

---

# Working on Literacy in CLIL/Bilingual Contexts: *Reading to Learn* and Teacher Development<sup>1</sup> *Trabajando la literacidad en contextos AICLE/ bilingües: Leer para Aprender y formación del profesorado*

---

RACHEL WHITTAKER

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid  
rachel@uam.es

CLAIRE ACEVEDO

The Open University (UK)  
claire.acevedo@open.ace.uk

**Abstract:** This paper describes a project implementing a literacy programme based on a linguistic approach to teaching reading and writing, found especially useful for subject classes taught through a foreign language. The programme, *Reading to Learn* (Rose, 2014; Rose & Martin, 2012), based on an analysis of the genres of different subjects, their language features and the difficulties these pose learners, offers teachers an explicit and detailed method to approach text comprehension/production. The paper includes examples of texts from late primary to mid-secondary content classes as analysed and used by teachers, student texts, and reactions to the pedagogy.

**Keywords:** literacy; CLIL/bilingual; teacher development; subject genres.

**Resumen:** Este trabajo presenta un programa de formación para la enseñanza de la lengua escrita en las diferentes áreas curriculares, implementado en las clases de contenido impartidas en una lengua extranjera. El programa, *Leer para Aprender* (Rose, 2014; Rose & Martin, 2012), se fundamenta en el análisis de los géneros de las disciplinas escolares, sus rasgos lingüísticos, y dificultades para los aprendices, y ofrece al docente una secuencia didáctica explícita y detallada con la que enfrentarse a la comprensión y producción de textos. Se incluyen ejemplos del trabajo de los profesores (análisis, diseño de la interacción) y de producción escrita de alumnos, así como la evaluación del proyecto.

**Palabras clave:** literacidad; AICLE/bilingüe; formación; géneros escolares.

---

<sup>1</sup> We are grateful for the funding of the Comenius Multilateral project TeL4ELE 518080-LLP-2011-SE-COMENIUS-CMP (2011-2013), the results of which we report on in this article.

## INTRODUCTION

This article offers a snapshot of the possibilities which open up when teachers of different subjects, using different languages, are brought together to reconsider the role of texts in their classes, and the potential for student learning that knowledge of the language of their disciplines can offer. For teachers to be able to design an approach to effective intervention in their students' comprehension and production of the texts of their subjects, they need to know both how those texts are constructed at macro- and micro-levels, and how to work on the normally individual and private processes of reading and writing, in the large classes most have to deal with. In this paper, we present a pedagogy based on such knowledge, the *Reading to Learn* program (Rose, 2014), as it was implemented in an EU Comenius multilateral project during the years 2011-13 (Acevedo, Coffin, & Lövestedt, 2014), focusing on the experience in Spain, and particularly in CLIL contexts. In the project, CLIL was found to be an ideal site for fomenting awareness of the role of literacy across the curriculum (Lorenzo, Trujillo, & Vez, 2011), as teaching through a foreign language gives CLIL teachers a clearer perspective on the centrality of language, in its different modes, in learning a subject.

Even a quick look at the vast literature on reading and writing in the mother tongue is enough to convince us of the magnitude of the task we pose our students when we set them a reading task or a composition (e.g. Kamil, Pearson, Birr Moje, & Afflerbach, 2011; Rijlaarsdam, van den Berg, & Couzijn, 2005). If we add to that list of references those dedicated to researching reading and writing in an additional language (e.g. Alderson & Urquhart, 1984; Bernhardt, 1991; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008; Manchón, 2011), the task demands multiply. Reading problems, especially, are associated with falling behind at school, a process often starting towards the end of the primary years, as children who are able to decode become unable to extract meaning from more complex subject texts (Gee, 2004). These students are unlikely to make up lost ground in secondary school, and very often join the ranks of those who fail to complete their schooling (e.g. Fernández, Mena, & Riviere, 2010). PISA studies (e.g. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2014) show how a fifth of 15-year-olds around the world are only able to understand the most basic and salient information in texts, and PIAAC studies of adult literacy (OECD, 2013) remind us that when workers are unable to read the material for training courses, they have no chance of access to new jobs. Literacy, then, is both complex and vitally important, inside and beyond the education system. At the same time, it is an area which risks attracting less attention than it deserves in bilingual teacher education, despite Cummins' (1998)

recommendations, since the need to foment oral skills for successful classroom interaction may seem more urgent. This article describes a program for teacher education offering an approach to the integration of language and content around the reading and writing of texts in different school disciplines.

