ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF CLIL: MAKING THE BEST OF THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND CONTENT TEACHERS

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Abstract

Success in CLIL depends on making students able to understand and express academic material. In theory, a high linguistic competence will enable students to smoothly deal with the content, although there might be occasions in which the students are not equipped with a solid command of the basic linguistic skills. The idea posited in this article is that, in parallel with other procedures and measures brought up to promote a correct employment of the language, the construction of a structure of collaboration between the language and the content teachers could contribute to attain positive results in CLIL, and may help mitigate the consequences of a possible linguistic deficit. In particular, the collaboration between the language and content teachers, the collaboration between the content teachers themselves, and the collaboration between all the languages present in the curriculum (mother tongue, language of instruction/foreign language, and any other languages) may result in a better ability to work with academic material on the part of the students, and may provide them with the necessary linguistic support to understand and express this content. We will discuss the theoretical foundations behind this proposal, and we will put forward a series of recommendations aiming at establishing and carrying out this structure of collaboration and coordination.

Key words: CLIL, curricular organisation, teacher collaboration, methodology.

Resumen

El éxito de AICLE depende en gran medida de si el alumnado es capaz de comprender y expresar el material académico. Así, en teoría una competencia lingüística alta asegura fluidez en el tratamiento de los contenidos, aunque en algunos casos el alumnado puede no llegar a contar con unas capacidades lingüísticas adecuadas. En este artículo propondremos que, junto con algunas de las medidas tradicionales encaminadas a promover un uso correcto de la lengua, el diseño de una estructura de colaboración entre el profesorado de lenguas y el de contenidos puede contribuir a la mejora de los resultados en AICLE, e incluso a mitigar un posible problema de insuficiente dominio lingüístico. En particular, la colaboración entre el profesorado de lengua y de contenidos, la colaboración entre el profesorado de contenidos y la colaboración entre el profesorado de las lenguas implicadas en el programa (lengua materna, lengua de instrucción y otras lenguas, si las hubiere) redundará en un aumento en la facilidad para trabajar con el material académico y le proporcionará al alumnado un necesario apoyo lingüístico para facilitar su comprensión y su expresión. Analizaremos los fundamentos teóricos que se encuentran detrás de esta propuesta y ofreceremos una serie de indicaciones para llevar a cabo esta estructura de colaboración.

Palabras clave: AICLE, organización curricular, colaboración del profesorado, metodología.

1. Introduction

In the European and the Spanish context, one of the most frequent approaches adopted to implement bilingual education is content and language integrated learning (CLIL), a wide term that covers different models based on the teaching of academic content through a foreign language (Wolff, 2005:11; Coyle, Hood and Marsh, 2010:6). Among its potential benefits (Mehisto and Marsh 2012), CLIL is traditionally seen as an

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educational proposal that "seeks to promote the use of the foreign language in the schools" (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2008:61), due to "the direct influence that teaching in CLIL may have in language learning" (Llinares, Morton and Whittaker, 2012:53). However, its potential benefits are not only associated with an increase of the linguistic competence of students: linguistic awareness, wider vocabulary, morphological creativity and morpho-syntactic production (Admiral, Westhoff and de Bot, 2006; Dalton-Puffer, 2007; Lasagabaster, 2008; Lorenzo, Casal and Moore, 2009; Lo and Murphy, 2010; Navés, 2011; Brevick and Moe, 2012); but also to the amelioration of cognitive development and to the learning of content itself: greater creativity, semantic scaffolding, divergent and convergent thinking, metalinguistic awareness, abstract and symbolic reasoning, and context understanding (Genesee, 2002; Moore, 2006; Marsh, 2007; van de Craen, Ceuleers and Mondt, 2007; Meyer, 2010). The linguistic output is the dimension that is normally proclaimed as the main objective of CLIL, although there are also important academic and psycho-affective benefits that have to be highlighted: greater interest and motivation, higher self-confidence, more positive attitude towards the foreign language, greater spontaneity, and the promotion of intercultural learning (Merisuo-Strom, 2007; Seikkula-Leino, 2007; Lasagabaster, 2011; Coonan, 2012; Hütner, Dalton-Puffer and Smit, 2013; Méndez, 2013).

