LanguageS vs the language of real life: A mismatch made in heaven

Áine Furlong
Waterford Institute of Technology

North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers
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Personal and professional composite

Bilingual/cultural
Post-primary education
Primary education
Distance education
Teacher education
Third level education

Tim Noble and Sue Webster
THE INDIVIDUAL, 2012, 1 wooden stepladder, discarded wood, light projector
21st Century challenges and realities
(for learning and teaching)

Identity vs Identities

Interdisciplinarity (thinking across boundaries)

Diversity (being across boundaries)

...across... = spaces in-between
Good news for languages...

...oh muffy, I'm as happy as a pig in Zen!
Paradox of 21st century realities for language learning

If language learning leads logically to thinking across boundaries + being across boundaries,

then why are so many people choosing not to learn languages?
And what about the 700 reasons for learning languages???

(https://www.llas.ac.uk/700reasons)
Two issues

The relationship of human beings to language: language as communication and language as carrier of culture

Relevance in communication
Language as communication
(1) The language of real life

From *Decolonising the mind* by Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong’o (1986)

Basic to the origin and development of language.

The link individuals necessarily establish among themselves, (people and community), to produce wealth or means of life (food, clothing, housing...).

‘Production is cooperation, is communication, is language, is expression of the relation between human beings’.
Language as communication

(2,3) Language as speech and language as written signs

Imitate the language of real life
Language as communication in society

- Broad harmony
- Language as written signs
- Language as speech
- Language of real life
Language as carrier of culture

Culture: the collective memory bank of a people’s experience in history

Values are the basis for people’s identity, they are all carried by language
Culture creates images in our heads, how we perceive ourselves and our place in the world.

The capacity to confront the world creatively is dependent on how those images distort or clarify the reality around us.
Communication creates culture and culture is a means of communication.

A specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality but ... in its particularity as the language of a specific community with a specific history.
Language as culture is mediating in my very own being
To summarise

The language of real life (through speech and writing) and language as culture mediate between me and the world
The mismatch

the language of real life ≠ language as carrier of culture
Creating **new context** for the language of real life and language as carrier of culture

**Thinking ...across... boundaries**

**Being ...across... boundaries**
European rationale for language learning: transform the language learner into a language user
... humans automatically aim at maximal relevance:

that is, **maximal contextual** effect

for **minimal processing** effort

(Wilson and Sperber, 2004, p. 67)
Relevance in language learning and language use?

Cognition (language learning)
- Perceived difficulty:
  - Maximal processing effort
  - Time consuming

Communication (language use)
- Uncertain:
  - Limited contextual effects at the time of learning
  - Undetermined future
The link between the language of real life and language as carrier of culture is ...

A shared context

The link between language learning and language use is ...

Relevant context
In-between space for shared contextual relevance (Heaven in 21st century)

The 21st century classroom
(thinking ... Across... boundaries
being... Across... Boundaries)

Language of real life
(work, produce, communicate)

Language as carrier of culture
(image forming, value creating, identity constructing)

Relevance in communication
(minimal processing effort for maximal contextual effect)
An example of a mismatch made in heaven:
Fiontar, Dublin City University
Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

A language-sensitive approach

Re-thinking how and when certain types of subject matter and language/s are taught

Interdisciplinary mindset
The major concern is Education, not multilingualism (multilingualism is the added value)

CLIL is context-dependent (as many CLIL models as there are learning contexts)
CLIL as language-sensitive: Graphic Organisers
Reading strategies, e.g. awareness of text structures (LICI handbook – available online)

2. Cause-effect

The effect of nitrogen on the cold-forging properties of steel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSE:</th>
<th>EFFECT:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nitrogen increased</td>
<td>• increase in the strength of steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• decrease in ductility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temperature increased</td>
<td>• decrease in the strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• initial decrease in ductility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• later increasing trend in ductility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Process and sequence

Example of process and sequence:

Cheese-making process

cooking → moulding → preliminary pressing → pressing → salting → cellaring

4. Description and classification

Properties of concrete

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>strength</th>
<th>durability</th>
<th>thermal properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abrasion resistance</td>
<td>chemical corrosion</td>
<td>thermal conductivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compressive strength</td>
<td>frost resistance</td>
<td>fire resistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tensile strength</td>
<td></td>
<td>thermal expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shear strength</td>
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</table>
Use Wordle as a language-sensitive stimulus when introducing a new topic (www.wordle.net)

http://www.slideshare.net/JenniferW/wordle-ideas

You can also create a WORDLE as a whole class activity
The pratice du coût-plus-marge est-elle loighciúil ? En général, non. Une approche qui ne considers ni de la demande ni de value-based pricing, ni de competitors dans la fixation des luachanna a peu de chances de conduire au profit maximal, qu’il soit à court ou à long terme. Cette approche perd son sens si les diolteanna ne correspondent pas aux anticipations.

la valeur perçue tient compte
la concurrence la pratique
logique prix ventes
A new context (heaven): Marketing and French (Furlong 2008)

Parallel teaching of the language and the subject (adjunct model)

16 learners, Business degree, Year 2 with French.

Thinking across boundaries
Being across boundaries

Marketing = 36 hours per semester

French = 48 hours per semester including 20 hours of CLIL

Minimal processing effort for maximal contextual effect
(prior knowledge of marketing, new perspective, better exam results in marketing exam)
Do you believe CLIL will help you in your marketing studies?

**Broader understanding of content (n = 5):** Insight into how French marketing operates. Gives a broader view of marketing. Learn some things that are not covered in marketing class × 3

**Deeper understanding of content (n = 4):** Knowledge of and being familiar with specific marketing terms is important. Went through marketing in a lot of detail. I understand the marketing topics better now × 2

**Better recall of content (n = 8):** I learn the material twice × 2. I have become familiar with the topics × 2. Another way to revise. Because you already know it, it is easier to translate into French and learn. Helped me to remember aspects that I may not have spent a lot of time on. There are things I’d remember from French class that I would need in a marketing exam
Average marks 2006-07  
42 students including 15 French learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Marketing (+ French)</th>
<th>Marketing (- French)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HRM</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Successful CLIL programmes rely on:

• Varied language teaching and learning methodologies
• Optionality (based on informed decision)
• Dedicated teacher education characterised by materials development (e.g. e-learning training model 20-80; 40-60; 80-20)
• Collaboration
• Stability
CLIL and Plurilingualism in/for unpredictable times and for increased relevance in Education

- Develop ‘new’ loci for language learning
- Share language learning pedagogies with other disciplines

Work with what we have

6 schools at WIT: amalgamate learners, yes, but... within each school

CLIL expertise at WIT: sharing of expertise with language colleagues but also... with subject specialists

Use what we have: interested students (approx. 600 out 1000!) and potentially interested subject specialists with language competencies

And of course... European pedagogical developments and instruments over the past 20 years: portfolio, learner autonomy, study abroad, tandem language learning, technology for L2 learning and teaching, CLIL, Plurilingualism/culturalism
Decolonising our learning culture?
Claiming in-between spaces for a rightful place in 21st century society
European Centre for Modern languages
http://www.ecml.at/

Content-based teaching and plurilingualism
http://conbat.ecml.at/

Language Educator Awareness

Language in Content Instruction (language learning strategies for CLIL)

Multiperspectivity in history teaching: a guide for teachers

The European Council’s homepage for History teaching
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/historyteaching/projects/sharedhistories/shared_stories_EN.asp?