foreign language too. However, training seems to be teachers' main concern. In-service teachers, on the other hand, mainly referred to methodological aspects and language use. Two criteria clearly associated with their daily experience. In spite of the fact that teacher training was also frequently mentioned by in-service teachers, they claimed for lifelong learning opportunities within their professional career.

Regarding teacher training, in-service teachers indicate the need to take a new perspective on foreign language teacher training programs. A more in-depth reflection should be posed in order that training to respond to the challenges of future education.

"It seems to me that if we are in a foreign language, we need to start a real reflection process. Nowadays, the ways we do things sometimes seem to be conformist, I wonder if we are making a real bet. Are we ready to respond to the needs of the future society, the educational model, the student profile? Is this the training we receive as a foreign language teacher? I have doubts. "

(IS_03)

Most teachers stated that they are undergoing a process of innovation in their school but the foreign language is not fully integrated on these processes. This issue raised the question about the need for specific training in the foreign language is emphasised. There is also a shift in perspective in foreign language teaching and this, in conjunction with the rest of the education system, should address the challenges of the 21st century.

Foreign language teachers also point out the importance of the specific training in their teaching. In fact, certifying the C1 level in the CEFR framework in Spain is sufficient in English (Fleta Guillen, 2016). However, if in-service

teachers want to take a significant step forward, receiving specific training relevant to this profile will be viewed as a key factor for in-service teachers.

"It is known that a good level of English for a foreign language teacher is essential. Is that enough, though? I would say no, we need pedagogical training in foreign languages and multilingualism."

(IS_13)

Concerning the methodological aspects in teaching and learning of the FL, integrating language and content in the everyday classroom practice is a main challenge. Pre-service teachers aipatzen dute atzerriko hizkuntzaren izan ohi dela ikastetxeko berrikuntza prozesuetatik kanpora geratu ohi den arloa.

"How to integrate the English projects with the other projects which are being developed in the school or corresponding grade. it is important not to have English as an "extra, isolated" element. Try to include it in the other projects. Trying to identify the different problems or interesting topics in society so that they can be brought to the classroom. To be able to integrate into other projects, materials need to be designed and developed. This area would need more attention."

(PS_11)

As stated in the following quote, a more integrative approach to continue integrating the foreign language with other areas of knowledge would be beneficial. In fact, training may lead to a change in that situation. In addition, pre-service teachers claim a need for developing critical criteria to connect the theoretical knowledge of the methodologies studied throughout their degree and the reality they find at school.

"Student-teachers need training on how to foster language development and use in natural ways. They need to have criteria on which pedagogical approaches will best enhance language development and use in different contexts. Therefore, it is not only a questions of learning what each pedagogical approach is about. They need to discriminate the pedagogical rationale behind different approaches concerning language development and use."

(PS_04)

In-service teachers identify their foreign language lessons as an isolated subject from others, and even in some cases, having little contact with other teachers.

Another great difficulty lies in the relation among teachers. If we aim at integrating the foreign language within the projects, coordination among teachers would be crucial.

(IS_01)

In-service teachers showed difficulties in integrating the foreign language in project-based methodologies or found difficulties when in advancing both language and subject specific knowledge. Indeed, from the perspective of what

has been done so far, it would require a change of perspective and knowledge in other areas. Likewise, the connection between content and language, based on CLIL approach, highlight the concerns mentioned in the interviews.

"We are working on combining the field and the language, we do social sciences in English, but we do not realize the full potential of this combination. It seems to me that such an approach can give us another game."

(IS_08)

Beyond the link between content and language so far, the pedagogical and methodological innovations mentioned above have revealed a growing need to integrate the teaching of the foreign language with other areas of knowledge or school subjects. Hence, adopting an interdisciplinary approach in the foreign language seems to be an important aspect. In fact, in-service teachers claim for a step further in foreign language teaching.

"How to integrate the English projects with the other projects which are being developed in the school or corresponding grade."

(IS_06)

Concerning the second criteria, communication in the foreign language criteria comprises two subtopics: language competence and language use. Teachers' language competence as well as students' language use were mentioned in the interviews. Among pre-service and in-service teachers, language competence has been one of the most recurrent aspects. In these conversations, it seems extremely important for teachers to have a good linguistic competence. But not only to have a good level of language according to the CEFR, but also to have the ability to adapt that language for each age group they are teaching to.