In order to achieve positive results in CLIL, consideration of the language is not the only area that deserves specific attention. Therefore, it is necessary that a series of influential elements be organised correctly so that the integration of content and language can be tackled appropriately (Mehisto, 2012a). Curricular organisation, the selection of subjects, the methodology and materials, the evaluation procedures, etc., are factors that will determine the success and the quality of CLIL (Ruiz de Zarobe, 2013). But among all of them, the linguistic competence of teachers and students and the use of the language of instruction will inevitably affect the learning of content, which forces educators to cast about for initiatives and actions that may benefit the access to the language required to process academic information, and may also counterbalance the possible negative effects of a limited use of the language of instruction.

One of the most remarkable differences between CLIL and immersion programmes is that in CLIL "the English language is taught as a subject" (García, 2009:127). This is a fact that is particularly relevant for the purpose of this article since the inclusion of the English language in the curriculum "provides the conditions for the establishment of a network of collaboration between language and content teachers" (García, 2009:210). The possibility to set up a connection between the language students learn as a vehicle of communication with the content they are learning paves the way for the construction of a bi-directional relationship between the academic knowledge and the language needed to understand and express this knowledge. Moreover, this collaboration could also be extended to other areas (Pavón *et al.*, 2014), and include the coordinated work of content teachers, and even comprise the coordination between the English teacher with the teacher of the mother tongue and the teacher of any other language present in the curriculum (French, German, etc.). In this article we would like to proffer the benefits of establishing a three-level collaboration, a multi-faceted type of coordination that aims at facilitating the processing and assimilation of academic content, and at providing students with effective linguist support to help them comprehend, process, manipulate and verbalise this content.

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2. Analysing the CLIL context: conditions for the establishment of a network of collaboration

In general, the efficacy of a given educational proposal requires the existence of a structure of connection, coordination and collaboration between all the stakeholders (Mehisto, 2009; Viebrock, 2012). In CLIL, this proposition is even more important because there are decisions that have to be taken by the school management team that "will be crucial for the organisation of the teaching and for the achievement of subsequent outputs" (Baetens Beardsmore, 2009:210). The implementation of CLIL requires a careful screening of the linguistic and methodological competence of the human resources available. It should clearly state the timing of the programme (initiation and time-span), and also the number and type of the subjects must be chosen taking into consideration the degree of difficulty and cognitive demands. Additionally, the schools may also make provision for a programme of language assistants; offer an incentive programme for teachers; create an accurate programme for the evaluation of the language and the content acquired by students, and for the evaluation of the students' cognitive, psychological and emotional development; provide didactic resources and materials specific for CLIL; and set up a programme of extra-curricular activities to foment the use of the foreign language in non-instructional settings (Pavón, 2014:9). But along with all these initiatives, there are measures that could be taken up based on the creation of a network of collaboration for teachers. They are mainly aimed at facilitating coordinated work between teachers, for example, by elaborating adequate schedules in order to provide the teachers with the necessary slots to allow them to share, discuss and plan their teaching together.

Another initiative associated with the creation of a network of collaboration between language and content teachers is the elaboration of a school linguistic project (see for example the Andalusian proposal in Consejería de Educación de la Junta de Andalucía, 2010). Good intentions about the establishment of this coordinated work have to be packed up in a series of normative decisions agreed by all the school agents (Mehisto, 2009, 2012a), because if they are not supported 'officially' they would probably come to nothing in the long term. The school linguistic project serves as the adequate instrument to connect curricular organisation and methodology by grouping together the objectives, the sequencing of contents, and the methodological approach chosen (Casal, 2007). In sum, the school linguistic project includes some of the most relevant decisions about the CLIL programme: organisation of subjects, pedagogical strategies and use of resources, and the utilisation of a homogeneous procedure for the evaluation of language and content. And above all, it may become a decisive instrument to support the collaboration between language and content teachers by indicating the actions to be adopted in order to ensure their coordinated work.

In this context, the figure of the CLIL coordinator becomes a key element, in particular to assist the construction of sound teacher collaboration (Coyle, 2007 –especially table on p. 551). From a general perspective, the main role of the CLIL coordinator is to guarantee that the programme is being implemented in a correct way, and to define the actions that have to be adopted in order to monitor the achievement of positive results in the areas of language and content (Julián, 2007). More precisely, his/her activity is essential for the organisation of a structure of collaboration between language and content teachers. He/she will be in charge of arranging the work and responsibilities of the teachers: conducting the coordination meetings where language and content teachers gather to reach agreements on the collaborative strategies; helping content teachers to search for common elements in their programmes; assisting language teachers to look for common linguistic functions; advising teachers on the application of common methodological

strategies and on the employment of appropriate materials and activities for the characteristics of the different subjects; guiding them through the use of homogeneous criteria and instruments for the evaluation of language and content; and organising the responsibilities and activities of the language assistants (see for this last dimension Ministerio de Educación, 2011).