#### A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO TEACHING LITERACY

A study of bilingual teachers at different points in their careers in the USA (Cammarata & Tedick, 2012) based on in-depth interviews shows how content teachers in bilingual settings came to an understanding of the key role of language in their subjects, but discovered they lacked the tools to incorporate that realization into their teaching. Poignant is the phrase used to express reaction to their disorientation: “a stab in the dark”. Teachers in the study knew something had to be done, but had not been prepared in their professional training to know what that something was, as the authors explain (2012, p. 261):

It is the nature of this particular pedagogical difficulty –that is, integrating language and content instruction– that (...) “a stab in the dark,” portrays. Despite the levels of awareness that immersion teachers develop when it comes to understanding the critical connection between language and content, they struggle to find the exact language they need to bring students’ attention to as they teach content.

Here we present an approach to help teachers with this problem. It was developed by educational linguistics, and combines a functional model of language with social, Vygotskian pedagogy, offering teachers a guide to both principles and practice.

#### THE MODEL

The *Reading to Learn (R2L)* programme was designed in the framework of Systemic-Functional Linguistics or SFL (Halliday, 2004), a linguistic model developed from the 1960’s on with the needs of teachers in mind (Halliday, McIntosh, & Stevens 1966; Halliday, 2007; see McCabe, forthcoming, for a survey of SFL applications to language teaching). This theory sets out to explain how language makes meaning in context –explaining language, then, as meaning potential, and in relation to its context of use, and its users. While the model has been applied to the analysis of texts in many different social contexts, the world of education has received special attention. Research teams led by Jim Martin at Sydney University

(eg. Martin, 1997; Rose & Martin, 2012; Veel , 2006) have collected thousands of texts produced and consumed through the school years and beyond, in order to discover the types of texts which have a role at different times, in different subjects, along with their structures and characteristics. This invaluable map, or network, of genres for education shows how texts create knowledge in different disciplines, and provides an analytical tool to trace similarities and differences in the texts of disciplinary areas at any moment, either developmental or historical. The map also contemplates change –evolution in the sets of genres and their features–, as societies, always dynamic, develop new activities and new modes for making meaning.

*Genres* are identified according to their purpose (Martin & Rose, 2008; Rose & Martin, 2012). The function of any text-type provides its motivation, the reason it was developed in a community. In the map of education genres, texts may, for example, be written (or spoken) to entertain, to inform, to guide actions or to evaluate (Rose, 2014; Rose & Martin, 2012 etc.). While it is the whole text, as an example of a genre, that carries out an academic activity, such as explaining the causes of a historical event or reporting and interpreting the results of an experiment, differentiated sections, or *stages*, are needed to construct the experience for the reader. This is easily seen in a procedural genre like the *report* of a science experiment, or in a *historical recount*, where there is a relation between the meanings expressed in different stages and chronological time. However, it is just as true of a genre organized rhetorically, in logical steps, like, for instance, a text arguing for a change in the world, a *hortatory exposition*, in which the writer presents as a thesis some action that should be taken, then offers support for that position (at different levels, often with examples), and finally closes with a reiteration of the thesis.

Each stage, in its turn, is realized by characteristic selections from the linguistic system, choices which make possible the types of meaning required. Here we are at the level of lexico-grammar, at which both grammatical forms and specific lexical items are chosen, to represent the content, or *field* of the text and the identity of the writer (see, e.g. Schleppegrell, 2004; Llinares, Morton, & Whittaker, 2012). The stages themselves can be seen to be built of a number of *phases* (Rose, 2014). This level is not predictable by the genre, but plays an important role in the identification of blocks of meaning, and facilitates both the analysis of a text to use in class and the writing of texts by students.

## THE PEDAGOGY

The different research projects studying the texts of schooling have also had a strong applied side, aiming to include students from all linguistic and social backgrounds in the education system successfully, and to provide the linguistic skills required by the changing labour market as the knowledge society made different demands on the competences of school leavers. A successful pedagogy for writing genres for primary and secondary schools was developed around analysis of model texts leading to guided and then individual writing (Martin, 1999; Rothery, 1989). *Reading to Learn* completed the didactic circle, providing support for students from the very beginning, by guiding them as they read the model texts. The program offers a carefully-designed teaching sequence in which the interaction is based on studies of how children are socialized into literacy in the home (Adams, 1990; Rose & Martin, 2012; Williams, 1995), on Vygotskian learning through modeling, and on Bernstein's notion of horizontal and vertical knowledge and the roles of the regulative and instructional registers in education (Bernstein, 1999, 1996), with knowledge of genres and registers of the disciplines guiding explicit teaching of reading, and later writing, of a text. Texts to work on are chosen for their role in the syllabus, since reading and writing are seen as an integrated part of the subject, in the same way as the language of a subject is an integral part of its content.