Foreign language teacher must have a good level of English. B2 level? Level C1? The higher, the better. But we must not forget, we ask a child 'shall we wear an apron?', 'Shall we read a story?' Or 'what will we write on the blackboard?' And sometimes that's the difficult part.

(PS_16)

On the other hand, the use of the foreign language was also a remarkable issue in the interviews. Three main aspects were identified by pre-service and in-service teachers: creating the need to use the foreign language, creating the use of the foreign language outside the classroom and answering to language diversity in the classroom. Promoting the use of foreign language within the classroom is one of the challenges identified by pre-service and in-service teachers. Creating spaces for children to use natural language in a foreign language classroom to make the room a breathing space for the language.

"We need to find ways so that the kids find the connection between the language and their daily life; so that they find language useful and meaningful. I believe these two aspects are key: usefulness, functionality and meaningfulness. And so I think it is essential to embed the foreign language in their daily life in order to reach those objectives. So that children can feel they can play, laugh, have fun... with that language; so that they connect the language with positive experiences and with pleasure. Apart from that, we need to have a very clear idea of the foreign language objectives we set for each stage. Those must be objectives directly related to the (maturation) development of the kid and also we need to give relevance to experiences."

(PS_03)

Teachers also identify the difficulties of moving this situation out of the classroom. In other words, given the sociolinguistic context, teachers find a real challenge in creating opportunities to use the language outside the classroom.

"Approach the language to make them feel closer to the child's everyday reality, to find usefulness and not to feel strangers."

(IS_02)

The third element identified by teachers is the need of strategies and resources for managing the linguistic diversity they have in their daily lessons. In-service teachers mentioned that, in addition to the official languages of the Basque Autonomous Community (BAC), Basque and Spanish, some of their students have other mother tongues. Taking into account the goals set by the curriculum in terms of language proficiency for two official languages, teachers show difficulties in integrating these goals with linguistic diversity they find in their classrooms.

"We have difficulties in achieving the goals set for the foreign language. What about other languages? How do we strengthen home languages?"

(IS_09)

Final remarks depicted the challenges pre-service and in-service teachers have when teaching the FL. Both pre-service and in-service teachers identified continuous training as a necessary element to continue improving their professional profile. More specifically, as indicated by all teachers in order to continue improving their language competence as well as the new methodological trends outcoming by new pedagogical advances opportunities for continuous training are required.

"Need to have continuous training both regarding language and new pedagogic trends. In the past there was more support from the Basque government."

(IS_12)

However, in-service teachers also claimed for a more integral language policy by stakeholders in order to *“enable opportunities for continuous training for teachers as well as stronger connections between primary education and universities”* (IS_08).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Evidence from the interviews revealed that teacher training was one of the many repeated topics in the teachers' discourse. Among pre-service and in-service teachers, apart from a high language level in the foreign language, the need for specific training was mentioned. That is to say, training adapted to the child's context, school education project and social challenges is needed both, pedagogically and linguistically. Several recent studies in other contexts, such as, Madrid or Portugal, also highlight the need for this specific training (Enever, Fleta and Mourao). However, it is understood from the teachers' interviews that in the schools where pedagogical innovations are taking place, teacher training becomes even more necessary.

Pre-service and in-service teachers identify in the interviews the need to develop methodological aspects. In current research, methodological aspects have also played an important role. A wide range of research studies have focused so far on CLIL but these studies to date have yielded different results (Dalton-Puffer, 2013, 2016; Meyer et al. 2015; Lorenzo and Meyer, 2018). In the voices of teachers, the field and the combination of language are not sufficient to meet the goals of the curriculum. Likewise, the difficulties or challenges that teachers have expressed in connecting foreign language with other projects also seem insurmountable with the current model. To this extent, PTLs can expand the possibilities of combining the foreign language with other areas of knowledge, with the aim of achieving deeper learning.

In spite of the PTL approach addressing the 21st century skills, there still remain several questions unresolved. Teachers in their interviews indicated that from an interdisciplinary approach, the integration of the foreign language with the rest of the school subject or disciplines is required. In fact, in order to make the use of foreign language more natural in this context, the teaching of foreign language should also be integrated under the interdisciplinary approach. To find out how PTL can help us achieve this integration, we will need further research.