One of the reasons that motivate the search for initiatives that may come to the aid of correct implementation of CLIL may also be the necessity to complement a possible shortage of linguistic proficiency, not only in students, but also in some teachers. In fact, the profile of the content teacher is another area that deserves closer attention because in the end it is the teacher who has to conduct the lessons and lead the students into the learning of the content material (Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff and Frigols, 2010:5; Pavón and Ellison, 2013:70). Content teachers must be prepared to juggle three distinct competences: knowledge of the discipline; a competent use of the foreign language; and the utilisation of appropriate methodological strategies (Pavón, 2014:14). Hence, deciding who are prepared to carry out the teaching is a very important decision. It has to be noted, though, that there is no instant recipe for the implementation of CLIL programmes, as the analysis of the context, necessities and human resources will finally dictate the choice of the model; and the non-existence of a fixed model also extends to the selection of the content teachers (Pavón, 2010:34). Some programmes may opt for choosing foreign language teachers with a solid knowledge of the disciplines, in this case it is the foreign language teachers who bring content to their classes as in 'content-based instruction (CBI) models. Another option would be to choose experts in the different disciplines with a high command of the foreign language, as in 'language-sensitive instruction' models, these being the most frequent ones adopted in CLIL.

However, some content teachers may not feel comfortable with their command of the foreign language. In the case of existing lack of proficiency on the part of the content teachers, this handicap can be overcome by establishing a solid collaboration with the foreign language teachers, who will provide students with valuable linguistic support. But also, content teachers must understand that, beyond the possession of a high command of the foreign language, the factor that definitely guarantees the quality of their teaching practices is the capacity to use the language they have to facilitate the assimilation of content, and their ability to use "particular strategies to support comprehension and to activate production" (Wolff, 2012:112). Therefore, the necessary command of the foreign language must be complemented with specific knowledge of the strategies required to make their foreign language work effectively: for example, making teachers move from the traditional teacher-student interaction to the promotion of student-student interaction (Della Puppa, 2008; Guazzieri, 2008), especially by means of fostering cooperative and collaborative work between students (Berton, 2008; Coonan, 2012). The objective would be to redirect their knowledge and use of the foreign language to a more academic dimension and to learn to use resources and materials more effectively (Mehisto, 2012b), which at the same time will help teachers deal with mixed abilities and to accommodate the different students' learning styles.

3. Expanding language and content teachers' collaboration: establishing a 3-level collaboration

As stated in the previous pages, the objective of this article is to highlight the relevance of establishing a network of collaboration between language and content teachers as a way to increase positive results in CLIL. In line with Tan (2011), Meyer (2012), Bonnet (2012), and Graaf, Koopman and Tanner (2012), we believe

that success in CLIL also depends on the correct relationship established between the content and the language. In general, in contexts of partial immersion, and especially when the students' linguistic competences is not very high, the setting-up of an organisational model based on the coordination between subjects, the collaboration between teachers and team work, may contribute to raise the standards in two different dimensions: the learning and consolidation of academic content, and the improvement of the linguistic capacity of the students (Lorenzo, Trujillo and Vez, 2011:301). However, this structure of collaboration may not be limited to the collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the content teacher. Thus, the collaboration between the teachers of the content subjects involved, and the collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the teachers of the mother tongue and of any other foreign language present in the curriculum, may contribute to make the most of the coordination between subjects and the most of the collaboration between teachers in CLIL.

3.1. Collaboration between language and content teachers

The foreign language subject plays a pivotal role in CLIL, helping students garner the linguistic competence necessary to assimilate academic content. As a proper way to support the learning of content, the foreign language teacher should stimulate fluency, paying attention to linguistic errors, and stressing the importance of putting across meaning as well as taking care of the form. He/she should also try to limit the use of metalinguistic information and, in general, "to favour strategies for the transmission of academic content" (Lorenzo and Moore, 2010:24). As a starting point, the collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the content teacher could include the fulfilment of a preliminary planning to identify the linguistic needs for the content subjects (Van de Craen, Ceuleers and Mondt, 2007). It would not be sufficient that foreign language classes are orientated to teach general instrumental and everyday use of the language (BICS, *Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills*), since the necessities of the students to deal with academic material require that the language they are learning in the foreign language class is connected to the content (CALP, *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency*) (Cummins, 1984, 2000).