Texts can be approached at different levels, focusing on a whole genre, a stage, a phase, or a sentence, depending on the teacher's objectives and the students' needs (Rose & Martin, 2012 p. 147). The principles guiding the interaction are the same. Most illustrative of how these principles translate into teacher-student interaction is the level of Detailed Reading. Working on a short segment of text, chosen for its importance in the syllabus, and its difficulty, the talk is planned in a five-step interaction. The cycle consists of first *preparing* the students to find some information in the text, by giving them a short summary in everyday spoken language, before reading aloud the sentence they are working on. Then the *focus* question or clue asks students to *identify* the wording of a piece of information in the sentence. The teacher *affirms* the response, *directs* students to highlight the key word or phrase, and finally *elaborates* on the answer, either explaining something more about the content, or about the language it is couched in.

Working with a science report on cells, for example, Rose would work in the following way (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 181 ff.). First, the students are guided round the whole page of the textbook, which contains dense text in a number of columns, as well as diagrams:

This is a report about the parts of cells. Because it describes what cells are composed of, we call it a compositional report. Each paragraph describes on structure in the cell and what it does, in other words its function. The first paragraph describes... (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 185)

The teacher summarizes the topic of each paragraph, focusing especially on scientific names getting the students to pronounce them, and so begin to speak science, before working in detail on the content sentence by sentence. As an example (pp. 187-188), for the sentence “In the cytoplasm hundreds of chemical reactions take place, transferring energy, storing food and making new substances”, first the preparation is a paraphrase at a very general level: “The next sentence tells us what happens in the cytoplasm”. Students are then focused on a piece of information: “Can you see what takes place inside the cytoplasm?”. A student identifies the answer “hundreds of chemical reactions”, which the teacher affirms: “Exactly right”, and directs all the class to mark the key words in their texts: “Let’s just highlight chemical reactions”. A new preparation is given for the main information, the purpose of the reactions: “Then it says three things those chemical reactions do, three functions”. To the focus question “What’s the first one?” a student identifies “transferring energy”. After affirming the answer and directing students to highlight the key word “energy”, the teacher elaborates: “Transferring energy means taking energy from a chemical reaction to do other work.” The next focus question asks students to infer a relation, not made explicit in the written text: “For example, what work does the cell membrane need energy for?”. This inferential question helps students build connections with previous information they read, an important part of understanding the text.

This very short example illustrates the focus on content, which at the same time integrates work on language. The students are shown, for instance, that the scientific clause, with its abstract subject, “reactions take place” is talking about “what happens”, if we use everyday terms. At the same time, the teacher uses an abstraction, “functions”, when rephrasing the clause “what the reactions do”, getting the students used to perceiving events scientifically. This talk around the text with the students reveals the usually hidden process of reading, as the academic language of the text –or literary language of a narration in a language class– is translated into everyday spoken terms, both before reading, with an oral summary of the next segment of content, and during the interaction, to guide identification of the key word or phrase. All students are involved, as an action is required of each of them –they all highlight the information– and the teacher is able to monitor this, even in a large class. The language of the subject is shown to be accessible to

all the students, and what makes it difficult is made explicit, and explained. Since technical or literary language, depending on the subject, is part of what students need to learn, it is focused on and talked about. Then, the elaboration phase is used to take the students further with the content, allowing teachers, for example, to attend to different needs –those of more advanced students as well as those who need more support–, or to relate new knowledge to students’ experience or their context, and so on.

In the interaction in class, talk is explicitly around the text itself, as one of the main participants, the other being the students: “the text says..., explains to us...”, as shown in the example above. The students are constructed as able to interrogate the text, and find its meanings: “Can you see what takes place inside the cytoplasm?”. Here, the text is an object that is shared, and to which all have access, which means that reading is no longer an interior process during which students have an individual responsibility to make sense of the words, but a social, shared activity, which is possible for all members of the class. This is very different from posing a question demanding a display of knowledge that the students are individually responsible for having: “What takes place inside the cytoplasm?”. Classroom talk, then, is based on questions, as in the typical Initiation-Response-Feedback sequence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), but the questions have a different base and a different function. Their base is an oral paraphrase of the meaning of the text, and the function is for students to be able to match meanings in the spoken language that they understand with their formal written equivalents. Most important is the principle that the prompts are designed so that all the students in the class without exception will be able to identify the information required, and contribute to building the model of the text. Nothing is more motivating than success, or more de-motivating than feeling frustration and exclusion in a class.