The third major challenge identified in conversations is the use of foreign language. Creating contexts to engage students in using a foreign language, both inside and outside the classroom, becomes a task for teachers. Similarly, for

communication to be effective and for interaction to occur in a foreign language, it is necessary to use linguistically appropriate strategies (Enever, 2011).

A final thought that emerges from the interviews is a need for different institutions, i.e. government, universities and schools, to work together in order to approach the challenges foreign language teaching has in a holistic manner. Moreover, as Fleta Guillén (2016) points out there is a need to redefine the education policies concerning the teaching of FLs in primary and, thus, in pre-primary education.

In conclusion, this study has been an attempt to identify the challenges pre-service and in-service English as a foreign language teachers encounter in the Basque Autonomous Community. Evidence from semi-structured interviews showed that teachers in both public and charter schools shared their views and concerns regarding the teacher training, the methodological approaches for English as a foreign language teaching and the use of English in the classroom. English as a foreign language teachers' concerns were enhanced in schools implementing innovative programmes suggesting the need for reinforcing teacher training in new pedagogical trends. Findings also revealed a need for reflection on the understanding of how current language policies understand language competence for English as a foreign language teachers. Nonetheless, this contribution has shortcomings that we need to acknowledge but we believe they open up new lines for research. Future work should include a larger sample and should be replicated in other educational contexts. Other interesting lines of research should examine foreign language teacher training and continuous training in more depth. This line of research could also contribute to analyse the new methodological approaches (i.e. PTL approach) in more detail. In order to address the challenges of future education, research should also consider a deeper reflection on the English as a foreign language teacher's role in primary education.

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Chapter 9 Constructing Research Pathways from Multilingual Challenges to Pluriliteracies Practices

Abstract: Global, social, and cultural movements intertwined with educational challenges have fostered a new research agenda in terms of language and subject literacy development. Considering the trajectory of CLIL research, the author claims for a more holistic and connected research paradigm. Thus, this chapter presents a conceptual framework for a multiperspectival, participatory, and ‘close-to-practice’ research. It is also highlighted the importance of Research Partnerships if the potential of language and subject literacy is to be promoted.

Keywords: pluriliteracies, multilingualism. research agenda

This chapter of the volume seeks to frame a research agenda in terms of recent shifts in thinking driven by global, social and cultural movements referred to by Vertovec (2007) as ‘super-diversity’. Whilst the complex roles of language and languages in multilingual contexts have driven education debates, theoretical frameworks and practice-oriented models over centuries (Llinares, Morton & Whittaker, 2012), the dynamic, hybrid and transnational linguistic repertoires’ (May, 2014:1) of the *here-and-now* are demanding alternative ways of understanding the principles, perceptions and practices of multilingual education. Moreover, the realities of increasingly diverse classrooms in increasingly diverse contexts have required stakeholders to listen to teachers, learners, families and communities in order to rethink how challenges can become opportunities for enriching social and linguistic capital. The rhetoric is grand, the canvass is complex and the research is hybrid.

More recent discourses in language education have increasingly embraced issues of inclusion and social justice in line with principles outlined in the UNESCO report (2013:4).

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.

Yet, transforming such underpinning values into regular classroom practices demands changes in the way that bilingual education is designed and understood, context-embedded and sustained at many different levels. A more holistic view not only of language education *per se* but also the roles of language in school learning in general are urgently required (Schleppergrell, 2004: 1).

It is through language that school subjects are taught and through language that students' understanding of concepts is displayed and evaluated in school contexts. In addition, knowledge about language itself is part of the content of schooling, as children are asked to adopt the word-, sentence-, and rhetorical-level conventions of writing, to define words, and in other ways to focus on language as language. In other words, the content, as well as the medium, of schooling is, to a large extent, language. (2004:1–2)

