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EOI “El Fuero de Logroño”

Fortanet-Gómez, I. 2013. *CLIL in Higher Education: Towards a Multilingual Language Policy*. Series Title: Bilingual Education and Bilingualism. Bristol: Multilingual Matters. 304 pp. ISBN: 9781847699350.

Centuries ago, a group of people called Akkadians moved to Mesopotamia, invaded all surrounding land called Sumeria and soon wanted to learn the language used by the conquered. The way to perform their aim was done by employing Sumerian language as a medium of tuition in some subjects such as zoology or theology, what is today denominated *content learning*. This fact can be considered the origin of today's *CLIL*, that is, Content and Language Integrated Learning.

However, it was not until the XXth century that this new approach was introduced in Europe as beneficial as well as useful for the teaching and learning of both content and language, having been referred to ever since as an alternative flexible approach to acquire an efficacious learning based upon four main principles: content, communication, cognition and culture (Coyle 2008)

*CLIL in Higher Education. Towards a Multilingual Language Policy* presents a theoretical support to multilingualism and multilingual education by taking the Content and Language Integrated Learning approach as the basis to instruct tertiary education students in a multilingual education policy by contextualizing a case at the bilingual Spanish-Valentian Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, Spain.

Despite being divided into three differentiated parts, in which the first two present the foundation for the study brought about in part three, all the chapters follow a well-rounded development and progress preceded by some acknowledgements and a clear sighted introduction written by the author, to end up with an eleven-page conclusion, two annexes, references and a detailed index.

Part one, formed by two chapters, provides the reader with a theoretical background of what can be understood by multilingualism and multilingual education. Chapter one gives a general outlook on definitions stated by renown linguists such as Moore and Gajo (2009) or Aronin and Singleton (2008:4) although the absence of the

expressed meaning of the term rendered by the Council of Europe deserves to be mentioned. Contrasting and comparing the study of multilingualism understood under two practices, societal and individual, follows the previously given definition as an important starting point to learn the understanding of the term “multilingualism”. Not only is this denomination explained in its broader sense but also its implications and contributions to both, the society and the individual. Taken as a societal practice, several dimensions of multilingualism are discussed, such as the social status of a language in one society and the association of multilingualism with a certain geographic area. The correlation between the use and planning of a language linked to its cultural identity is also discussed. When multilingualism is viewed as an individual practice, aspects such as age, cognition, context, social cultural status, competence in two languages and cultural identity are depicted as connected and combined in the human being’s mind. The closing of this chapter is granted to the linguistic characteristics of multilinguals and the social and individual multilingualism one can encounter at Universitat Jaume I.

The thirty-page devoted to multilingual education chapter two smoothly blends three subdivisions: factors, achievements and approaches present in this variety of schooling. Beginning with a broad definition of what multilingual education is, definition that leads to the explanation of three factors, socio-political, individual and pedagogical, which condition this type of education, the chapter continues overviewing language, literacy and content achievements. Success in reaching the fore-mentioned characteristics can be accomplished in adopting multilingual education as a response to the needs of the globalization reached in the XXIst world. Finally, Fortanet-Gómez reviews five approaches used to the teaching of second or foreign languages throughout the years. In doing so, the reader is furnished with the following methods: language across the curriculum, languages (English) for specific purposes, content-based instruction, immersion programmes and content and language integrated learning. This is the model the writer clearly supports by explaining its main strengths in contrast with the aforementioned approaches and by using it as the *raison d’être* for part three of this volume.

Part two consists of four chapters whose common interconnection lies in answering questions related to why, how and when design and implement a multilingual education policy in a society. The title of chapter three, *The Sociopolitical Context*, tackles the always controversial political issue. It is worthy of notice that the majority of assertions stated in this chapter are to be re-expressed in Part three, where several individuals’ language-related ideas are pointed out. Although these ideas that might hurt somebody’s feelings when reading them, we find an extreme objectiveness supported by explicit data and prudent technique of information reported by the writer.

Furthermore, the author focuses on multilingualism as the necessity of mutual national and international linguistic-cultural cooperation among citizens to ensure protection for all minority languages, then, reaching the development of a country immerse in a process of globalization. In order to do so, we are displayed examples of multilingual policies put into effect in several world-wide universities. India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, South-Africa, Helsinki and Luxembourg together with the Catalan universities in Spain are

used as examples of similarity between the Valencian and Catalan communities, representing a key indicator of the integration process.

Local, national or international language as the teaching communication tongue in schools embodies chapter four, which briefly discusses the novel phenomenon of English as a native language versus English as a lingua franca in several situations. Cummings' BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and CALPS (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) (Cummings 1996), their classroom implications and research findings highlighting the importance of using several contrastive modes of language depending upon the objectives and research genres required close this chapter.

After analyzing the language component in chapter four, chapter five focal point refers to pedagogy. Three distinctions shall be made so as to follow this chapter. First of all, the author gives an insight into tertiary education pedagogy, the tendencies used along the XXth century starting with Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theory of cognitive development as well as his theory about the fundamental role of social interaction in a person's learning, to move on to explain the three approaches to teaching in higher education described by Ramsden (1992): teaching as telling or transmission, teaching as organizing student activity and teaching as making learning possible. Secondly, we find a section dealing with foreign language teaching approaches, in which the three principal models stated by Finney (2002): the content model, the objectives model and the process model, following Skilbeck's (1992) are outlined. Thirdly, the CLIL pedagogy is characterized in some detail, with special emphasis on its implementation in tertiary education. The author justifies her defence of this approach by making the reader aware of the fact that CLIL is mostly influenced by three language approaches: the grammatical approach, the communicative approach and the cognitive approach García (2009). All these methods bring forward the distinctive pedagogy CLIL has. Also, the author illustrates these theoretical remarks with examples of real CLIL experiences; she discusses encountered difficulties and puts forward possible solutions.

Based on the members that participate in the daily life at a University, chapter six deepens into the functions and characteristics each and every person who takes part in this living have. Human-orientated chapter, the author launches several questions, such as whom are today's university students? or what have the lecturers' roles in higher education come upon? Finally, the writer even bears some words to the administrative staff need to first get interested and then implicated in a multilingual language policy.

Lastly, when part three of the book is reached, one can see that its coverage differs from the rest of the book. After a rationalization of the reasons of the study, the writer presents the case study performed at the University Jaume I by giving a thorough study based on surveys and questionnaires regarding a great number of essential factors which include ratios, languages, perceptions, attitudes, pros and cons, objectives and outcomes of implementing a multilingual policy.

This is a thought-provoking worthwhile reading volume in which there are a few matters that deserve a further account; to begin with, more references to the language education policies promoted by the Council of Europe as the institution caring for the

achievement of plurilingualism in our continent; next, the treatment to be given to a more-than-possible gap the students face when joining a multicultural university.

All in all, through the reading of this engaging complete book, the contribution of the author challenges the reader into exploring the world of multilingual language policy in tertiary education, comprehend the various approaches leading to multilingual instruction, perceive the actual existence of advantages in the implementation of a multilingual approach in any level of schooling to end up with an interesting proposal to use a multilingual higher education policy for Universitat Jaume I in Castellón, Spain that could be extrapolated to other institutions.

## NOTE

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