As the examples show, teachers are not required to become fully-fledged linguists to integrate work on language and content in their subjects. Like all professionals, teachers of non-linguistic and linguistic subjects have a very developed, though implicit, awareness of the texts which have roles in creating knowledge in their disciplines, i.e. of the genres and registers of their subjects. Once this knowledge is seen through the lens of a linguistic model, teachers become aware of the sets of genres in their subjects, and of the role their linguistic features play in each genre, they are ready to approach the analysis of texts in preparation for use in class –that is, to teach their content and build new knowledge around it with their students, including explicit knowledge of language. Linguistic knowledge developed by the teacher, or *Knowledge about Language* or *KAL* (Carter, 1990) is applied to revealing meanings, and so metalanguage is kept to a minimum, and is as transparent and

familiar as possible. When discussing meanings in sentences, for example, rather than referring to constituents of the clause (*participants, processes, circumstances* in SFL terms), *wh*-interrogatives guide the students to find wordings (Martin, 2006, pp. 110-111). The stages of the genre, however, are named, and their functions explained, giving the students an understanding of the purpose and the higher level structure of the text into which to organize the new content as they read. This metalanguage is used by students and teacher, making it possible to talk about what makes different choices more or less successful at the lower levels of phases and lexico-grammar. This is especially important at the moment of writing a new text in the same genre, since the function of each stage provides the reasons for an evaluation of choices of phrases, both by the author of the original text which teacher and students have discussed together, and as students and teacher make decisions about the language of a new text they are jointly constructing.

It is at the moment of writing a new text that the students take over. The teacher (literally) moves onto the sidelines, and the class proposes content and wordings for a new text which they take turns to write on the board, or key into the computer for projection. The complexity of the process of writing is broken down in different ways. If the class has been working on detailed reading of a short text, that same content may be re-written, with students first offering key words –those highlighted during the reading of the paragraph– which are noted on the board, and then built into a text, all based on students' suggestions and written by a student. The teacher is there to help when problems of content expression, information management, cohesion, etc. come up. If the class has been working on a complete text, the macro-level –i.e. the stages of the genre, or the names of phases– is visible, to guide the construction of a new text, for which new content is negotiated, or researched. This re-working of content, now in language closer to that of the students, plays an important role in learning both language and content. This is particularly true when the vehicle is not the L1, as has been shown by Heine (2010) in relation to writing on geography in a CLIL context. Also, research into the role of writing for learning lexis in a foreign language –often seen as a challenge in bilingual education– has demonstrated that the depth of learning which takes place during the decision-making involved in writing a text in that language leads to greater stability of the new terms (Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001).

*R2L* also provides the teachers with an instrument to assess the students' written texts, based on the requirements of the genre and its linguistic features (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 325), and developed for different genres in Rose 2014. For each of the 14 categories of features which are evaluated, a mark from zero to



three is given, which the teacher bases on the expected achievement for the grade. This allows teachers to give constructive feedback showing individual students their strengths and weaknesses in writing a particular genre, and indicating to the teacher those areas where more work is needed. The progression of individual students, and whole classes can be followed using the assessment scales.

To sum up, to the question ‘What does *R2L* pedagogy show teachers?’, there are three answers. It shows how different school subjects organize knowledge in their texts, which features of the language of different disciplines make texts difficult to understand, and, most importantly, a didactic sequence to work with subject texts, for deep understanding of the structure and content of the text, and for ability to write similar texts following the conventions of the genre. The results from the implementation of the pedagogy across the school years and subject areas over the period of one school year in Australia (Rose, 2010) show the constant improvement in literacy scores for all pupils, and especially its effect in “closing the gap” between low and high achievers, bringing up the performance of those who started at the lower levels (Rose & Acevedo, 2006).

A pedagogy focusing on the language of school subjects clearly has potential to find resonance with the interests and needs of teachers in bilingual contexts. As we will see, this was the case when *Reading to Learn* came to Europe. We now turn to an experience with the pedagogy in Spain, a country where bilingual education has grown exponentially over the last two decades (Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster, 2010).

### *The Reading to Learn project in Spain: Teacher Learning for European Literacy Education, TeL4ELE*

*Reading to Learn* came to Europe from Australia, perhaps surprisingly via one of the Nordic countries, Sweden, where the incorporation of pupils from many different origins created a need for work on literacy in Swedish as a second language. A partnership was formed by the Australian teacher educator and specialist in *R2L* pedagogy, Claire Acevedo, and the Swedish *R2L* expert, Ann-Christin Lövestedt, at the Multilingual Institute in Stockholm. Their success in adapting the pedagogy to this very different context, with materials in Swedish and implementation with newly-trained teachers using activities tailored to a very different and varied school population, led to interest from other European countries in taking part in a project which was showing itself to be beneficial at a time when literacy was in the limelight, and the role of language in education clearer than ever.

The Comenius Multilateral project, *Teacher Learning for European Literacy Education (TeL4ELE)* which ran from 2011-2013 (final report by Acevedo et al.,

2014) was aimed to support the development of literacy educators in five European countries (Denmark, Portugal, Spain, Scotland and Sweden) to become experts in *Reading to Learn*, the genre-based literacy pedagogy described in the previous section. The project was led by Acevedo and Löfstedt, but the inclusion of the non-European partner, Australia, enabled the national teams learning the pedagogy to also attend sessions given by the linguists responsible for the original research, Martin and Rose. The educators from the different European countries then worked with groups of their own teachers in courses and seminars, as these, in their turn, implemented the literacy pedagogy in their classrooms, adapting it to the local languages and curricula.