Increasing amounts of research have focused on the nature of 'integration' leading to different interpretations of integrated learning in bilingual education especially content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Pendulum swings and pedagogic trends tend to identify and focus on specific elements of what integrated learning entails – typically knowledge-based versus skills-based learning; disciplinary focus versus interdisciplinary learning; language learning versus language using; focus on form versus focus on meaning; target language versus translanguaging; generalisable study skills versus language strategies and so on. Yet these debates are problematic since, whilst there is agreement about the importance of language for learning, there is less consensus concerning the underpinning theoretical constructs, which focus on conceptual development and its profound interrelationship with meaning making and knowledge building. Leung (2005: 240) notes that curriculum and content learning and language learning are still seen as 'two separate pedagogic issues'. And Mohan, Leung and Slater (2010: 220) call for a 'language-based theory of knowing and learning that addresses characteristics of literate language use in all modalities'. Moving thinking forwards, Nikula, Dafouz, Moore and Smit (2016) in their volume dedicated to integration in CLIL and multilingual education, identified three fundamental perspectives requiring urgent attention: curriculum and pedagogy planning, participant perspectives and classroom practices. Focussing on the latter, Scarino and Liddicoat, (2016: 33) emphasise the need for a strong steer towards interdisciplinary approaches required to understand the dynamic complexities of pedagogies and classroom practices. Increasingly diverse and multilingual in nature, neither the theorising of learning nor language is sufficient to realise the potential and address the challenges of the role of *languages* in bilingual learning. They draw attention to

the capacity to 'move between' linguistic, cultural and knowledge systems; participating in and understanding communication as an act that involves reciprocal exchange of meanings; and using processes of reflectivity and reflexivity to develop consciousness and self-awareness about what is entailed in interpreting, creating, and exchanging meaning in diversity.

The current trend emphasising opportunities created through interdisciplinarity suggests greater attention needs to be paid to the development of subject-specific discourse and literacies especially in writing and to greater understanding of teaching *through* another language (Vollmer, 2008; Dalton-Puffer, 2013; Bruton, 2013). As Morton (2018: 57) suggests literacy-based approaches embrace deeper integration through focussing more on meaning-making in different subjects rather than balancing content and language. This current phase takes account of the above by working towards theory-related practices of language, resonating with interest in literacies across languages (i.e. Pluriliteracies) and thereby positions CLIL in a much broader educational arena. It signifies a shift from CLIL being very much a language-related phenomenon to one which connects to pedagogic movements where language and literacies, especially subject literacies, are seen as core to all learning in any language at any level. The implications of this re-positioning are far reaching.

In what Kumaravadivelu (2012) describes as the postnational, postmodern, postcolonial, posttransmission and postmethod era, there is little wonder when language education research adopts the broader perspective of education and subject disciplinary learning that different epistemologies or lineages – coined by Dale, Oostdam and Verspoor (2017) – are brought into the frame. As referred to previously, as current societal and economic global moves shift educational agendas so too the power of connecting first language and other language perspectives with pedagogic understanding indicates that the boundaries described by Becher and Trowler's (2001) academic tribes and their territories are beginning to merge through transdisciplinary exigencies. Whilst this chapter focusses on schooling, the rapid increase of English-medium programmes in higher education is drawing increasing attention and thus far I contend that, despite growing evidence from research (Block and Moncada-Comas, 2019; Dafouz, 2014), in practice, these currently remain below the surface.

Over ten years ago, a paper in the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* (Coyle, 2007: 543–558) entitled Content and Language Integrated Learning: Towards a Connected Research Agenda for CLIL Pedagogies, sought to provide a forum for openly discussion and trigger debate and critique. The tenet of this piece stated that future research agendas for CLIL should 'embrace a holistic approach', in order to continue 'mapping

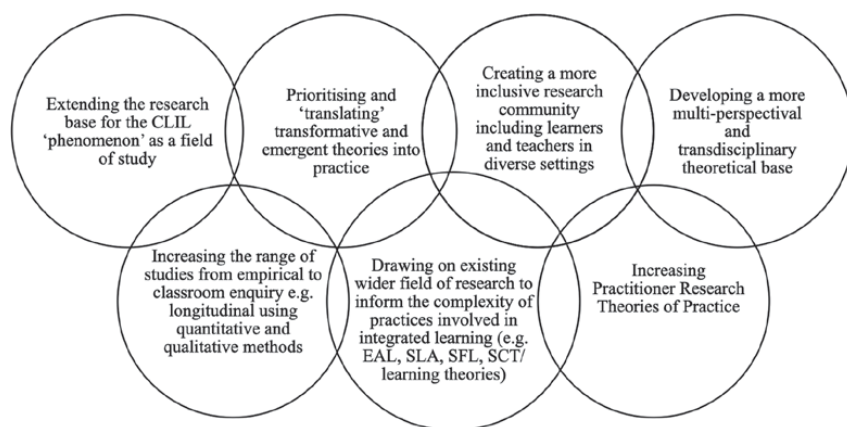


Figure 1: Mapping the future research agenda (Coyle 2007).

the terrain' and to respond to rapid societal change and thereby 'connect' and 'be connected' within a range of research communities. Seven key points were raised in terms of creating a pathway for future research. These are presented visually in Figure 1.