How to carry out this coordination and collaboration may be a source of controversy, mainly due to the difficulty of making some foreign teachers understand that it is necessary to move from BICS into CALP in their classes to support the reaching of content. The simplest procedure could be that the foreign language teacher in his/her class deals with the linguistic functions, grammar structures and specific vocabulary previously agreed so that the students can suitably use them in the class of content (Deller and Price, 2007:9). Consequently, a possible option to carry out this proposition is that language teachers deal with the language connected to the content subject in advance, in this way equipping students with the necessary knowledge of the use of the language required for participation in the class of content. This proposal may also bring out a restructuring of the content sequencing for the foreign language subject, and on occasions it would be necessary to anticipate a given linguist element with respect to its position. For example, in coursebooks, if it is convenient that the students possess this knowledge in order to understand and work with what is being treated in the content subject. It has to be reckoned that the amount of effort that this kind of collaboration entails is surely quite high because content and language teachers should give a detailed plan of the contributions in their own classes and should carefully define the timing of their respective actions. However, even though the time and effort that should be invested in preparing this collaboration may discourage some teachers, especially if the school management team does not offer the necessary help, the promised reward

may entice teachers into thinking that it is worth establishing this particular collaboration since the expected positive outcomes are high too.

Finally, the coordination between subjects and the collaboration between teachers must also comprise other areas beyond the planning of teaching and actual practices and should include evaluation (Serra, 2007; Quartapelle, 2012). This is a complex area because if a student has problems understanding or verbalising a particular piece of academic information, the content teacher needs to confirm that the problems are caused by the complexity of the idea or by inappropriate language use (Barbero and Maggi, 2012). In order to address the evaluation of content and language correctly, content and language teachers should collaborate closely, since both must use similar procedures to assess the students' linguistic production (Kiely, 2009). Teachers could develop a type of collaboration where the content teachers become responsible for the assessment of the language in his/her classes, an option that is advisable in contexts where the content teacher exhibits a high command of the foreign language and knowledge of resources in order to assess correct use of the language. On the other hand, the decision could also remain that the language teacher is mainly in charge of assessing language accuracy, an option more adaptable to contexts where the students' linguistic skills are not very high and the content teachers cannot spend a lot of time dealing with linguistic correction as this would impede suitable attention to the teaching of content. All in all, it will be the characteristics of the context that will determine the choice of one model or another. In general, the implementation of a structure of collaboration in CLIL is mainly subjected to the characteristics of the teachers and the linguistic competence of students.

3.2. Collaboration between content teachers

It could be argued that establishing proper collaboration between content and language teachers is the only strategy required to ensure positive results in CLIL. However, as Coyle, Holmes and King (2009:17) point out, "different levels of success in CLIL mostly depend on the collaboration between content teachers", too. We also believe that this type of collaboration is not secondary but may be a complementary strategy to increase the positive results of CLIL. The main objective of the collaboration between the teachers of the content subjects is to foster a more effective assimilation and consolidation of content, trying to diminish the negative effects of teaching academic information through a foreign language. It is based on the parallel treatment of similar and related thematic areas, concepts, ideas and notions in the different content subjects with the purpose of "familiarising students with complex academic information" (Dale, Van der Es and Tanner, 2010:75). Working with common objectives and contents may be a suitable starting point to find the elements of thematic cohesion between subjects, and it seems to be especially recommended in contexts where students' linguistic competence may seriously hinder the acquisition of content material. Paying more attention to work with shared vocabulary and concepts in the content subjects will result in "establishing connections between new and previously learnt concepts" in the different subjects, and will enable students to understand and assimilate complex information in a better way (Coyle, 2007:51).

It has to be noted that this collaboration also exceeds the thematic dimension and should encompass the methodological aspect. Content teachers should understand that CLIL does not entail a simple change of the language in teacher-fronted classes, but it implies a serious shift into participative classes where students do not simply learn things but learn to understand and use content material. In order to make students able to deal with academic content properly, teachers should direct their attention to upgrading the students'