In Spain, four languages were used: Spanish and Basque as L1 or L2, English as FL or as the language of curricula content in bilingual/CLIL classes (schools with two content subjects taught in a foreign language), and French as FL. Participants worked in subjects across the curriculum at late primary and early secondary levels in state schools, as well as with adults. The project produced special interest in those teachers who were most aware of language, those who worked with more than one language, either in linguistic or content subjects. The existing close collaboration between language and content teachers in the bilingual schools meant that there was already a tradition of working together to solve linguistic problems for lesson preparation in several of the schools participating in the project, most from the Madrid Region.

The examples below of the way the teachers used R2L pedagogy have been selected from those using English in their classes. They show how the teachers applied an analysis of the genre of the text to develop a pedagogical sequence for reading and writing, and also include segments of the students' written production.

The first comes from a written report by a primary school teacher on her experience of the pedagogy in a geography class. The second shows how an English language teacher from a school taking part in an international project, Global Classrooms, dealt with the challenge of helping her students read an official document, and learn to write a similar text in the appropriate register<sup>1</sup>.

*Final year in a social science class in a state bilingual primary school*

The class of 12-year-olds was learning about “European rivers and lakes” in English, in a lesson based on a text of over two hundred words presented in a dense column, of about nine words to a line. The column of text was set out on a page

---

1 Thanks to Virginia Montealegre and Isabel Bleuca for permission to use their work.

as part of a colourful double-page spread, including two photographs –one of a river and one of a lake–, a map of Europe with the watersheds marked in different colours and a bar chart showing the length of rivers. The students were faced, then, with different representations of the information in the text. The teacher reported on her analysis in preparation for the interaction for the reading lesson in the following terms: “This descriptive report (it gives us information about the way things are) seems to be a combination of genres. This text is part of a classifying macro-report which classifies the rivers of Europe”. As to the interaction itself, she explained: “Before starting with the questions, I explained how the text was divided and I summarized the information in the text. Then I asked them to take a highlighter or colored pencil and follow me as I was reading”. She followed the interaction sequence for detailed reading to work on the different paragraphs with the children. For the writing stage, the highlighted words were later organized into key words as notes on board: “Europe –many rivers– different characteristics / Relatively long –average volume of flow / Therefore– navigable –travel routes ...”. The teacher explained that she was interested in the students learning both the language of geography and of logical relations in English– hence the inclusion of the connector *therefore*.

In the teacher’s report, samples of student writing illustrate their uptake of the content of the lesson. A high achieving student’s individual rewriting of the text began: “There are many rivers in Europe, with different characteristics. They are relatively long and with an average volume of flow. Therefore they are navigable so they are used as travel routes”. While the text remains close to the original, to include the technical language of the subject content, the student has organized the information slightly differently, starting with presentative *there*, not often found at this level to introduce concepts into a text (Llinares & Whittaker, 2009), uses a preposition phrase to include information in one clause “with an average volume of flow”, and pronouns instead of repeating full noun phrases. Interestingly, as well as the formal logical connector *therefore*, the student included a spoken marker of consequence: *so*. In another sample text from the same class, now of a low achiever, key phrases were simply linked using *is* or *of*. It must be said, though, that a characteristic of the genre of reports is precisely the frequent use of the simple present and of the verb *be*. Answering the teacher’s questionnaire on the detailed reading lesson, while some students found the activity “tiring” most said it helped them to learn, and the teacher reported that the following day the class asked if they were going to work in the same way. Despite the routine, which critics of the pedagogy find repetitive for all but the slowest learners, this teacher explained in her report that “One of the best

students in this group told me that it was easier for him to study and work on the unit after this experience. The re-construction of the text also helped them to revise and ‘settle’ the new knowledge”.

*Third year EFL class in a state bilingual secondary school working on a position paper*

In EFL classes the R2L pedagogy was used with different types of texts, both literary and factual. The following example presented a considerable challenge for the 14-15-year-olds, that of participation in an international competition, the Global Classrooms Project, involving writing a position paper in representation of a developing country and defending proposals aimed at solving a real problem there. The purpose of this type of text is to persuade the United Nations countries to implement the proposals presented, and the model position paper provided was seen to belong to the genre of hortatory exposition, though the stages were realized somewhat differently from those typical of the school system (Rose & Martin, 2012, p. 130). Instead of the usual organization by presentation of the thesis, followed by arguments and closing with reiteration of thesis, the teacher found that in the position paper the thesis was implicit, only inferable from the arguments until the reiteration of thesis stage, which developed specific proposals for actions. Given the key role of the proposals, the teacher decided to work on this stage, including among the objectives of the class sessions recognition and production of proposals and the language of purpose. Part of the strength of the proposals would be the legitimization of the writer making them, which meant the students had to learn to create the appropriate identity, by using the register of international documents. Neither the understanding of the model text, nor the writing of a new proposal based on research into the country assigned to the class would be an easy task, so detailed reading was chosen as a way to focus the students on the language they would need. We now present a snippet from the teacher’s preparation.