Reviewing a projected CLIL research agenda more than a decade later provides a temporal perspective on paradigmatic trends and pedagogic positioning. It is of course useful to note the extent to which the same issues continue to be priorities. Figure 1 encapsulates research demands which straddle the development of CLIL driven by research, policy and professional learning and practices throughout the last decade. In tracing these trajectories three phases discussed in detail in Coyle (2018) 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*.

In the earlier phases of CLIL research, debates centred around the importance and balance of a focus on content and/or a focus on language emphasising the need for new and shared pedagogic practices in CLIL classrooms – not only of strategies and techniques drawing on both subject and language areas of expertise, but more fundamentally on the need to create new ways of conceptualising learning. The focus was on language extended to subject disciplines and on the linguistic demands of learning subject knowledge at an appropriate cognitive level. The next phase emphasised different interpretations of integration across

very diverse settings. Now often referred to as an ‘umbrella term’, different models of CLIL emerged in what Pérez-Cañado (2015) describes as a ‘heterogeneous panorama’ – some more subject-oriented and others more language-oriented depending on the school context. Such complexity led to constant debate about the distinctive nature of CLIL, its definitions or interpretations and different enactments across national and regional boundaries (Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter, 2014). Whilst CLIL is context-embedded and cannot or should not be distilled into a single prescribed approach, the need to accrue, critique and refine theory-driven pedagogic principles applied and adapted across linguistic and cultural boundaries is critical for assuring quality learning outcomes (Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010).

So where are we now and where are we going?

The current phase embraces broader curriculum agendas, taking a more holistic view of learning in terms of global issues, diversity and multilingual, multicultural classrooms. Viewing classroom learning through an ecological lens has led to a much wider and deeper analysis of the conditions for learning which are conducive to successful or deeper bilingual learning. Increasingly, pedagogic framing built on social justice and inclusive practices is gaining momentum as a realisation of our rapidly changing demographic. This has shifted significantly the emphasis from language learning and content learning to *bilingual education* in the broadest sense at the macro level, and provided a focus on learning design and inclusive pedagogies at the micro level of classroom being, knowing, doing and working together (UNESCO, 1996). Here I use *bilingual education* to describe dynamic ways of being and behaving in classrooms underpinned by values outlined previously, and not as a label or description of schooling in more than one language. Embracing *education* in this sense requires critical reflection on emergent epistemological and ontological principles of what CLIL is and could be. Such positioning embraces both the macro and micro and as such impacts significantly on constructing a research agenda. Hence, the mapping of future research for CLIL focussing on classroom pedagogies begins to take shape – as an example see Figure 2.

However, each one of the suggested areas for research in CLIL contexts uncovers a plethora of variables, factors and issues which not only impact on learning but are themselves the subject of extensive research involving different fields of enquiry. There is logic in using an ecological lens through which to see classroom learning and teaching in bilingual contexts from a more holistic, interconnected perspective. Yet what is prioritised or even brought into the frame is open to wide debate and sometime contentious argument – readers may well identify omissions in Figure 2. Yet herein lies the nub of the issue. Pedagogies

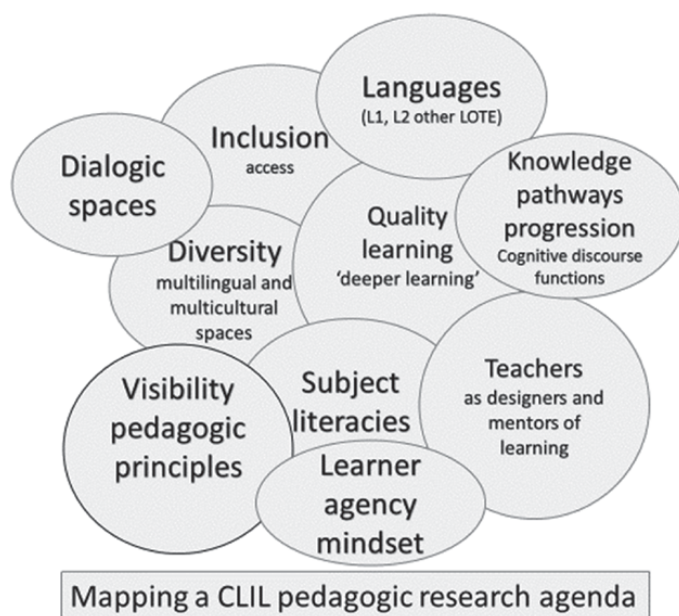


Figure 2: Mapping a CLIL pedagogic research agenda.

