This book explores different ways in which cultural awareness and cultural understanding can be promoted and successfully achieved by means of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), with a special focus on higher education. The authors of the different articles provide a theoretical background and practical examples in which content, culture and language learning are intertwined, illustrating how educators explore new ways of interactive and collaborative learning which encourage both instructors and learners to become multi-culturally aware and to make the most of a multicultural environment.

In the preface, Carrió-Pastor points out the aim of this book: "to analyse the cultural aspects of content and language learning and the integration of different cultures in a new society in which communication and technology are the key aspects to be taken into consideration" (p. 8). This aim, fully achieved by the book, is particularly relevant nowadays, since 2009 was the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. This means that active European citizenship is being increasingly promoted, and the contribution of this book to this goal is, as far as European higher education is concerned, to find innovative ways of integrating the teaching of foreign cultures and languages in the teaching strategies of content subjects.

The first part of the book begins with an introduction by David Marsh aimed at putting CLIL into context and explaining the meaning of key words such as culture, education and CLIL, these definitions being deeply grounded in bibliography, although we miss some more references to more recent publications. Marsh opposes the maximalist perspective, which is a static, cross-cultural and monolithic view, to the minimalist one, which is intercultural, linked to situational analysis and to intercultural communication performance. After a deep analysis, the author concludes that the minimalist perspective is the one that should be promoted by CLIL methodologies. In addition to this, the author gives and anthropological definition of culture and relates culture to important terms such as intercultural societies, nation states, personality and situational adaptability. These terms are central to CLIL, in which “dynamism and realization of human interaction should be stressed whilst emphasizing the inseparability of language, communication and culture” (p. 27).
Following this introduction, María Luisa Carrió-Pastor’s article “Cultural Diversity in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)” explores the role of cultural awareness when learning an L1 through an L2 culture, and the difficulties a student has to overcome in order to be fully socialised in a second culture and not just in a second language. The author underlines three factors to be taken into account to foster successful intercultural communication: Identity, Otherization and Representation, as well as other key CLIL-related factors such as developing new strategies to help students to adapt to the new needs in the communication era and including culture in our teaching materials.

The next article, “Sharing CLIL in Europe”, written by Inmaculada Fontanet-Gómez and Miguel F. Ruiz-Garrido, presents the state of the art in European education systems, as a part of mainstream school education, within pilot studies or experimental projects, or both, as well as the different status of the languages involved in every country, i.e. from foreign to regional and minority languages. The authors also refer to the admission criteria, the subjects involved, and whether CLIL is introduced in primary, secondary, or higher education. This is followed by an overview of CLIL experiences in Spain, both in Secondary and higher education. The variety of experiences and methodologies used within the same country seems to show that CLIL is not yet fully implemented, and there is no common norm for its implementation. However, the results obtained so far are encouraging and illustrate how the CLIL approach to language learning is growing in Europe, with an increasing number of researchers and practitioners getting involved in CLIL practices and with more and more recommendations for “plurilingualism” in the European Union.

The last article of this part is entitled “How can CLIL benefit from the Integration of Information and Communications Technologies?” Its author, Ana M. Gimeno Sanz, explores a variety of ways of integrating ICT into a CLIL classroom setting and illustrates how the InGenio online authoring tool and courseware delivery platform can be used in CLIL. According to the author, a crucial factor in designing dual purpose learning materials is the importance of close co-operation between the language specialist and the subject-matter specialist to design and implement pedagogically sound materials that serve the acquisition of knowledge in two disciplines. This article closes the first section of the book in a very adequate manner, clearly showing that there has been a progression from definitions and a more general perspective, in the previous articles, to the state of the art in European countries and, finally, to a specific application of the theory through the use of an online authoring tool and learning management system.

The next section of the book, CLIL in practice, presents four case studies that describe the effects of culture and CLIL in different backgrounds. The first of these case studies is Do Coyle’s “Promoting Cultural Diversity through Intercultural Understanding: A case study of CLIL Teacher Professional Development at In-service and Pre-service Levels”, which focuses on CLIL teacher training and the importance of moving ahead from cultural awareness to the development of cultural understanding and the intercultural competence. Do Coyle wittily refutes common beliefs that presuppose an “automatic link between learning a foreign language and becoming a world citizen” (p. 106), accepting the challenge of vindicating the role of “culture” in CLIL if intercultural learning and intercultural understanding are to be achieved. She proposes a 4Cs framework for conceptualizing CLIL (content, communication, cognition and culture), which "conceptualizes the integration of subject learning and language learning through developing intercultural understanding” (p. 109). She also suggests that students should develop intercultural competence, a step forward from cultural awareness that would enable them to act as mediators between different cultures. In the case study presented, the author describes how pre-service and in-service teachers go through two phases, one of awareness-raising and one of exploration of a professional development course. She concludes that the notion of intercultural teaching has to be addressed in all training programmes, and that the content of these programmes should be considered as an important contributor to CLIL teacher development.
This is followed by a short case study entitled "Working across Boundaries with CLIL", by Isabell Hodgson and Steven R. Jones, describing an experience that took place in several universities in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Finland. After a brief introduction of the institutions involved, the authors express the objective of the module taught, briefly explain what the module is comprised of, and finally discusses the results. Since this experience seems quite a complex and interesting one, it would have been good to have a more extensive explanation about the way the module was taught, followed by some bibliographical references.

The next case study is provided by Tom Morton, under the title "Integrating Language and Content in Secondary CLIL History: the Potential of a Genre-based Approach". This article, deeply grounded on bibliography and very well organised, points out the fact that explicit language teaching needs attention in CLIL and suggests that a good way to do this is by means of a genre-based approach. In this explicit approach, CLIL practices are further enhanced and enriched by an explicit approach to the teaching of features of secondary history genres. To illustrate this, the author presents several examples of actual history classes where students mixed different genres successfully in their oral presentations. Morton considers that "what was successfully accomplished could be enhanced and extended by the incorporation of a genre-based pedagogy" (p. 145). This could be done by promoting genre awareness with the help of CLIL materials with an explicit focus on subject-specific literacies by scaffolding students’ comprehension and production.

Joseba Ezeiza Ramos signs the last article, “Integrating Languages, Contents and Cultures in the European Space for Higher Education: from Theory to Practice”, a very theoretical compendium of lists which is the result of a thorough literature review on CLIL in the European Space of Higher Education (ESHE). Among the main topics the author looks at are intercultural awareness, Coyle’s model of the four C’s, European collaboration programmes, students’ basic competences, key capacities to meet communicative demands, curricular elements, types of resources, criteria governing planning and development, and methodologies. The aim of these lists is to serve as guidelines that help us to face the renovation of methodological approaches required in order to suit the current needs of European multicultural societies, bearing in mind that universities have a responsibility in “helping to shape the political, economic, cultural and social identity of Europe” (p. 166) and that CLIL can make an enormous contribution to that goal.

The overall impression we get from reading this book is that it addresses the CLIL approach from many different perspectives, providing worthy information that is valuable for different professionals, both experts and non-experts in this approach, in a very well organised and interconnected way, going from the general information to the practical examples of how theory can be successfully put into practice.

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