"How to measure and integrate socio-affective variables in the evaluation of CLIL"

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ABSTRACT

In an era of internationalisation, triggering increased multilingualism, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) provides an interesting alternative to traditional education for the acquisition of an additional language. A new interdisciplinary research project entitled ‘Assessing CLIL’ has just been launched and aims to tackle the interplay between linguistic, cognitive and educational aspects of the CLIL approach in French-speaking Belgium. Despite abundant literature indicating higher proficiency in the target language for CLIL learners (Admiraal et al. 2006, Dalton-Puffer 2011, Lasagabaster 2008), it largely remains unclear to what extent, in what respect and thanks to which (internal and external) processes/factors CLIL learners outperform traditional learners. The present study is part of this evaluation project and focuses on socio-affective variables. While it is established that language attitudes and motivation play a significant role in language learning (see a...
**STUDY CONTEXT**

**Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**
- Dual-focused educational approach: content & language
- « Learning to use language and using language to learn »
- Promoted by European Union to reach "1 + 2 languages" target
- Besides main educational aim, also socio-economic and socio-cultural aims
- Research indicates higher target language proficiency for CLIL learners
- Promoted by European Union to reach "1 + 2 languages" target
- Dual focused educational approach: content & language
- However, it largely remains unclear
  - To what extent?
  - In what respect?
  - Thanks to which (internal or external) processes/factors?

**BROADER RESEARCH PROJECT**

**‘Assessing CLIL’ (French-Speaking Belgium)**

**Goals**
- Compare processes and products of language learning between CLIL and non-CLIL learners:
  - what are the differences, if any;
  - for which linguistic aspects; according to which cognitive, socio-affective and instructional factors?
- Contrast: one official state language (Dutch) and one high prestige foreign language (English)

**Methodology**
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Longitudinal: 5 waves of data collection during 2 school years
- Sample: about 600 pupils
  - Primary (age 10-12)
  - Secondary (age 16-18)

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Socio-affective variables in SLA**
- Research indicates a significant role of language attitudes and learning motivation in language learning (see amongst others Gardner 1985; Dörnyei 2003)
- Importance of intergroup contact: impact on attitudes towards the target community, depending on facilitating/impeding conditions (Alford 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp 2006)
- Research in Belgium confirms positive attitudes towards the target language and/or language community relate to higher language proficiency, whereas negative attitudes correlate with lower proficiency
- Attitudes towards the "other" major language and/or community in Belgium: marginally positive but clearly less positive than attitudes towards English

**Socio-affective aspects in CLIL**
- Use of foreign language to teach: substantial impact on students’ attitudes, possibly due to more intense exposure and more meaningful opportunities to use the target language
- Research in French-speaking Belgium confirms very positive impact of CLIL on attitudes & motivation (Van de Craen, Summont, Montiel & Couders 2011; Lorente & Meltower 2011)
- However, experimental CLIL-project in technical-vocational school in Brussels failed, mainly due to very negative attitudes and lack of motivation amongst the pupils. Numerous causes, including late starting age and French-speaking, underprivileged background of the pupils (De Smet 2012)

**CURRENT STUDY**

**Socio-affective aspects in CLIL**
- as dependent variables
  - Attitudinal profiles and motivational processes of language learners in CLIL/ non-CLIL
  - Impact of target languages and individual variables
- as dynamic variables
  - Influencing educational context
- as predictive variables
  - For linguistic and cognitive processes and products (cf. multidisciplinary data collection)
- as socio-cultural outcomes
  - Metalinguistic awareness
  - Tolerance, appreciation, openness towards "the other" within Belgian polarized context

**Hypotheses**

- To possible real differences in target languages
  - Contact situation
- to specific CLIL approach

**Challenges**

1. Analyze socio-affective aspects in multiple ways & for different purposes
2. Construct a relevant & reliable questionnaire
   - Few scales appropriate for the specific contexts of Belgium & CLIL
   - Create items based on key concepts borrowed from the literature
   - Different motivational theories & socio-affective variables to be integrated
   - Create comparative grid of items
   - Delicate tasks of translating items & adapting the wording for children and adolescents
   - Limited length & duration

**Questionnaire: selected variables**
- **Target language community**
  - Outgroup perceptions (15) including perceived conflict, similarity, status, ...
  - Multiculturalism (11) in general & in Belgian context
- **Target language**
  - Perception of target language (10) (inspired by Metthew 2004)
  - Anxiety (15) (inspired by Horwitz, Horwitz, Cope 1986 - Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)
  - Positive emotions (10) (inspired by Dawson & MacIntyre 2004 - Foreign Language Enjoyment Scale)
  - Perception of CLIL (4)
- **Motivation**
  - Degrees & orientations / expectancy-value-costs / ideal & ought-to L2 self (30) selection based on comparative grid of items from different theories)
  - Sense of belonging (5) (inspired by Galand & Philippot 2005)
  - Goal (1)

**Method**

- **Qualitative**
  - Classroom observations
  - Focus groups
  - Evaluation CLIL/non-CLIL
  - Text analysis
  - Questionnaire: selected variables

- **Quantitative**
  - At beginning, halfway & end of data collection
  - Classroom observations
  - Focus groups
  - Questionnaire: selected variables

**Pilot study**

- End of June 2015 (n = 91)

**Research team**
CONTACT

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