The topic for the project was Sustainable Development, and the model text, which contained 610 words distributed in four dense paragraphs, dealt with Vietnam and its problems with sustainability. After introducing the first proposal, for sustainable industrialization, the text went on to give details:

We uphold the creation of a law requiring every factory built to be maintained at least in half by renewable energies, such as solar or hydroelectric power. Since Vietnam is not a completely developed country, we call upon the UN for financial support to build these power plants...

The preparation for the first sentence, rephrasing the content into everyday language, was “The next sentence tells us that Vietnam is going to propose a law for factories and it says that factories should take half of the energy that they use from renewable energies”. After reading the sentence aloud, the teacher had prepared a series of focus questions, giving synonyms for the bureaucratic language the students had to learn in order to write their own proposals. For the key function of persuasion, to get students to recognize the meaning of *uphold*, she asked: “Which word at the beginning of the sentence means we propose the creation of a law for factories?” And for the difficult passive infinitive: “Who can see the three words that tell us that the factory has to function with renewable energies?” Or to understand the use in this context of the phrase *in half*: “Which two words tell us the minimum amount of renewable energy the country would accept?” It was also important to make explicit the relationship of hyperonymy, so the question: “Which two words refer to two types of renewable energies?” was included.

The elaboration phase was used to relate the content of the text to the students’ own experience: “Spain is a country that produces renewable energy. What methods have you seen in the countryside. Where? Why is renewable energy important for Spain? Do you know other renewable energies apart from solar and hydroelectric? She also used this phase to focus on language: “*such as* introduces an example”, and pronunciation: “SOlar in English has the stress on the first syllable, in contrast to the Spanish stress pattern, on the second syllable, soLAR”.

The second sentence in the example above was introduced with the preparation “The next sentence tells us that Vietnam is going to ask the UN for money to be able to build these factories because they are not a developed country and they haven’t got much money”. Another characteristic expression the students would need for their own position paper appears here “we call upon the UN for...”, so the teacher asked the students “Who can see the phrase which means “we ask for help”? And to make sure they related the abstract expression *financial support* with its concrete meaning, the question: “Which two words mean they are asking for money?” was posed. After this sentence, an important elaboration of content, giving opportunities for participation, was “Who can tell us what the UN does?”.

In her evaluation of the session, the teacher reported that she realized she had made the students concentrate for too long on this intense work on reading, and that the students had found it tiring. The later individual construction of a new text, which involved a lot of research on a new country in order to write a convincing position paper of their own, showed its fruits, though. The following extract is from a text by a high achieving student in the class:

To try to eradicate poverty, we propose a decrease the taxes for fishermen and allow them to export more fish, so that they can earn more money. This is an idea for 2014-2015. Fiji also believes that if more hospitals are built and you send doctors that hire some of our people and teach them first aid we have made a planning about the construction and it would take just 5-6 years to finish the hospitals. We can also call for some volunteers of NGO's like Save The Children, because they can help...

While it includes examples of orality (for example, the move between nominals and clauses “a decrease... and allow them...”; the use of personal pronouns *you, we*; or the long clause complex including a number of coordinated clauses linked with *and*) the text manages to recreate the register, and maintain the official voice for stretches of the proposal.

These examples show how Spanish teachers were learning how to work on literacy in English, a foreign language for them and for their students, using *Reading to Learn*, and give an impression of their achievement, in this, their first experience implementing the pedagogy, having received between 25 and 50 hours of seminars. We now turn to the evaluation of what they had learnt in the programme.

#### EVALUATION OF THE TEL4ELE PROJECT: THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TEACHERS

Despite the very different national contexts in which the R2L project was implemented, and the variety of languages and disciplines represented, the external evaluation produced a surprisingly consistent picture (Acevedo et al., 2014). Though the great majority of the 98 classroom teachers from the different countries who participated had had no previous contact with the functional approach to text analysis and language-based pedagogy, in a questionnaire, over 90% of them reported that the work with the project had had a considerable impact on their awareness of genre and register, and almost all had changed their approach to teaching text, no matter the field they belonged to. In her report, the project evaluator expressed the effect of the language-based literacy program on the participants as a “paradigm shift” (Coffin, 2013). Despite the short period of time the teachers had had to implement the pedagogy before the evaluation of the project, they noted in their students improved reading comprehension, and especially writing. The pre- and post tests of reading and writing, selected to suit the different national contexts, varied considerably in their results, though average improvement was 10% for reading and almost 15% for writing, with disadvantaged students, often language learners, showing higher gains (Acevedo et al., 2014).