do not exist in a vacuum and the implications of transformational change in CLIL classrooms impact on bilingual education as a broad inclusive phenomenon alongside political and educational agendas (macro level) and the contexts in which learning happens, and the learners and teachers who together make it happen (micro level). It is not surprising, therefore, that most recent studies conclude with an urgent need for further research especially in terms of a paucity of hard-to-reach classroom data, longitudinal studies and scientific data. However, if the argument that CLIL is context-embedded holds, challenging questions are raised about who constructs research agendas, how and why – in other words who 'owns' the research?

Dalton-Puffer, in her postscriptum of the 2018 special issue of the *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, refers to the 'itinerary of ideas and the generation and appropriation of knowledge within the professional community' (2018: 386) noting that transforming classroom practices is a complex process that not only demands time but an emergent shared understanding between researchers and teachers and between teachers and learners. The

complexity of CLIL classrooms is a given. Yet the need for research to become normalised and thrive by those who teach and learn in classrooms is emphasised by Dudley (2018: 22) stating that ‘only through processes of problematisation – making the familiar strange and the over-familiar visible – can the enduring grip of present practice-knowledge be loosened enough to make change possible’.

These messages emphasise the continuous need for CLIL research to be rigorous in terms of its multiperspectival, participatory nature, especially with regard to collecting classroom data and involving teachers and learners as researchers. This stance promotes ‘close-to-practice’ research which connects and contextualises theory and policy defined by practitioners as ‘relevant to their practice, and often involves collaborative work between practitioners and researchers’ (Wyse, Browne, Oliver and Poblete, 2018: 14). Such collaboration can be instrumental in leading to a wider range of research, where an identified urgent need for more intervention studies is recognised in order to ‘drive forward the translation (or not) of theory/data-driven research results into pedagogical practice’ (Dalton-Puffer 2017: 385).

Whilst much has been written about research collaboration drawing on the relative strengths of academic research and practice-oriented enquiry, I would like to return to what for me has been the driver for classroom pedagogic research over several decades. It focusses on Van Lier’s (1996: 24) proposed ‘practical philosophy of education’ in a sense where theory, research and practice are ‘dynamic ingredients of the theory of practice’ so that the implicit theories we all have are made explicit. According to van Lier, constructing a Theory of Practice (I use capitals to highlight the interpretation and significance of these in the CLIL contexts) – envisions teacher development as pedagogic development:

a process of practicing, theorizing and researching. Our growing understanding of this process determines the relevance of information from different sources and disciplines [as] a mode of professional conduct which in some respects differs from traditional ways of doing theory, research or practice. In other respects, however, it is no different than any other thoughtful approach to work.

However, I suggest that when Theories of Practice and the research, reflection and exploratory practices inherent in their iteration and reiteration – referred to by Rodgers (2006) as small ‘t’ theories – are co-constructed alongside large ‘T’ theories – developed by ‘those who spend their time creating such theories,’ a potentially transformational dialectical relationship emerges which looks for meaning between them. This has powerful connectivity and echoes Lantolf and Poehners’ (2014, 27) view that practice is not predicated on the application of theory but rather is ‘drawn into the scientific enterprise in a profound way’. In

other words, a case is made to develop trusting relationships where school-based researchers (teachers and learners) and academic researchers work together through ongoing dialogue, (dis)agreement and debate whilst building Research Partnerships. Kinpaisby-Hill (2010) describes these processes as: ‘messy’ – since society is complex and contradictory; collective – since theorizing is ‘done together’; and iterative – since development is not linear. I believe that defining pathways for growing shared understanding between scientific researchers and practitioner researchers is essential for the sustainability of quality-integrated learning. Using Theories of Practice as the trigger for discussion, as the bridge, as the connection for growing a genuinely co-constructed and shared understanding, facilitates ways in which theoretical constructs can be ‘translated’ into agreed principles, then can be ‘transformed’ into classroom practices – and crucially *vice versa*. This builds on Dalton-Puffer’s (2017) suggestion that we need to generate carefully constructed intervention studies, longitudinal and practice-oriented research.

