

CLIL in Higher Education. Towards a Multilingual Language Policy

Immaculada Fortanet-Gómez

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Immaculada Fortanet-Gómez's monograph *CLIL in Higher Education. Towards a Multilingual Language Policy* is an impressive contribution to the growing literature on CLIL. Setting her research in higher education, and specifically at the Universitat Jaume I in Castelló in the Valencian Community autonomous region in Spain, the author opens a discourse on the role of second, additional and foreign languages as the media of instruction for tertiary settings. In particular, she looks at the implementation of English and Valencian, a variety of Catalan, as media of instruction at the Universitat Jaume I. As a consequence, the book is an excellent resource and case study for academic researchers and university administrators seeking to understand the background of CLIL and multilingual education in tertiary settings.

Part 1 of Fortanet-Gómez's book focuses on aspects of multilingualism and multilingual education as part of societal and individual practices, taking into account how cultural identities and language planning shape the social status and geographical use of languages. The author reviews the existing literature extensively, and provides an overview of worldwide examples. One interesting concept referred to during this first part of the book is the M-Factor. A relatively new term coined by Herdina and Jessner (2002) to capture the specific characteristics of multilinguals, it is revisited here at different points in the book to continue a conversation about what is special about multilingual individuals and their metalinguistic awareness. While much of the multilingualism debate explores the political, societal and individual relationships to different local languages, English stands out in the book as a priority language based on its lingua franca status worldwide. Interestingly, the author analyses how English was for a long time a sign of elite multilingualism in Spain, and only in recent decades has been adopted as the major non-local language learnt in schools.

Fortanet-Gómez then introduces her chapter on multilingual education with the statement that “multilingual education develops in response to a conscious policy within the language planning of a society” (p. 22) to build or maintain societal multilingualism in a world characterised by global flows of people and ideas. She engages with different influencing factors for multilingual education, from the “ethnic revolution” (Fishman 1977, quoted here) to individual factors such as socio-economic background and academic ability, and questions of pedagogy and achievement outcomes (language, literacy, content).

An interesting contribution of this book is the continuation of a “mapping-out” of differences between different multilingual education approaches, in the spirit of the differentiation between CLIL and immersion as proposed by Lasagabaster and Sierra (2010). Fortanet-Gómez situates the beginnings of awareness of ‘language’ in education in the Language Across the Curriculum approach advocating the inclusion of *first language instruction* across all school subjects. The author then examines how English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is an example for *second language instruction* supporting content studies across the academic spectrum for students studying through the medium of English as a second or foreign language. A related concept, Content Based Instruction, was developed to help limited English proficiency students in American schools, whereas the immersion concept usually assumes that the second language is only used in the classroom.

CLIL is introduced as serving the European need to produce multilingual speakers who can communicate proficiently, rather than necessarily aiming for balanced bilingualism. The author goes into much detail to delineate the origins and approaches of CLIL and contributes to the debate by developing an argument of where and how CLIL can work in higher education.

In Part 2, the book then moves on to multilingualism in Higher Education. Her case study, the Universitat Jaume I, while specific in some aspects, is typical for many other higher education institutions set in multilingual contexts across Europe and beyond, often catering for a state language, a regional language and an international language. Fortanet-Gómez examines policy development in a multilingual socio-political context, taking into account linguistic imperialism, linguistic human rights, and language and

power. Her examples from European, Asian and South- African universities show the complexities of different language demands when CLIL is introduced into the tertiary setting.

The book also engages with the questions of what types of language, and language functions, CLIL in higher education needs to incorporate. The author investigates the roles of language as medium of instruction, as well as target of education, and considers the different discourses students and teachers are developing in tertiary CLIL classrooms, and as researchers faced with the overwhelming dominance of English. This is followed by a general overview of pedagogy in higher education, and how CLIL interacts with this context, for example by influencing if and how students engage verbally in lectures and seminars. Quoting Snow et al (1989), Fortanet-Gómez concludes, for language as a target of education, that “academic discourse is what is needed to participate in classroom activities, so the use of the target languages as media of instruction provides the motivation and opportunity for meaningful communication” (p.149).

Part 2 finishes with a look at the “Human Factor” , examining the background of contemporary students and lecturers in tertiary settings, and pointing out that universities have become a mass education system with highly diverse, including linguistically diverse, student populations. The author points out that while academics needs to consider different pedagogical approaches in higher education, in CLIL they are also always language teachers – just like primary or secondary teachers in CLIL programmes. Interestingly, the author also considers the role of administrative staff, alerting the reader to the reality that internationalisation efforts like CLIL involve the whole university.

In the third part of her book, Fortanet-Gómez introduces her own study of the Universitat Jaume I, which focuses on the new multilingual language policy at the university. The author sets out to investigate the conditions for this new policy, and includes profiles and interviews of university community members, as well as an analysis of the institutional context and other internal and external factors impacting on the implementation of the policy. In her study, she found that only about one third of the undergraduate students report being able to do highly demanding tasks in English, with

most of them having Spanish or Valencian as their first language. Chapters 7 and 8 of the book are, in general, dedicated to offering a detailed description of the language situation in Spain and how this influences local practices and attitudes at the Universitat Jaume I. In Chapter 9, the author then assesses her findings in the context of CLIL theories and the socio-political factors presented earlier, and proceeds to recommend policy steps and strategies to support the successful implementation of CLIL at the Universitat Jaume I.

The conclusion at the end of the book is, at least in parts, a summary and justification of the chapters. However, there are also some important conclusions drawn from the study. Among these is the observation that language skills in Valencian, largely used as a family language only, might actually increase if more attention were given to it through CLIL and immersion programmes. Related to this observation is her emphasis on the relevance of building an ethos of multilingualism that accepts the same status for all languages in use, particularly in times when economic difficulties might infringe on material costs and benefits. Furthermore, there is a strong statement in the author's conclusions that the development of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in English needs more attention through dedicated preparatory courses, potentially for students, academics, and administrative staff alike.

At the end of the book, Fortanet-Gómez informs the reader that in her capacity as vice-rector of the Universitat Jaume I, she implemented a multilingual language plan for the university, parallel to writing the book. I can fully support her suggestion that the book will be inspiring “to those who are responsible for the design and implementation of multilingual language policies” (p. 246). Furthermore, as an academic and researcher, I found this book an exciting new contribution to the research field of CLIL, convincingly filling an epistemological gap, i.e. the use of CLIL in tertiary settings, and mapping and designating the areas this research focus can explore in the future.

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