The teachers in the Spanish group commented informally on their experience with the project at different moments during and after the training sessions. The project, they said, had made them aware of the texts they used and of their features. It had made visible the language of school texts and the difficulties students encounter when reading. Both language and content teachers found especially useful the work with genres across the curriculum, which provided them with a window on texts of the “others”. Though there had been little time to dedicate to the application of the evaluation scale based on genre and register, they appreciated its potential not only for assessment but as a teaching tool. After trying out the teaching sequence in class, they emphasized especially the effect of the detailed focus on text on student engagement, as well as their participation at the re-writing stage. The students’ response to the didactic routine was positive, since they asked if they could “look for words” again, or reminded the teacher of the stage of writing a new text together, when the teacher had to miss this activity for reasons of time. However, to achieve this response, they had to invest a lot of time both in selecting the text to use in class, for its key content and the language they wanted the students to learn, in analyzing it and preparing the cues which would guide students to identify key phrases successfully. Working in teams and sharing lesson plans meant that little by little a bank of resources could be built up. The greatest difficulty found by all was the questioning format, in which the preparation gave the students the meanings to identify. Adapting to such a radical change needed time, and to maintain it in the classroom interaction, a lot of practice. Most important, though, was the new way of looking at texts, their content and language, the “paradigm shift” for teachers.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, working with *Reading to Learn* pedagogy made teachers aware of the challenge of school texts and their language, but it also provided both content and language teachers with principles and tools enabling them to face that challenge, leading them to work with texts in class in a completely different way. The pedagogy allowed teachers to approach the comprehension and production of texts from the point of view of the learner, and deal with problems systematically. In this way, explicit teaching of reading, focusing on language and content, and modeling the writing of new texts, led to uptake of language and content by students. This approach to the texts of school subjects gave the teachers a new perspective, that of their students as processors of a variety of text types, in different languages, and as producers of texts for disciplines and languages with very different requirements. It also gave them principles and examples of practice to help their students deal with

this complexity. We ask our readers, members of the teacher-education community: Where are bilingual teachers-in-training given guidance on the role of literacy in their subjects, and ways to exploit its possibilities?

Date of receipt: 5 October 2015

Date of acceptance: 29 July 2016

## REFERENCES

- Acevedo, C., Coffin, C., & Löfstedt, A.-C. (2014). *Teacher learning for European literacy education (TeL4ELE) Final report. Public part*. Retrieved from <http://tel4ele.eu/>
- Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.
- Alderson, J. C., & Urquhart, A. H. (Eds.) (1984). *Reading in a foreign language*. London: Longman.
- Bernhardt, E. (1999). *Reading development in a second language: Theoretical, empirical and classroom perspectives*. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex.
- Bernstein, B. (1999). Horizontal and vertical discourse: An essay. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20, 157-173. Retrieved from <http://lhc.ucsd.edu/mca/Paper/JuneJuly05/BernsteinVerHor.pdf>
- Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique* (Rev. ed. 2000). London: Taylor and Francis.
- Cammarata, L., & Tedick, D. (2012). Balancing content and language in instruction: The experience of immersion teachers. *The Modern Language Journal*, 96, 251-268.
- Carter, R. (Ed.) (1990). *Knowledge about language and the curriculum. The LINC reader*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Coffin, C. (2013). *Teacher learning for European literacy education (TeL4ELE): An evaluation*. Presentation at the Dissemination Conference Teacher learning for European literacy education ([www.tel4ele.eu](http://www.tel4ele.eu)): Literacy across the curriculum in different languages and contexts: functional approaches to reading and writing/ Aprendizaje integrado de la(s) lenguas(s) y los contenidos: aproximación funcional a la lectura y a la escritura. Universidad Autónoma, Madrid.
- Cummins, J. (1998). Immersion education for the millennium: What have we learned from 30 years of research on second language immersion? In M. R.