One such example is the exploratory research carried out by the Graz Group¹ using a holistic ‘growth model’ for integrated learning and exploring its potential to transform CLIL into plurilingual education for deeper learning. Pluriliteracies Teaching for Deeper Learning (PTL) (Meyer, Halbach & Coyle, 2015; Meyer & Coyle, 2017, <https://pluriliteracies.ecml.at/>) brings together classroom practices that promote literacies for deeper (subject) learning and personal growth across languages, disciplines and cultures. It seeks to make transparent the interconnected and interdependent dimensions of learning which need to be activated and made explicit by learners and teachers together. This is an ambitious task. Our intention, therefore, was to explore how a convergence between building, expanding and ‘testing’ boundaries might lead to shared ownership of existing understanding alongside ‘new and different directions’ for integrated classroom teaching and learning. Mediated through the construction of a Theory of Practice and embedded in an epistemological position focussing on involvement with the wider community, a means of ‘validating’ the theory had to emerge. This required a paradigm shift which embraced a transformation of knowledge structures, conventions and rituals in order to integrate ‘information that comes from different sources, critical frameworks and academic disciplines’ so that new knowledge is constructed ‘in dialogue amongst disciplines, through practices of social negotiation and in creative collaboration with peers and experts’ (Balsamo, 2010: 430).

1 The Graz Group

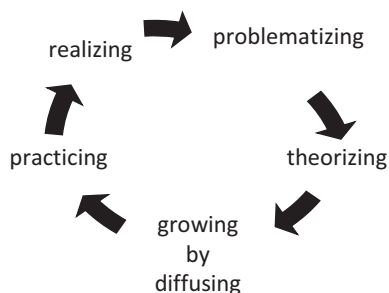


Figure 3: Processes involved in Research Partnerships.

The outcomes of this Research Partnership are documented (Coyle, Meyer and Schuck, 2017) in ‘Knowledge ecology for conceptual growth: teachers as active agents in developing a PluriLiteracies approach to Teaching for Learning (PTL)’.

The most challenging yet fundamental stage involved ‘growing by diffusing’ in the growth cycle (Figure 3) where, the voice of practitioners who wanted to dispel ‘meaningless rhetoric around what they *should* be doing in the classroom’ (teacher feedback TF3:2)² led to translating and interpreting theoretical and academic discourse into a Theory of Practice based on ‘shared professional and pedagogic understanding of real learners in real classrooms’ (teacher feedback TF2.5)³. A wide range of significant research studies informed the early stages of the process e.g. the New London Group, 1996; Coffin, 2006; Coffin & Donohue, 2014; García, Bartlett & Kleifgen, 2007; Hornberger, 2003; Lantolf & Poehner, 2014; Mohan, Leung & Slater, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008 and 2012; Llinares, Morton & Whittaker, 2012; Jackson, 2011; Swain, 2006; Veel, 1997 and Gillis, 2014. Mindful of learning ecologies, these Theories (as defined by Rogers, 2006) informed the identification of four broad yet interconnected dimensions (Figure 4) for designing classroom learning in multilingual contexts: building knowledge and refining skills; demonstrating understanding; mentoring learning and personal growth; and generating and sustaining commitment and achievement.

Each dimension required detailed deconstruction by the Research Partnership. Key constructs based on research studies, readings, discussions and practices