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performance with regards to essential macro-strategies: comprehension (identify, interpret and assimilate), expression of previously learnt material, and critical thinking (analyse, compare, decide) (Anderson and Krathwolh, 2001). Also, there should be a firm commitment to the promotion of content and language scaffolding techniques, and use of materials in order to promote a constructivist model of learning, as CLIL "favours a learner-centred, constructivist and motivating type of teaching" (Ting, 2010:14). Thus, the use of general scaffolding techniques (Hammond, 2001; Gibbons, 2002; Walqui, 2006) should be encouraged, and especially those specifically designed to be applied in CLIL contexts (Hansen-Pauly *et al.*, 2009; Meyer, 2010; Mehisto and Lucietto, 2011). Additionally, CLIL is particularly suitable for the application of a task-based approach (Cendoya and di Bin, 2010; Toscano, 2011; Poisel, 2012; Tardieu and Dolitsky, 2012; Pavón, Prieto and Ávila, 2015). As Berton (2008:146) and Meyer (2010:19) note, CLIL involves the learning of "authentic and meaningful content" through the realisation of motivating and challenging tasks, which results in an amelioration of their learning capacities. Following Berton (2008) and Escobar and Sánchez (2009), in terms of the strategies and techniques to be applied there are three actions that can contribute to enrich and facilitate the learning of content: first of all, teachers should avoid traditional strategies of reception of content as they just put in passive activities that severely cut down possibilities of interaction and use of the language; secondly, there should be an emphasis on the use of activities aiming at searching for information with the purpose of training students to discover; and finally, teachers should support the understanding of content by maximising redundancy through the use of good visual aids.

Finally, it would be convenient to favour a sense of homogeneity in the different content subjects with respect to the use of common pedagogical strategies, and with respect to "the utilization of mutual criteria and instruments for the evaluation of learning" (Pavón and Ellison, 2013:72-74). The application of common methodological strategies by the content teachers is certainly relevant because students need to perceive that there is a shared pedagogy, that content teachers use the same techniques and resources to deal with written and oral material, and that they administrate common assessment techniques. The utilisation of different pedagogical approaches by content teachers would be, at the least, distracting for students, and would be detrimental to the achievement of agreed learning objectives. It would also be advisable that the focus on the language is not excessive during the teaching of content, and that the attention to linguistic objectives within the content subjects shifts to the use of appropriate language and content scaffolding techniques. We should be careful with the attention paid to the language used by students because, for example, the inclusion of grammar elements as linguistic objectives in the content class may distract the attention from the general linguistic functions (understanding, referencing, hypothesising, deducing, etc.), will reduce the time that should be allotted the teaching of content, and may imperil "the accomplishment of the learning objectives" (Mehisto and Marsh, 2009:4).

3.3. Collaboration between language teachers

Traditionally, when describing and analysing the potential positive outputs deriving from the coordination and collaboration between content and language teachers (Graaf, Koopmant and Tanner, 2012), the relationship between all the languages participating has not generated appreciable interest. The common assumption has been that the possibility of this collaboration is a step too far for teachers, that it might create some kind of anxiety because of the extra amount or work added, or that language teachers might be reluctant to participate in a project that they do not consider as "theirs". It is assumed that the promotion of

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the language of instruction is one of the most decisive factors for the success of CLIL, and some may think that only making content and language teachers collaborate can help achieve this objective. However, our view is that the role of the other languages involved in CLIL could also be taken into consideration as a way to support and consolidate a better use of the foreign language. In essence, CLIL implies a great flexibility in the use of the language as opposed to all kinds of immersion and subtractive bilingual education programmes, where the objective is always to overcome the use of the L1 as soon as possible. In this sense, CLIL advocates for the recognition of the role that the mother tongue may play as a forceful learning tool (Dobson, Pérez and Johnson, 2010; Ibarrola and García-Mayo, 2012; Laupenmülen, 2012, Lázaro and García-Mayo, 2012; Méndez and Pavón, 2012). In line with this idea, it seems reasonable that similar benefits can be reaped from the coordination with the other foreign language or languages present in the curriculum, which may also put in some notable contributions to "the formation of a common linguistic capacity" (Pavón, *et al.* 2014:4).