- Childs, & R. M. Bostwick (Eds.), *Learning through two languages: Research and practice* (pp. 34-47). Katoh Gakuen: Japan. Retrieved from <http://www.carla.umn.edu/cobal/tt/modules/strategies/immersion2000.html>
- Fernández, E., Mena, L., & Riviere, J. (2010). *School failure and dropouts in Spain*. Barcelona: Obra Social La Caixa (Social Studies Collection, 29). Retrieved from <http://obrasocial.lacaixa.es/>
- Gee, P. J. (2004). *Situated learning. A critique of traditional schooling*. New York: Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2007). *Language and education. Collected works of M. A. K. Halliday Vol. 9*. (Ed. J. Webster). London: Continuum.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar* (3rd ed., revised by C. M. I. M. Matthiessen). London: Hodder Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K., McIntosh, A., & Strevens, P. (1964). *The linguistic sciences and language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Hulstijn, J., & Laufer, B. (2001). Some empirical evidence of the involvement load hypothesis in vocabulary acquisition. *Language Learning*, 51, 539-558.
- Heine, L. (2010). *Problem solving in a foreign language: A study in Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.
- Kamil, M. L., Pearson, P. D., Birr Moje, E., & Afflerbach, P. P. (Eds.) (2011). *Handbook of reading research (Vol. 4)*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Leki, I., Cumming, A., & Silva, T. (2008). *A synthesis of research on second language writing in English*. New York: Routledge.
- Llinares, A., Morton, T., & Whittaker, R. (2012). *The roles of language in CLIL*. Cambridge: C.U.P.
- Llinares, A., & Whittaker, R. (2009). Teaching and learning history in secondary CLIL classrooms: From speaking to writing. In E. Dafouz, & M. Guerrini (Eds.), *CLIL across educational levels: Experiences from primary, secondary and tertiary contexts* (pp. 73-88). Madrid: Santillana.
- Lorenzo, F., Trujillo, F., & Vez, J. M. (2011). *Educación bilingüe: integración de contenidos y segundas lenguas*. Madrid: Síntesis.
- Manchón, R. M. (Ed.) (2011). *Learning-to-write and writing-to-learn in an additional language*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Martin, J. R. (1997). Analysing genre: functional parameters. In F. Christie, & J. R. Martin (Eds.), *Genre and institutions: Social processes in the workplace and school* (pp. 3-39). London: Cassell.
- Martin, J. R. (1999). Mentoring semogenesis: 'genre-based' literacy pedagogy. In F. Christie (Ed.), *Pedagogy and the shaping of consciousness: Linguistic and social processes* (pp. 123-155). London: Cassell.

- Martin, J. R. (2006). Metadiscourse: designing interaction in genre-based literacy programmes. In R. Whittaker, M. O'Donnell, & A. McCabe (Eds.), *Language and Literacy: Functional Approaches* (pp. 95-122). London: Continuum.
- Martin, J., & Rose, D. (2008). *Genre relations: Mapping culture*. London: Equinox.
- McCabe, A. (forthcoming). SFL and language teaching. In T. Bartlett, & G. O'Grady (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of systemic functional linguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2014). *PISA 2012 Results in focus. What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/keyfindings/pisa-2012-results-overview.pdf>
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2013). *OECD skills outlook 2013: First results from the survey of adult skills*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264204256-en>
- Rijlaarsdam, G., van den Berg, H., & Couzijn, M. (Eds.) (2005). *Effective learning and teaching of writing. A handbook of writing in education* (2nd ed.). New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Rose, D. (2010). *Reading to learn: Implementation and outcomes of the professional development program*. Report for the Western NSW Region. NSW Department of Education and Training. NSW, Australia.
- Rose, D. (2014). *Reading to learn: Accelerating learning and closing the gap*. Teacher training books and DVD. Sydney: *Reading to Learn*. Retrieved from <http://www.readingtolearn.com.au>.
- Rose, D., & Acevedo, C. (2006). Closing the Gap and Accelerating Learning in the Middle Years of Schooling [online]. *Literacy Learning: The Middle Years*, 14(2), 32-45. Retrieved from <http://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=153665521179541;res=IELHSS>.
- Rose, D., & Martin J. R. (2012). *Learning to write, reading to learn: Genre, knowledge and pedagogy in the Sydney School*. London: Equinox.
- Rothery, J. (1989). Learning about language. In R. Hasan, & J. R. Martin (Eds.), *Language development: Learning language, learning culture* (pp. 199-526). Norwood, N. J.: Ablex.
- Ruiz de Zarobe, Y., & Lasagabaster, D. (Eds.) (2010). *CLIL in Spain: Implementation, results and teacher training*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars.
- Schleppegrell, M. J. (2004). *The language of schooling*. Norwood, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Sinclair, J. M., & Coulthard, R. M. (1975). *Towards an analysis of discourse: The English used by teachers and pupils*. Oxford: OUP.

- Veel, R. (2006). The Write it Right project: Linguistic modelling of secondary school and the workplace. In R. Whittaker, M. O'Donnell, & A. McCabe, (Eds.), *Language and Literacy: Functional Approaches* (pp. 66-92). London: Continuum.
- Whittaker, R., O'Donnell, M., & McCabe, A. (Eds.) (2006). *Language and literacy: Functional approaches*. London: Continuum.
- Williams, G. (1995). *Joint book-reading and literacy pedagogy: A socio-semantic examination*. (Doctoral thesis). School of English and Linguistics, Macquarie University: Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from <http://www.researchonline.mq.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/mq:7594>