2 Teacher Data is drawn from workshops in Austria, 2014 and in Italy, 2016.

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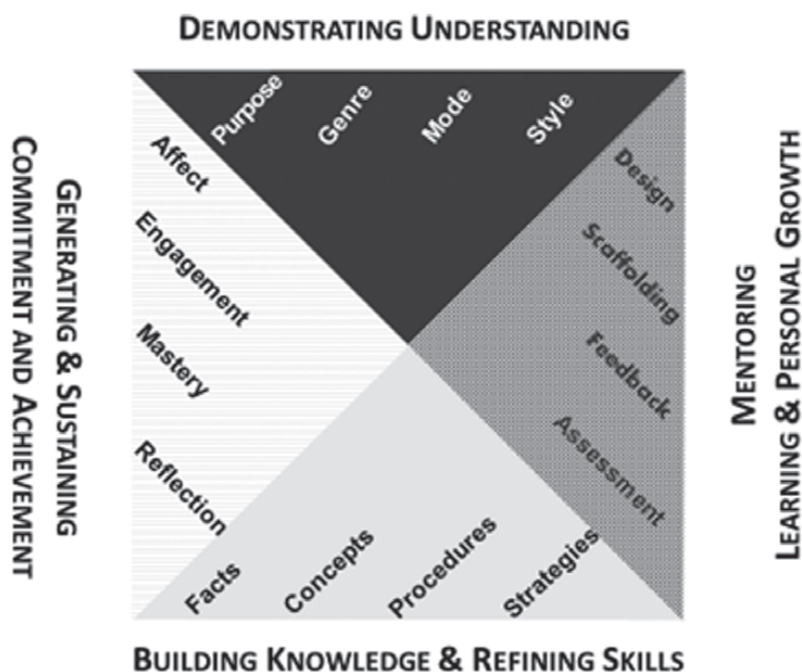


Figure 4. Dimensions of the Pluriliteracies Framework for Teaching for Deeper learning.

were discussed and debated. These included exploring and agreeing definitions of concepts such as deeper learning, subject literacies, languaging learning, cognitive discourse functions, ecologies, knowledge pathways, mentoring learning and growth mindsets. The shift moved us out of a ‘comfort zone’ of language education into less familiar fields – literacies, subject discipline thinking and behaving, using more than one language for learning and enabling very diverse learners linguistically and cognitively to achieve. Many of the key constructs were informed by the broader more inclusive notions of learning (across languages as well as in a first language) for promoting designing and teaching for deeper learning. New ideas and definitions needed not only to be unravelled but also needed reconstruction and adaptation into a coherent interconnected whole which we termed ‘pluriliteracies’. Moreover, the ‘Theories’ now needed to be informed by ‘theories’ (Rogers, 2006) involving practitioner enquiry and close-to-practice research fundamental to Theories of Practice.

Building on a wealth of accumulative professional and academic understanding, the focus is increasingly on the quality of learning experiences for all learners i.e. deeper learning. Current pluriliteracies work includes a wide international community of teachers and learners as researchers ranging from those undertaking doctoral studies collecting classroom data to those engaged in enquiry carried out by learner-teacher Research Partnerships in schools – all experimenting, exploring, critiquing and evidencing what works and why. Throughout, there is emphasis on longitudinal data collection and innovative use of ‘intervention’ techniques and robust research design at all levels. This takes time and patience.

It was not my intention in this chapter to detail the PTDL Framework but rather to use its co-construction and ongoing development to underline the importance of Research Partnerships which I believe are required to change the direction of ‘the itinerary of ideas and the generation and appropriation of knowledge within the professional community’ described by Dalton-Puffer (2017: 386). Changing the ‘classic trajectory’ endemic in the research-practice divide is a challenge and one which I suggest should be prioritised in ongoing and future research. In 2007, a strong case was made for CLIL as a field of study in its own right, building up a research base ‘beyond the current boundaries so that new research questions evolve and existing ones are addressed’ (Coyle, 2007: 558). I contend that over ten years later, CLIL research has certainly shifted the boundaries and is positioning integrated learning within a much broader learning agenda. The question remains as to whether or not this broader agenda as yet prioritises or recognises fundamental issues to expand critical pedagogies – such as the importance of the role of language and languages in learning in ways which impact on: the quality of what happens in classrooms across languages (including first language and multilingual classrooms with tasks designed according to accessible and values-driven principles for deeper learning); across cultures (within and outwith the classroom, within and across subject disciplines); across curricula (focussing on specific subject literacies and behaviours); and across contexts (along the content-language-oriented continuum in diverse settings). The charting of how such multilingual challenges can lead to pluriliteracies practices is indeed all-encompassing and requires not only more robust research-focused planning and extensive critical literature reviews to bring together increasing numbers of studies, but also alternative research thinking, methodologies and purposes to embrace multilingual learning ecologies. CLIL research has a dynamic yet significant role to play – but we need the combined voices of our learner, practitioner, professional and academic research communities together to be heard.

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