The coordinated work in the different language subjects may bring about important benefits and play a significant part in facilitating the understanding and expression of academic content, some advantages that may be helped with the design and implementation of a *languages across the curriculum* model (see, as an example of this approach, Consejería de Educación-Junta de Andalucía, 2008). In this model, agreed and common treatment of objectives and contents, of linguistic strategies and structures, and of textual genres in the foreign language (English), mother tongue and another foreign language (French, German) classes, are proposed in order to foment similar uses of the languages and, ultimately, strengthen linguistic competence in all the languages. The rationale of this proposal is connected to Cummins' iceberg model of language independence and the existence of what he calls "a common underlying proficiency" (Cummins, 2000). The idea is that knowledge transfers across languages, what has been learnt in one language does not need to be learnt again, and students just need to find the words that best label this common knowledge. In this context, attention to the cognate connection (Costa, Caramazza and Sebastian-Galles, 2000; Scheletter, 2002; Sherkina, 2003), i.e. the use of similar vocabulary to help understanding (e.g. velocity-velocidad, evaporation-evaporación, omnivore-omnívoro) may turn into a fruitful pedagogical tool. English and Spanish are quite different languages in the conversational domain but they get closer in the academic area because a great deal of technical and scientific vocabulary has a Greek or Latin origin in both languages. Interconnected work between the languages also aids the increase of language awareness (Marsh, 2007), helping students compare the strategies and forms in the verbalisation of content, which in turn helps them understand the differences between the languages and allows them to obtain profitable conclusions. Also, in terms of the manipulation of this comparative information to increase linguistic proficiency, the learning of students is maximised when they are allowed and enabled to draw from all their existing language skills (Hornberger, 2005). Even in the same class, the use of linguistic connections, which may take the form of application of code-switching and translanguaging techniques, may reinforce the underlying linguist processes.

Finally, it has to be said, as highlighted by Irujo (1998) and Tucker (2008), that the use of two languages is not a factor for failure in bilingual classes. Some teachers, and many parents, may think that the instruction by means of different languages is an obstacle for the development of the mother tongue and of the language of instruction itself. However, language strengths, not limitations, come from the combination of both languages under appropriate pedagogic conditions (Edelsky, 1986); and in the case of unsatisfactory results,

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these are due to inadequate use of teaching resources and methods (Pavón and Rubio, 2010). All in all, it seems reasonable to think that the collaboration between language teachers has a value to offer in CLIL settings. Planning shared and common work with the linguistic functions beseems the cognitive development connected to the operation of interlinguistic processes, thus contributing to accelerate positive transference and to consolidate communication strategies between all the languages.

4. Conclusion

Attention to the use and development of the foreign language is of paramount importance in CLIL as in any other bilingual education programme, which means that one of the objectives should be to make the understanding of content easier to students and to provide them with the linguistic tools required to manipulate it. In general, attaining positive results in CLIL is contingent on the correct application of measures and initiatives related to different important aspects: the choice of subjects and model; the selection of teachers with suitable linguistic and methodological competences; the combined efforts of all the stakeholders (school management team, teachers and students) involved in the programme; drafting a series of normative decisions concerning the objectives and the organisation of the programme; and putting forward effective, homogeneous methodology and evaluation procedures. But beyond these considerations, there are decisions that could also be taken in order to enhance the quality of CLIL, in our view, particularly those associated with the establishment of a three-level collaboration between the foreign language teachers and the content teachers, between the different content teachers, and between the teachers of the language subjects present in the curriculum.

The collaboration between the foreign language teacher and the content teacher, traditionally the most frequently adopted kind of collaboration, generates positive results as it contributes to encouraging the utilisation of linguistic skills associated with the manipulation of academic content (CALP), promotes fluency and attention to meaning in the use of the language, fosters the micro and macro linguistic strategies required for the transmission of content, allows language teachers to advise content teachers on the strategies and techniques needed to develop the different linguistic skills, and provides the possibility of agreeing on the decisions and on the activities that would put a correct evaluation of content and language into practice. With regards to the collaboration between content teachers, the most salient result deriving from connecting the different subjects through the work with similar thematic areas is that this will inevitably produce ease in the assimilation of content. In parallel, embracing common methodological strategies such as language and content scaffolding, the adoption of a task-based approach, the gamble on the promotion of interaction, cooperative and collaborative learning, and the adoption, too, of common assessment criteria and instruments, may decisively contribute to enrich the quality of the content classes. Finally, the collaboration between the language teachers has also something to offer. Thus, selecting common linguistic objectives and contents, designing activities that require similar use of the language, and in general working with linguistic elements and communication strategies, may benefit the comprehension and verbalisation of content and, consequently, may strengthen the processing and consolidation of the academic material in the content subjects.

It has to be noted that these three different types of teacher collaboration do not pursue to complicate the implementation of CLIL, but simply aim at providing the conditions for an easier and more profitable use of

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the foreign language. Each one separately adds a positive element in CLIL by providing necessary linguistic support to students, facilitation in the learning of content, and consolidation of the linguistic structures of the language of instruction and of other languages. As a whole, they may become a powerful set of strategies that may enrich the implementation and the quality of CLIL.

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